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Syria Sees No Peace with Bush in Office: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has told a French newspaper his country is unlikely to enter direct peace talks with Israel while President George W. Bush remains in office. However, in an interview published on the website of Le Figaro on Monday, Assad said he was betting that the next US leader would get more involved in the peace process. Assad said Syria and Israel were looking for common ground to start face-to-face negotiations, adding that it was vital to find the right country to mediate such talks.

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July 8, 2008 Vol. 16, No. 134 (2008_07_08) Editor: Don Canaan, Telephone (352) 750-9420, The Villages, FL 32159

Iran Launches Military Exercise

By YnetNews.com & Israel Faxx News Services

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard has launched a ground and naval military exercise, the Iranian news agency Fars reported Monday.

According to the report, the drill – dubbed "Prophet 3" – was meant to "up the level of readiness by the Guard's missile carriers and units." Earlier Monday, the US announced it had completed a military drill in the Persian Gulf.

Western diplomats said, according to intelligence reports, that Iran has resumed work on constructing highly sophisticated equipment that nuclear experts say is primarily used for building atomic weapons.

Tehran announced that it has no intention of halting its uranium enrichment program. The work is aimed at developing the blueprint provided by Dr AQ Khan, the "father" of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, who sold Iran details of how to build atom bombs in the early 1990s.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which has overall responsibility for the country's nuclear program, has set up several civilian companies to work on the program whose activities are being deliberately concealed from the United Nations nuclear inspection teams.

The companies, based on the outskirts of Tehran, are working on constructing components for the advanced P2 gas centrifuge, which can enrich uranium to weapons grade two to three times faster than conventional P1 centrifuges.

Iran's controversial nuclear enrichment program at Natanz, which Tehran insists is designed to produce fuel for nuclear power, runs on P1 centrifuges. But Iranian nuclear scientists recently conducted successful tests on a prototype P2 centrifuge at Natanz, and the Revolutionary Guard has now set up a network of companies to build components for the advanced centrifuges.

This has raised concerns among Western experts that Iran is continuing work on its nuclear weapons program, despite Tehran's protestations that its intentions are peaceful. "If Iran's nuclear intentions were peaceful there would be no need for it to undertake this work in secret," said an official familiar with the intelligence reports.

Reports that Iran has resumed work on sophisticated uranium enrichment technology follow Tehran's announcement at the weekend that it has no intention of halting its uranium enrichment program at Natanz.

According to recent intelligence reports, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian President, personally ordered the Revolutionary Guard to set up companies for the secret manufacture of components for P2 centrifuges this year.

One of the companies is in a residential building in Amir Abad, western Tehran, where its work is unlikely to be detected by UN nuclear inspectors. One of the facilities is said to be run by a company owned by the Revolutionary Guard.

The operation is a direct copy of the Revolutionary Guard's previous attempt to develop P2 centrifuges, when research work was undertaken by the Kalaye Electric Company, which claimed it was manufacturing watches.

When its true activity was revealed to UN nuclear inspectors in 2004, they found the company had succeeded in building the centrifuges and enriching small quantities of uranium to weapons grade.

Senior officials from Iran's Atomic Energy Agency are supervising the current clandestine program, which is based on the atomic weapons blueprint sold to Iran by Dr. Khan in 1994. Reports that Iran is actively working on Khan's blueprint will deepen suspicions that Tehran has resumed work on its nuclear weapons program.

Israeli Arab Terrorists Threaten 'Unprecedented Attacks'

By IsraelNationalNews.com

An Israeli Arab terrorist group, the "Galilee Liberation Brigades" (GLB) has claimed responsibility for the deadly bulldozer attack in Jerusalem last week.

In an interview with a London-based Arabic daily this weekend, a purported leader of the group claimed that GLB committed several other terrorist murders, he threatened more attacks to come and added that they are holding a female IDF soldier hostage.

In the interview, conducted by way of third-party email, a journalist for Al-Quds Al-Arabi posed a series of questions to someone claiming to be the commander of the GLB.

In his replies, the GLB spokesperson hinted that they are holding Dana Bennet, 17, who was reported missing in August 2003. The group made a similar announcement in 2005. Asked why Israel has thus far refused to acknowledge the GLB's claims that they are holding a hostage, the spokesperson said, "Because it is causing considerable embarrassment to them."

The GLB's ransom demands, according to the Al-Quds Al-Arabi interview, include the release of six Israeli Arabs imprisoned on terrorist-related offenses. The objective of GLB, according to the spokesperson, is "to sow terror in the hearts of Zionists" and to "pursue the enemy wherever he is to be found."

'Obama will Immediately Birth a Palestinian State'

By WorldNetDaily.com

The Palestinian Authority is hoping Sen. Barack Obama wins the presidential election in November and expects the Illinois Democrat to immediately set out to create a Palestinian state once he takes office, a top PA official said.

"We would like to see Obama elected. If he is elected, an agreement about the foundation of a Palestinian state (would be) reached," PA Planning Minister Samir Abdullah told reporters in Tokyo this weekend.

Abdullah, who is the former head of the Palestinian Communist Party, said the PA expects Obama to win in November. He said once Obama takes office, "He will immediately study the Palestinian cause and will try to push it forward. Obama promised he will not wait until the last period of his office to relaunch negotiations ... he will begin doing this since his first day in office unlike President Bush, who waited until his last period of power."

Abdullah's remarks were published Sunday in the Firas Press Network, a Palestinian news website identified with PA President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah organization.

Abdullah is not the only Palestinian official to recently express support for Obama. In a headline-making interview, Ahmed Yousuf, Hamas' chief political adviser in the Gaza Strip, told WND and WABC Radio in April he "hopes" Obama becomes president. "We like Mr. Obama, and we hope that he will win the elections."

Obama has repeatedly condemned Hamas as a terrorist organization that should be isolated until it renounces violence and recognizes Israel.

Iranian 'Spy' Reveals Mossad's Methods

By YnetNews.com

In interview with Iranian television, a man convicted of spying for Israel exposed tactics and technology used by his Mossad handlers

The Islamic republic's news agencies quoted Ali Ashtari as stating that he met with three Mossad agents abroad who he said took advantage of his occupation as a computer broker whose clientele included top Iranian military officials.

"I was given a laptop computer so I could communicate with him and write to him by encoded and ciphered email, and he gave me two encrypted communication devices that I was to give to my clients, to test them out," said Ashtari, adding that he was told by his handlers to plant bugging equipment in the electronics he sold to his customers.

Ashtari said that among his clients were military acquisition officers from the Iranian defense ministry; and his handlers were apparently expecting to obtain information regarding Iran's missile program.

"As for the three military acquisition experts who were in contact with me, they (the handlers) asked me to bring them abroad under any possible pretext: tourism, special seminars or exhibitions," said Ashtari.

In a staged interview in the grand tradition of Iran's state-owned media, the spy was asked "if a senior military official asks to trade in an appliance or have it fixed, what do you do with it and how do you switch it?"

In response Ashtari said: "I take it to the company and it agrees to exchange or fix the appliance for him. The senior official who gave me the appliance becomes an intelligence source without his knowledge and I pass that information on, and tell them he has given me his equipment."

Ashtari went on to explain that by bugging GPS (Global Positioning System) units, Mossad agents were able to "see where that person was, know what he has and where he can be found."

Throughout the interview Ashtari appeared calm and composed – though one might expect someone convicted of an offense as grievous as spying for Israel to undergo physical or psychological torture, and that some sign of this would be apparent in his demeanor.

Israel has so far declined to respond to the affair save for a laconic statement from the Foreign Affairs Ministry saying it was unaware of the case.

By putting a convicted spy sentenced to death on display at the present time is undoubtedly an attempt by Iran to deter other Iranian citizens from aiding foreign operations in exchange for money.

Secondly, Iran is also interested in showing that in the ongoing espionage war between Tehran and the West, it has the upper hand and can thwart attempts by foreign spy agencies to infiltrate Iran and obtain intelligence regarding its military or nuclear programs.

Biting the Hand That Feeds You

By YnetNews.com (Commentary by Gilad Sharon)

The repeated terror attacks carried out by Arab terrorists possessing Israeli ID cards highlight the need for a frank and open discussion regarding relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel and the future of these ties.

Several weeks ago, around Independence Day, I saw at the entrance to Tel Aviv University a protest tent erected by Arab students to mark what they refer to as "Nakba Day" – their disaster. Yet there can be no greater contradiction or hypocrisy.

At the gates of the place that more than any other symbolizes Israel's success and achievements, an institution that is open to all citizens of the country, both Arabs and Jews, these Arab students chose to accept wholeheartedly what the State gives them, while at the same time protest its establishment.

After all, the collapse among Israel's Arabs did not happen on the day the State was established. Any other date in the course of the War of Independence could have been chosen to mark the fact these people turned into refugees. Yet the Arabs chose our Independence Day specifically. They view our revival as their disaster.

I have yet to see a protest by Arab Israelis where the Israeli flag was being held up, yet many Palestinian flags can always be seen there. This is the stage where we hear the cries about transfer and racism.

Well, there is no transfer, everyone is staying at home, although territorial tradeoffs are possible – areas populated by Jews in Judea and Samaria will be annexed to Israel, while areas populated by Arabs will switch sovereignty. The border may be moved West of these communities, and as to racism, even the United Nations recognized the fact that the Jews deserve a state.

Arab leaders in Israel are making false pretenses whereby should Israel withdraw to the 1967 borders, their hostility to the State will disappear and their dual loyalty problem will be resolved. Would we see in such case Arab Israelis proudly waving the Israeli flag? Would they call on their youngsters to join the army and enlist for national service? Of course not.

Military service can serve as a good indication for identifying those who chose to tie their destiny to that of the people of Israel. Those who choose to serve will maintain the status quo. Those who do not serve will only enjoy residency rights. Their right to elect and be elected can be realized in a parliament that reflects their national identity, the way they define it.

This pretention must stop: You shall stop pretending that you are loyal to the State the way it is, and the State will stop pretending that it does not discriminate against you, because it does. It has no choice, as you come out against its essence as a Jewish state and are working to turn it into something else. For example, how can we not discriminate against an elected representative such as Azmi Bishara or Ahmad Tibi, who served as an advisor for Arafat the terrorist, when it comes to sharing sensitive security information?

This juggling act, whereby on the one hand Arab Israelis enjoy the State's health and welfare services and freedom of expression unlike anywhere else in our region, while on the other hand their representatives condemn and attack Israel at every opportunity, and particularly in enemy states, must end.

You need to choose and be honest with yourselves: Do you wish to enjoy all the good Israel bestows upon you? Then be completely loyal to it. If you cannot do it, be prepared to pay the price. The current situation, whereby you bite the hand that feeds you, is devoid of both pride and honor.

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Courtesy of Yaakov Kirschen www.DryBonesBlog.com