



AYATOLLAH'S RAISES FEAR OF POWER STRUGGLE

October 31, 2013 The Times.co.uk reports: "Concerns are growing in Iran about the of , the country's Supreme Leader, amid fears of a power vacuum at a critical moment for the Islamic Republic. Ayatollah Khamenei, 74, Iran's most powerful man, has not been seen in public for three weeks. Reports suggest that has had a relapse of a chronic illness. He became Supreme Lader in 1989 and has no appointed heir. His death or even a prolonged absence, could prompt a power struggle..."

STUDY: BAT-TO-HUMAN LEAP LIKELY FOR SARS-LIKEVIRUS

October 31, 2013 The Wall Street Journal reports: "A decade after SARS swept through the world and killed more than 750 people, scientists have made a troubling discovery: A very close cousin of the SARS virus lives in bats and it can likely jump directly to people.

The findings create new fears about the emergence of diseases like SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome. The virus spread quickly from in 2003 and had a mortality rate of at least 9%. Worries of a severe pandemic led the World Health Organization to issue an emergency travel advisory.

While bats have previously been fingered as a host for SARS, it was believed that the virus jumped from there to weasel-like mammals known as civets, where it went through genetic changes before infecting people. Operating on that belief, China cracked down on markets where bats, civets and other wildlife were sold for food..."



ARAB MK: ISRAEL MUST SUBMIT TO ARAB DEMANDS OR DISAPPEAR

October 30, 2013 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "On Wednesday MK Ibrahim Sarsour of the Arab Ra'am-Ta'al party accused the Israeli government of endangering Middle East stability in failing to make peace with the Palestinians, declaring that Israel must either submit to Arab demands or disappear.

He further claimed Israel was the 'sole cause' preventing advances in the peace talks because it continues to refuse to withdraw to the 1949 ceasefire lines, divide Jerusalem and let Arabs who fled in 1948 return with their descendants.

Sarsour concluded by threatening that 'whoever doesn't agree to divide Palestine into two countries...will deal with...a demand for all of Palestine from the sea to the [Jordan] river.'

He added that Israel has to decide to exist while recognizing all Palestinian rights, such as the right of refugee return, or else 'cease existing.'

The statements were made in the course of his speech before the Knesset plenum, concerning the vote of no confidence which he presented on behalf of the Arab parties. Sarsour's position mimics the Palestinian Authority (PA) statement, also from Wednesday, which called the Israeli demands for security a "hardline position." ..."

ISRAEL WARNS OF AL-QAIDA DISASTER IN EGYPT

October 30, 2013 World Net Daily reported: "Israel is growing increasingly concerned about the concentration of al-Qaida and other global jihadists in the neighboring Egyptian Sinai Peninsula.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is questioning the wisdom of President Obama's reported decision to withhold hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Egypt at a time the Egyptian military is fighting global jihadists in the Sinai, according to Israeli diplomatic sources.

The sources told WND that Netanyahu sent messages in recent days to Egypt's interim president, Adly Mansou, and Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the country's defense minister. The messages expressed Netanyahu's opinion that U.S. sanctions could weaken the Egyptian military's ability to fight al-Qaida.

The sources further stated a recent Israel Defense Force intelligence report has warned the Sinai is quickly turning into a central location for al-Qaida, including reports of large numbers of jihadists moving to the Sinai after fighting the regime in Syria. Some of the jihadists, the report related, are attempting to infiltrate the Gaza Strip..."

JIHADISTS TIGHTEN THEIR GRIP ON SYRIAN UPRISING

October 29, 2013 SpaceWar.com reported "Hard-line jihadist groups have significantly increased their power in Syria at the expense of more nationalist and secular rebel forces, and analysts say that power is expected to grow, undermining Western efforts to build a credible opposition against President Bashar Assad.

Yet as recently as early August, the strength and influence of the radical forces appeared to be declining amid Western support for the Free Syrian Army and the mainstream Syrian National Coalition.

The sharp reversal of fortunes, accompanied by a general turn against the exile-led political opposition to Assad's minority Alawite regime, 'largely resulted from the Obama administration's decision to cancel planned airstrikes against the Assad regime' over an Aug. 21 chemical attack that reportedly killed 1,400 civilians, Oxford Analytica observed.

That move 'shattered the legitimacy of the FSA and the SNC's pro-Western stance, and emboldened hard-liners.'

It also deepened a rift between the United States and its longtime allies in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf monarchies that will only benefit Assad..."

FEARS THAT POLIO IN SYRIA COULD SPREAD

October 29, 2013 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "The World Health Organization warned Tuesday that the polio virus has been found among children in Syria. A test of 22 children in the Deir a-Zour region of northeastern Syria revealed that 10 were carrying the virus.

Results are pending on tests on another 12 children. Several of the children believed to have polio have not been vaccinated against the illness.

Those who have received a polio shot are unlikely to fall ill with polio; however, they can still carry the virus and transmit it to others, allowing the virus to spread. A high carrier rate could lead to illness among vulnerable populations, including young babies and those with compromised immune systems.



A polio outbreak would be particularly dangerous in Syria, where immunization programs have been disrupted by the country's bloody civil war, which began in 2011. While roughly 95% of Syrian children were vaccinated against polio before the war, the United Nations fears that as many as 500,000 children in Syria today have not been immunized..."

IRAN METES OUT 80 LASHES TO CHRISTIANS FOR COMMUNION WINE DRINKING

October 27, 2013 The Jerusalem Post reported: "An Iranian court sentenced four Iranians to 80 whips for drinking wine during communion and possession of a satellite antenna. Christianity Society Worldwide, an advocacy organization for religious freedom, reported on the punishment last week on its website.

A court in the city of Rasht sentenced the four Iranian Christian men on October 6. Rasht is located on the Caspian Sea in Iran's northern province of Gilan and has a population of over 600,000...

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), said, 'The sentences handed down to these members of the Church of Iran effectively criminalize the Christian sacrament of sharing in the Lord's Supper and constitute an unacceptable infringement on the right to practice faith freely and peaceably.



We urge the Iranian authorities to ensure that the nation's legal practices and procedures do not contradict its international obligation under the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to guarantee the full enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief by all of its religious communities.'

In an October UN report on Iran's human rights record, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran, wrote 'at least 20 Christians were in custody in July 2013.

In addition, violations of the rights of Christians, particularly those belonging to evangelical Protestant groups, many of whom are converts, who proselytize to and serve Iranian Christians of Muslim background, continue to be reported.'..."

PUTIN SEEKING TO RESUME RUSSIA-EGYPT MILITARY TIES AMID US VACUUM

October 27, 2013 The Jerusalem Post reports: "Russian President Vladimir Putin is planning a possible state visit to Egypt in order to take advantage of frayed ties between Washington and Cairo and possibly gain access to Egypt's Mediterranean ports, The Sunday Times reported.

The United States announced October 9 that it had decided to 'hold the delivery of certain large-scale military systems and cash assistance to the [Egyptian] government pending credible progress toward an inclusive, democratically elected civilian government through free and fair elections.'

The US move came days after 57 people were killed in clashes in Egypt amid the crackdown by security forces on supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi.

According to the Times, Putin is seeking to resume military ties with Egypt in light of the vacuum created by Washington's decision and fears of a return to the Cold War era rivalry in the region.

Among Russia's motivations, the Times suggests, is access to Egypt's Mediterranean ports. Russia's current point of access to the Mediterranean is the Syrian port of Tartus, which could be in jeopardy if Russian ally Bashar Assad's regime falls..."

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