



ISIS APPEARS READY TO ANNOUNCE EXPANSION TO GAZA

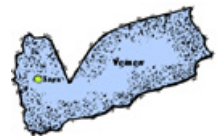
April 16, 2015 WND.com reported: "Internet forums and group chatter among ISIS supporters indicate the brutal jihadist organization is debating when to declare the Gaza Strip part of its expansive caliphate, WND has learned.

Informed Middle Eastern security officials said Hamas has been preparing a major crackdown on Salafist cells supportive of ISIS ideology, fearing the group could indeed make such a declaration of control over Gaza. The officials further said Hamas has been trying to bribe Salafist ideologues away from ISIS by providing them with salaries while integrating them among the ranks of Hamas' salaried security forces..."

SAUDI-IRAN RIVALRY OVER YEMEN DEEPENS MIDEAST SECTARIANISM

April 16, 2015 The Associated Press reported: " Saudi Arabia's government insists it is not at war with Iran despite its three-week air campaign against Tehran-backed rebels in Yemen, but the kingdom's powerful clerics, and its regional rival's theocratic government, are increasingly presenting the conflict as part of a region-wide battle for the soul of Islam.

The toxic rivalry between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran is playing out on the battlefields of Yemen and Syria, and in the dysfunctional politics of Iraq and Lebanon, with each side resorting to sectarian rhetoric. Iran and its allies refer to all of their opponents as terrorists and extremists, while Saudi Arabian clerics speak of a regional Persian menace.



Yemen

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran does not date back to Islam's 7th century schism, but to the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, which toppled a U.S.-backed and Saudi-allied monarchy and recast alliances across the region. The standoff worsened after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, which toppled a Sunni-led dictatorship that had long been seen as a bulwark against Iran's efforts to export its revolution.

But even if today's power struggle has more to do with politics than religion, the unleashing of increasingly sectarian rhetoric on both sides has empowered extremists and made the region's multiplying conflicts even more intractable.

Sheikh Mohammed al-Arefe, a Saudi cleric with 12 million Twitter followers and rock star status among ultra-conservative Sunnis, says the Saudi-led coalition launching airstrikes in Yemen is at war with the enemies of Islam. In a sermon viewed nearly 94,000 times on YouTube, he refers to them as "Safawis," a reference to a 16th century Persian dynasty that oversaw the expansion of Shiite Islam.

"It is they, who until today, bow in prayer to shrines," al-Arefe says, referring to the Shiite practice of praying at the tombs of religious figures. Saudi clerics who follow the country's strict Wahhabi doctrine view such rituals as akin to polytheism and advocate the destruction of shrines.

The Saudi government says its coalition of 10 Arab countries is bombing the Houthi rebels in Yemen to restore the country's internationally recognized president, who was forced to seek refuge in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis and the U.S. accuse Iran of arming the Houthis, but Tehran says it only provides aid and political support.

The Houthis are Zaydis, a Shiite offshoot considered close to Sunni Islam, and Yemen's conflict has less to do with sectarianism than with north-south tensions, political corruption and a flawed post-Arab Spring political transition. Hard-line Saudi clerics like al-Arefe say their problem is not with Zaydis, who make up about 30 percent of Yemen's population, but with the Houthis, who have been "corrupted" by the ideology of "Safawis," a clear reference to Iran.

"Who are the ones killing us in Iraq today, except them? Who are the ones killing us in the Levant today, except them?" al-Arefe said in the same sermon. In Syria, Saudi Arabia is a leading backer of the mainly Sunni rebels, while Iran is a key ally of President Bashar Assad, who hails from the Alawite community, another Shiite offshoot."..."

EGYPT TV TO ISRAEL: 'TRUST IN GOD AND BOMB' IRAN

April 16, 2015 World Net Daily reported: "An Egyptian television personality sent Israel some strong signs of support for any possible Jewish state move that could lead to an attack on Iran, telling Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bluntly: Go ahead and bomb.

Netanyahu cut a video segment in English to lay out Israel's objections to the looming nuclear deal between President Obama and Iran. In it, he said: 'In the last few days, Iran has shown again why it can't be trusted.'

Egypt's Tawfik Okasha reacted to the statement and to the ongoing U.S.-Tehran discussions on national television, first calling Netanyahu 'our dear friend' and then pressing Israel to take out the Bushehr nuclear reactor, CBN reported.

'Put your trust in God and bomb it,' Okasha said, CBN reported. 'We are with you and if you need fuel for the jets, we will give it to you.'

Netanyahu has been sounding the alarm on Iran's nuclear development program for years."..."

ISIS CAMP A FEW MILES FROM TEXAS, MEXICAN AUTHORITIES CONFIRM

April 15, 2015 JudicialWatch.org reported: "ISIS is operating a camp just a few miles from El Paso, Texas, according to Judicial Watch sources that include a Mexican Army field grade officer and a Mexican Federal Police Inspector.

The exact location where the terrorist group has established its base is around eight miles from the U.S. border in an area known as 'Anapra' situated just west of Ciudad Juárez in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. Another ISIS cell to the west of Ciudad Juárez, in Puerto Palomas, targets the New Mexico towns of Columbus and Deming for easy access to the United States, the same knowledgeable sources confirm.

During the course of a joint operation last week, Mexican Army and federal law enforcement officials discovered documents in Arabic and Urdu, as well as 'plans' of Fort Bliss – the sprawling military installation that houses the US Army's 1st Armored Division. Muslim prayer rugs were recovered with the documents during the operation..."

HINDU RADICAL CALLS FOR FORCED STERILIZATIONS OF CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN INDIA

April 14, 2015 Breitbart.com reported: "Deva Sadhvi Thakur, the vice president of the radical Hindu group 'All India Hindu Mahasabha,' has launched a series of proposals to curb 'threats to the Hindu population of the country,' including forced sterilization of members of minority religions and the installation of statues of Hindu gods and goddesses in churches and mosques.

Thakur has also proposed erecting a statue in Haryana honoring the 'patriot' Nathuram Godse, a militant of the Hindu paramilitary group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi in 1948.

In televised comments on April 11, Thakur stated: 'The population of Muslims and Christians is growing day by day. To control this, the central government must declare a state of emergency and force Muslims and Christians to undergo sterilization, so that they can't increase their numbers.'

She also urged Hindus to have more children in order to outgrow the populations of other religions in the world. Sajan George, the president of the Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC), has demanded that the woman be arrested for sedition and xenophobia. 'These obstinate invectives of Hindu fringe extremists against minorities in India must be strongly condemned,' he said..."

PUTIN LIFTS BAN ON DELIVERY OF S-300 MISSILE SYSTEMS TO IRAN

April 13, 2015 The Fars News Agency reported: "Putin's decision was announced hours after relevant reports said the Kremlin also plans to supply China with the advanced S-400 air defense system.

Earlier this month, a leading Russian defense expert said that his country may resume the deal to deliver S-300 surface-to-air defense systems to Iran.

Negotiators from Iran, the United States and other world powers agreed on April 2 to a framework for a final agreement on Tehran's nuclear program. Iran agreed in principle to accept certain restrictions on its nuclear facilities, in return, economic sanctions unilaterally imposed on the Islamic Republic by the US, EU and the UN Security Council will be lifted. Following the agreement, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that a UN arms embargo against Iran should also go.



'Lifting sanctions on Iran, including the arms embargo, would be an absolutely logical thing to do,' said Igor Korotchenko, who heads the Global Arms Trade Analysis Center think tank in Moscow, Sputnik reported.

'Of key importance to us is the delivery of the upgraded S-300 missiles to Iran... A contract to this effect could be resumed on terms acceptable to both Moscow and Tehran,' he added. In January, Tehran and Moscow signed an agreement to broaden their defensive cooperation and also resolve the problem with the delivery of Russia's S300 missile defense systems to Iran..."

CHINA, RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE BOOST DEFENCE SPENDING: STUDY

April 12, 2015 spacedaily.com reported: "Military spending increased sharply in 2014 in China and Russia and the Ukraine conflict prompted eastern European countries to boost their defence programmes, according to a study by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released Monday.

The United States remains the world's biggest spender on defence, but it spent 6.4 percent less year-on-year in 2014, while China, Russia and Saudi Arabia -- the world's next three highest spenders -- all increased their expenditures. China's spending last year was estimated at \$216 billion (204 billion euros), a 9.7 percent rise. The conflict in Ukraine pitting Kiev against pro-Moscow rebels has seen eastern European countries near Russia rack up their spending and revise their defence plans.

"The Ukraine crisis has fundamentally altered the security situation in Europe, but so far the impact on military spending is mostly apparent in countries bordering Russia," SIPRI's Sam Perlo-Freeman said. Ukraine's budget jumped by over 20 percent to \$4 billion, while Russia's rose by more than eight percent to \$84.5 billion. The Russian government's budget foresees an even bigger rise -- of 15 percent -- in 2015, but that could be cut due to the economic troubles linked to the Ukraine conflict.

In Western Europe, as in the United States, budgets were shrinking, the report said. While Washington is still the world's top military spender, levels have shrunk by a fifth since they peaked in 2010, said SIPRI, an independent institute that studies conflict, weapons, arms control and disarmament."...Saudi Arabia's 17 percent rise made it "the largest increase of any of the top 15 spenders worldwide", SIPRI said. The oil-rich state is a regional powerhouse with a significant role in several conflicts in the fraught region."..."