



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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AHMADINEJAD: IRAN WILL 'CUT OFF THE HAND' OF ATTACKERS

April 18, 2007 The Guardian.co.uk reported: "Iran's army will "cut off the hand" of any attacker, the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said during an annual military parade today. In a typically defiant speech to mark national army day, Mr Ahmadinejad played down the effect of UN sanctions over the country's nuclear programme, and said its military was self-sufficient.

"Some bullying powers imagined that by implementing sanctions they would weaken our army, [but] today our army is self-sufficient and secures its needs in general," he said. In a televised address, he said the army "stands against any aggressor and will cut off its hand". He made a similar remark at last year's ceremony, saying Iran would "cut off the hands of any aggressors".

The UN security council has set a deadline of late May for Iran to halt its uranium enrichment programme or face a further toughening of sanctions. After introducing limited measures in December, the security council last month ratcheted up the pressure, banning Iranian arms exports and freezing the assets of 28 individuals and companies involved in Iran's nuclear or ballistic missile programmes.

The US has said it wants a diplomatic resolution to the nuclear standoff, but has not ruled out military action if that fails. It has strengthened its military presence in the region by sending a second aircraft carrier group to the Gulf.

Mr Ahmadinejad delivered his address standing under a large banner declaring: "Peaceful nuclear technology is an essential need of our country."

A military parade following his speech included a parachute drop and the display, for the first time, of a locally manufactured air defence system said to have the capability of simultaneously launching two surface-to-air missiles. However, Iran did not show off its longest-range missile, the Shahab-3, which it says can hit targets 1,250 miles away, putting Israel or US bases in the Gulf within range.

Last week, Mr Ahmadinejad said Iran was now enriching nuclear fuel on an "industrial scale" - a claim that Mohammed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, discounted.

He also warned countries to stop trying to put pressure on Iran to suspend its enrichment of uranium and to accept that Iran's nuclear programme was "irreversible".

IRAN LEAVES OPTIONS OPEN ON 'OIL WEAPON'

April 18, 2007 SpaceWar.com reported: "Iran on Wednesday refused to rule out using oil as a weapon if the standoff with the West over its nuclear programme intensifies, saying that the Islamic Republic would use every means if attacked.



"The Islamic Republic of Iran's policy is to supply energy as a responsibility. We are never seeking to cut the energy supplies to the world," Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri-Hamaneh told an oil conference in Tehran.

"But naturally every country, which is subject to danger or attack, should use all its possibilities to defend itself and this is every country's right," he said.

His comments came in response to a question over whether Iran would use oil as a weapon if the UN Security Council passed a third resolution imposing more sanctions against Tehran over the atomic drive."..."

IRAN NUCLEAR OPERATIONS CONFIRMED

April 18, 2007 The BBC News reported: "Iran has started enriching small amounts of uranium gas at its underground plant at Natanz, according to the UN's nuclear agency, the IAEA. The agency said eight cascades of more than 1,300 centrifuges, the machines that spin uranium gas into enriched material, were now operating. Earlier this month Iran's president said Natanz was ready to enrich uranium on an industrial-scale.

The West suspects Iran of seeking atomic weapons, a charge Iran denies. Tehran insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only. The UN Security Council has imposed sanctions on Teheran for its failure to scale back its nuclear programme.

Diplomatic sources have confirmed to the BBC the contents of what was a confidential letter from the International Atomic Energy Agency to Iranian officials. The document - a letter signed by IAEA deputy Director General Ollie Heinonen - said the Agency took note of the information provided by Iran that it is running more 1,300 centrifuges - the machines used to spin the gas into enriched uranium.

It said some UF6 uranium gas was being fed into the centrifuges. The disclosure of the inspectors' findings comes after the head of the IAEA, Mohammed ElBaradei, downplayed Iran's claim that it was beginning industrial-scale production. Speaking in Saudi Arabia last week, Mr ElBaradei said Iran would need thousands of centrifuges, but had only hundreds operating at present. He also said that Iran would not be able to produce the highly enriched uranium needed for a nuclear bomb as long as it remained under the supervision of IAEA inspectors.

Iran says it plans to install 50,000 centrifuges at the Natanz plant."

SAUDIS REGARD CONGRESS AS HOSTILE

April 15, 2007 The Middle East Newswire reported: "Saudi Arabia regards Congress as a leading enemy of the Arab kingdom. Leading Saudi officials have asserted that the Democratic-controlled Congress was preventing U.S. weapons sales and military assistance to the Gulf Arab state. They said Congress has been mulling plans to impose sanctions amid allegations of Saudi violations of human and religious freedom.

"The reasons for that are many, the first of which is the Zionist lobby in the United States," Prince Turki Al Faisal, a former Saudi ambassador to the United States, said.

In an address on April 10 to the Saudi Association for Media and Communications, Turki said Congress has become "the center of hostility" toward Saudi Arabia. A former longtime intelligence chief, Turki blamed the influence of pro-Israeli supporters, whom he termed a powerful lobby."..."

BILLIONS AT RISK FROM WHEAT SUPER-BLIGHT

April 3, 2007 NewScientist.com reported: "This thing has immense potential for social and human destruction." Startling words - but spoken by the father of the Green Revolution, Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug, they are not easily dismissed.

An infection is coming, and almost no one has heard about it. This infection isn't going to give you flu, or TB. In fact, it isn't interested in you at all. It is after the wheat plants that feed more people than any other single food source on the planet. And because of cutbacks in international research, we aren't prepared. The famines that were banished by the advent of disease-resistant crops in the Green Revolution of the 1960s could return, Borlaug told New Scientist.



The disease is Ug99, a virulent strain of black stem rust fungus (*Puccinia graminis*), discovered in Uganda in 1999. Since the Green Revolution, farmers everywhere have grown wheat varieties that resist stem rust, but Ug99 has evolved to take advantage of those varieties, and almost no wheat crops anywhere are resistant to it.

The strain has spread slowly across east Africa, but in January this year spores blew across to Yemen, and north into Sudan. Scientists who have tracked similar airborne spores in this part of the world say it will now blow into Egypt, Turkey and the Middle East, and on to India, lands where a billion people depend on wheat.

There is hope: this week scientists are assessing the first Ug99-resistant varieties of wheat that might be used for crops. However, it will take another five to eight years to breed up enough seed to plant all our wheat fields.

The threat couldn't have come at a worse time. Consumption has outstripped production in six of the last seven years, and stocks are at their lowest since 1972. Wheat prices jumped 14 per cent last year.

Black stem rust itself is nothing new. It has been a major blight on wheat production since the rise of agriculture, and the Romans even prayed to a stem rust god, Robigus. It can reduce a field of ripening grain to a dead, tangled mass, and vast outbreaks regularly used to rip through wheat regions. The last to hit the North American breadbasket, in 1954, wiped out 40 per cent of the crop. In the cold war both the US and the Soviet Union stockpiled stem rust spores as a biological weapon."..."

FIRST TEMPLE WALL FOUND IN CITY OF DAVID

March 30, 2007 The Jerusalem Post reported: "A wall from the First Temple was recently uncovered in Jerusalem's City of David, strengthening the claim that it is the site of the palace of King David, an Israeli archeologist said Thursday.

The new find, made by Dr. Eilat Mazar, a senior fellow at the Shalem Center's Institute for the Archeology of the Jewish People, comes less than two years after she said she had discovered the palace's location at the site just outside the walls of the Old City.

The monumental 10th century BCE building found by Mazar in 2005 following a six month dig has ignited debate among archaeologists about whether it is indeed the palace built for the victorious David by King Hiram of Tyre as recounted in Samuel II:5.



A 20-meter-long section of the 7-meter-thick wall has now been uncovered. It indicates that the City of David once served as a major government center, Mazar said.

Mazar estimates less than a quarter of the entire wall has been uncovered so far, and says that it is the largest site from King David's time ever to have been discovered. The dig is sponsored by the capital's Shalem Center, with academic backing from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem."

*Compiled by L. Jim Tuck, Pastor
UCGIA Oakland, San Jose, Stockton, and Santa Rosa
ljt5053@sbcglobal.net*