



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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REPORT: WEST FEARS HEZBOLLAH SETTING UP CELLS IN VENEZUELA

August 28, 2008 Haaretz.com reported: "The budding strategic partnership between Venezuela and Iran has prompted fears from Western governments that Hezbollah is establishing a growing number of operational cells in the South American country, the Los Angeles Times reported on its Web site on Thursday.

The Lebanon-based Shi'ite organization is believed to be one of a number of anti-Western terrorist and non-state actors that have moved "people and things" into South America, an anti-terrorism expert told the Times.

Officials in the Bush administration and Jerusalem have expressed concern that Hezbollah is taking advantage of the close relationship between its Iranian patrons and Venezuela's anti-American president, Hugo Chavez, the LA Times said.

Iran is long believed to have undertaken covert activity in South America in concert with Hezbollah. The LA Times reported that the U.S. State Department believes Iranian operatives were behind two terrorist attacks in Buenos Aires - the 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires and the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center building. Both attacks killed dozens of civilians and wounded scores more."..."

NORTH KOREA GIVES UP NEGOTIATING WITH BUSH ADMINISTRATION

August 27, 2008 Agence France-Presse reported: "North Korea's decision to stop disabling its nuclear plants shows it has effectively abandoned negotiations with the Bush administration in hopes of a better deal from the next US leader, analysts say. The North announced Tuesday it had halted work to make the plutonium-producing plants unusable, and would consider rebuilding them, because the United States has failed to remove it from a terrorism blacklist.

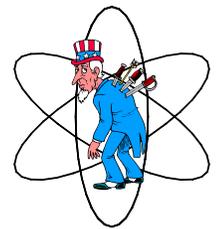
Each side accused the other of violating vaguely-worded six-nation nuclear disarmament agreements. Washington reiterated that before any delisting the North must agree on ways to verify the declaration of its nuclear activities which it made in June. A senior South Korean official said the North is trying to "take the upper hand in negotiations" but Seoul and Washington have agreed not to over-react.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, he said Seoul would continue providing energy aid under the six-party deal -- involving the two Koreas, the US, Russia, China and Japan -- unless the situation worsens."..."

The North tested an atomic weapon in October 2006 before the disarmament deals last year. In November it began disabling the reactor and other plants at Yongbyon and says 80 percent of the work has been completed.

Analysts say it would take at least a year and up to two to restart the reactor, but the North might raise the stakes in the meantime -- possibly with long-range missile launches.

"The North has apparently decided to stick to its guns and wait for the next administration," said Kim Yeon-Chul, head of Seoul's Hanyoreh Peace Research Institute."..."



DIMITRI MEDVEDEV RAISE SPECTRE OF NEW COLD WAR

August 26, 2008 TimesOnline.co.uk reported: "Russia put the West on alert for a new Cold War that the Kremlin is ready to fight, its President said yesterday.

President Medvedev set tensions soaring when he recognised the independence of two breakaway republics inside Georgia. "We are not afraid of anything, including the prospect of a Cold War," he said. Hours earlier he had ordered his Foreign Ministry to start establishing diplomatic ties with the secessionist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The move brought instant condemnation from the United States, Britain, France, Germany and other Western countries. President Bush appealed to the Kremlin to "reconsider this irresponsible decision". David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, said that it was "unjustifiable and unacceptable".

Mr Medvedev, whose troops still occupy positions in Georgia, including in the vital Black Sea port of Poti, said that he did not want a return to the Cold War, but that "everything depends on the position of our partners".

The sense of a stand-off deepened when US officials reversed a statement that American warships would be delivering humanitarian aid to Poti. A US diplomat in Tbilisi had announced that two guided missile warships would be docking at the port despite the Russian military presence. Mr Medvedev accused the Americans of trying to smuggle weapons to the Georgians.

President Saakashvili of Georgia declared that Russia's backing for the separatists was illegal, and accused it of looking for any excuse to provoke Georgia and allow Russia's military machine to roll back into his country."..."

IRANIAN CLERIC BLASTS AHMADINEJAD

August 27, 2008 The Jerusalem Post reported: "An Iranian cleric accused President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of betraying the people and

called on reformers to unite to defeat him in next year's elections, according to an interview in a German newspaper quoted by Reuters, Wednesday.

"Ahmadinejad is not complying with the will of the people," The Financial Times Deutschland quoted Grand Ayatollah Bajat Sanjani as saying. "This is a major threat, a big danger," the cleric added in an unusually direct personal attack.

The newspaper also said Sanjani accused Ahmadinejad's government of breaking the law, seriously violating personal freedom and illegally empowering the Revolutionary Guard.

Ahmadinejad is expected to run for a second term in Iran's next presidential election, slated to take place early in 2009. His reformist rivals are expected to attack him especially on his economic policies. Iran suffers from a rising consumer price index, high percentage of unemployment and an inflation of 26 percent."

THREE MAJOR US NAVAL STRIKE FORCES DUE THIS WEEK IN PERSIAN GULF

August 12, 2008 DEBKAfile reported: "DEBKA's military sources note that the arrival of the three new American flotillas will raise to five the number of US strike forces in Middle East waters – an unprecedented build-up since the crisis erupted over Iran's nuclear program.

This vast naval and air strength consists of more than 40 carriers, warships and submarines, some of the last nuclear-armed, opposite the Islamic Republic, a concentration last seen just before the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Our military sources postulate five objects of this show of American muscle:

1. The US, aided also by France, Britain and Canada, is finalizing preparations for a partial naval blockade to deny Iran imports of benzene and other refined oil products. This action would indicate that the Bush administration had thrown in the towel on stiff United Nations sanctions and decided to take matters in its own hands.
2. Iran, which imports 40 percent of its refined fuel products from Gulf neighbors, will retaliate for the embargo by shutting the Strait of Hormuz oil route chokepoint, in which case the US naval and air force stand ready to reopen the Strait and fight back any Iranian attempt to break through the blockade.
3. Washington is deploying forces as back-up for a possible Israeli military attack on Iran's nuclear installations.
4. A potential rush of events in which a US-led blockade, Israeli attack and Iranian reprisals pile up in a very short time and precipitate a major military crisis.
5. While a massive deployment of this nature calls for long planning, its occurrence at this time cannot be divorced from the flare-up of the Caucasian war between Russia and Georgia. While Russia has strengthened its stake in Caspian oil resources by its overwhelming military intervention against Georgia, the Americans are investing might in defending the primary Persian Gulf oil sources of the West and the Far East.

DEBKAfile's military sources name the three US strike forces en route to the Gulf as the <USS Theodore Roosevelt>, the <USS Ronald Reagan> and the <USS Iwo Jima>. Already in place are the <USS Abraham Lincoln> in the Arabian Sea opposite Iranian shores and the <USS Peleliu> which is cruising in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden."

PUTIN: US ORCHESTRATED CONFLICT IN GEORGIA

August 28, 2008 The Associated Press reported: "Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin accused the United States on Thursday of pushing Georgia toward war and said he suspects a connection to the U.S. presidential campaign – a contention the White House dismissed as "patently false."



In another sign of unraveling Russia-U.S. ties, Putin said that 19 U.S. poultry producers will be barred from exporting their products to Russia.

Putin, the former president and architect of an assertive foreign policy that stoked East-West tension even before Russia's war with the U.S.-allied ex-Soviet republic, suggested in an interview with CNN that there was an American presence amid the combat with a potential domestic U.S. political motive.

"We have serious grounds to think that there were U.S. citizens right in the combat zone," he said the interview broadcast on state-run Russian television. "And if that's so, if that is confirmed, it's very bad. It's very dangerous."

Putin's acid attack on the United States came as Moscow's bid to redraw Georgia's borders hit an obstacle among its Asian allies. France, meanwhile, said the European Union is considering sanctions against Russia for its conduct in the Caucasus."..."

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