



PROPHETIC TIMES

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ISRAEL SUCCESSFULLY TESTS TROPHY IN WAR

September 14, 2006 The Middle East Newslite reported: "The Israel Army employed a new electronic counter-measures main battle tank protection system during the war against Hizbullah in Lebanon.

A defense official said the Armored Corps used the Trophy tank protection system during the 33-day war in Lebanon. The official said four Merkava Mk-4 MBTs were equipped with Trophy, manufactured by Rafael, Israel Armament Development Authority.



"The tanks were not struck by the missiles and Trophy was part of the reason," the official said. The Trophy was designed to detect the approach of anti-tank guided missiles rocket-propelled grenades and fire a projectile to intercept the incoming weapons. In 2006, the system was tested in both Israel and the United States."...

TALIBAN ADOPTING IRAQ-STYLE JIHAD

September 13, 2006 The Christian Science Monitor reported: "Even in near-total darkness, the wounded Taliban fighter insists on masking his identity, his head and face covered by a tightly wound white cloth. Only two bright eyes and a confident voice tell how Afghanistan's Islamist militants are ramping up their fight against US and NATO forces.

He speaks a warning, of how the "new" Taliban has become more radical, more sophisticated, and more brutal than the Taliban ousted by US-led forces in 2001 - and of how its jihadist agenda now mirrors that of Al Qaeda, stretching far beyond Afghanistan.

Among the keys to the Taliban resurgence - which is sparking lethal violence on a scale unknown here for almost five years - are crucial lessons drawn from Iraq. "That's part of our strategy - we are trying to bring [the Iraqi model] to Afghanistan," says the fighter. "Things will get worse here."

Those "things" include suicide attacks, assassinations of government officials, moderate clerics, and civilians, along with guerrilla tactics now in use against Western forces in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, where NATO claims to have killed more than 500 insurgents in 10 days of intense fighting.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, speaking in Brussels Tuesday, said the Taliban now pose a greater danger than Al Qaeda. "The center of gravity of terrorism has shifted from al Qaeda to the Taliban," he told European lawmakers.

"This is a new element, a more dangerous element, because it [the Taliban] has its roots in the people. Al Qaeda didn't have roots in the people," he said..."The Taliban have tried their best to avoid murdering civilians, but they finally found if they don't get active, they will lose this opportunity" to attack "infidel" Western troops, says the fighter. "Now you are seeing explosions everywhere."

Among the most recent suicide attacks was one near the US Embassy last Friday, killing two US soldiers and 14 Afghans.

"I'm very happy about the murder of the Americans, though I am a little bit sad about the death of the Afghans - but this is wartime," says the fighter matter-of-factly. Such deaths, he says, are "inevitable," even if they cause a popular backlash.

"The shift has taken place," warns Hekmat Karzai, head of the Center for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) in Kabul, which analyzes terrorism trends. The Taliban still have local concerns, he says, but embrace global jihad as never before and believe in encouraging a "clash of civilizations."

"Taliban commanders talk of jihad in Fallujah in the same terms they speak of jihad in [the eastern Afghan province of] Kunar," says Mr. Karzai. "They think: 'Just as they are battling there, we are battling here.'"

Figures tabulated by CAPS indicate a recent 60 percent increase in attacks across Afghanistan, from 85 in July to 136 in August. Police have borne the brunt, with deaths jumping more than fourfold in that period."..."

U.S. SANCTIONS MAJOR IRANIAN BANK

September 13, 2006 The Middle East Newslite reported: "The United States has imposed sanctions on one of Iran's largest banks, accused of funding Hamas and Hizbullah. The Treasury Department has sanctioned Iran's Bank Saderat in a move that bans links with U.S. financial institutions. Under the sanctions, the state-owned Iranian bank could not relay or receive funds through the United States.

"Bank Saderat facilitates Iran's transfer of hundreds of millions of dollars to Hizbullah and other terrorist organizations each year," Treasury Undersecretary Stuart Levey said. "We will no longer allow a bank like Saderat to do business in the American financial system, even indirectly."

On Sept. 8, Treasury said Saderat contained 3,400 branches and was one of the largest banks in Iran. The department said Saderat

transferred funds to Hamas, Hizbullah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”...”

IRAN STEPS BACK FROM THE BRINK



September 12, 2006 Asia Times Online reported: “Iran has finally blinked, reportedly agreeing to a temporary suspension of uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, as a confidence-building measure in response to growing international pressure. This is a welcome development that can potentially take the wind out of the sails of the ship of sanctions planned by the US and its allies at the United Nations Security Council.

A diplomat close to talks between the European Union high representative on foreign and security policy, Javier Solana, and Iran's nuclear chief, Ali Larijani, in Vienna made the announcement on condition of anonymity.

According to the source, Larijani did not rule out the possibility that Iran would cease uranium enrichment for a month or two. Iran failed to fulfill the requirement of the international community to cease uranium enrichment by August 31, and its case is now before the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

It should be noted that Iran imposed conditions on a possible suspension, including, according to some reports, a halt in activity on Iran at the Security Council and a step-down from trying to impose sanctions on Iran.

In response, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice indicated that Iran's temporary suspension of its nuclear program might be enough for the first direct negotiations between the United States and Iran in more than 25 years. Rice said Iran needed to suspend uranium enrichment before talks could begin, but she did not rule out something less than a permanent suspension.

This marks a softening of the US approach, which has steadfastly ruled out any hint of negotiation unless Iran permanently abandons enrichment activities. This hard line has been drawing fire domestically, such as by Senator Chuck Hagel, who has pointed out the need of serious US negotiation with Iran, warning that allies of the United States would support tough action against Iran only if they were confident Washington was serious about achieving a negotiated, diplomatic solution.”...”

CATHOLIC HIGH LEVEL GROUP COULD FUEL EU 'GOD' DEBATE

September 12, 2006 The EU Observer reported: “European bishops have commissioned a high-profile group of thinkers to draft a report on the EU's common values, in a move which could spur the debate on the need to include Christianity in a new EU treaty text.

The "group of wise men and women" held its first meeting on Monday (11 September) at the initiative of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE).

The experts group - consisting only of Roman Catholics - notably includes three members of the previous European Commission - Mario Monti, Franz Fischler and Loyola de Palacio - as well as Jacques Santer, who led the EU executive from 1995-1999 and former European Parliament president Pat Cox.

Former Belgian ambassador to the EU, Philippe de Schoutheete, who also has a seat in the group, said the aim of the project is to raise awareness of European values among the public at a time when most people are "totally ignorant or unaware" that there is "something more" to the EU than the single market or agricultural policy.

"The EU process has clearly been based on a certain number of values, but in the course of the process they have been largely forgotten," he said.

A COMECE spokeswoman added that the initiative is also "indirectly" aimed at influencing a political declaration on the EU's values and ambitions which the bloc's leaders are planning to adopt on 25 March 2007 - the EU's 50th anniversary date.”...”

ARABS URGED TO ACQUIRE NUKE TECH

September, 2006 The Middle East Newslines reported: “Arab League states have been urged to develop nuclear technology in response to Iran's suspected weapons program. A two-day Gulf conference in Manama affirmed the right of Arab states to develop nuclear technology for peaceful applications. The Bahraini-sponsored conference, attended by security officials from a range of Arab countries, also warned of the dangers of nuclear proliferation, particularly by Iran.

"We can't just sit and look from the outside as these developments take place," Mohammed Al Said Idris, a consultant at the Egyptian state-owned Al Ahram Center for Strategic Studies, said.

A concluding statement on Sept. 11 urged the Arab League to formulate a strategy on the acquisition of civilian nuclear technology. The conference, titled "The Dangers and Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation in the Gulf Region," cited such nuclear applications as agriculture, industry, medicine and water.”...”

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