



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 22 2015

REPORTED NUCLEAR SIDE DEAL ALLOWS IRAN TO DO SELF-INSPECTIONS

August 20, 2015 VOAnews.com reported: "A draft of a side agreement to the Iranian nuclear agreement between the U.N. atomic watchdog agency and Tehran will allow Iran to use its own inspectors to investigate the secretive Parchin nuclear site, the Associated Press reported. The revelation comes just weeks before the U.S. Congress votes on whether to reject the deal.

The Obama Administration expressed confidence Wednesday in the technical plans of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for investigating Parchin and previous possible military dimensions (PMD) of Iran's nuclear program.

U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said that while familiar with the contents, he would not comment directly on the purported draft IAEA document..."

U.S. NAVY ON ALERT: CHINA, RUSSIA TO LAUNCH LARGEST-EVER JOINT NAVY EXERCISE

August 18, 2015 The Washington Times reported: "The Chinese and Russian navies are gearing up for their largest-ever joint exercises, slated to begin Thursday in the Pacific with more than 20 ships and featuring anti-submarine operations as well as a joint-beach landing.



The "Joint Sea 2015 II" exercises will run through Aug. 28 in the Sea of Japan and off the coast of Vladivostok.

While analysts say the operations have increased in size and sophistications during recent years, the Chinese and Russian navies have held five such joint exercises over the past decade.



But in the current round of exercises, Chinese frigates have reportedly made their first-ever visit to the Russian Novorossiysk naval base in the Black Sea.

President Vladimir Putin made headlines in the area Tuesday by joining a Russian navy team aboard a small vessel that plunged into the Black Sea along the coast of the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine last year.

The first "Joint Sea 2015" operation played out in the Mediterranean Sea in April. The USNI report noted that Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said late last year that the U.S. was a factor motivating increased China-Russia military training.

However, more recent comments by other top Russian officials suggest Moscow is generally in line — rhetorically at least — with U.S. calls for multilateral solutions to any territorial disputes in hotly disputed waters of the South China Sea, where Beijing has angered other countries in the region with aggressive sovereignty claims in recent months.

Russia Today also reported that the upcoming exercises mark the first time the Chinese Navy has taken part in a joint operation in the Sea of Japan, which borders North and South Korea and Russia, as well as Japan.

China's state-run Xinhua news service reported this week that seven Chinese warships had left the port of Qingdao for the Sea of Japan where they will join Russian counterparts for the upcoming nine days of exercises.

The drills will take place in the Peter the Great Gulf, waters off the Clerk Cape, and the Sea of Japan, according to Xinhua. Citing a "source close to the operation," the news services said the two nations will simulate anti-submarine combat and air defense and other relevant missions, including the joint beach landing of troops.

Six helicopters, five fixed-wing aircraft, 21 units of amphibious equipment and 200 marines are said to be preparing to join the exercise from the Chinese side, with the Russian navy reportedly planning to send 16 surface ships, two submarines, 12 naval aircraft, nine amphibious vehicles and 200 marines.

The drills "are not targeted at any third party and are not relevant to regional status-quo," the source was quoted as saying in the Xinhua report. "The drills are part of annual exchange program between Chinese and Russian militaries."

RUSSIA'S MiG-21 WOULD RIP APART AMERICA'S F-35

August 18, 2015 SpaceDaily.com reported: "America's much-touted fifth generation F-35 fighter jet is so bad it would be a sitting duck even for Russia's MiG-21, designed back in the 1950s, famed US aerospace engineer Pierre Sprey told Russian media on Friday.

"The F-35 is so bad it is absolutely hopeless when pitted against modern aircraft. In fact, it would be ripped to shreds even by the antiquated MiG-21," Sprey told RT, commenting on a recent expert report, which dismissed the F-35 project as a total failure.

The Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, described by US media as "a pure gold plane" for its exorbitant price tag, would find itself helpless in a dogfight with Russia's fourth-generation Su-27 and MiG-29 jets, Pierre Sprey said.

"The Su-27 and even the MiG-29 have bigger wing space, more powerful engines and carry more air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons... That's why the F-35 will be totally helpless against both because when you confront a plane, which is more maneuverable, accelerates faster and is better armed, then you are in trouble," he added.

Few people are as qualified to speak about fighter aircraft as Pierre Sprey. He is the co-designer of the F-16 Falcon jet and the A-10 Warthog tank buster, two of the most successful aircraft in the US Air Force.

In a report titled "Thunder Without Lightning: High Cost and Limited Benefit Development Program of F-35" and released by US non-profit organization National Security Network, analyst Bill French wrote that, according to the technical parameters, the F-35 is "losing to the fourth-generation fighter MiG-29 and Su-27, developed by the Russian Air Force and used around the world."

"The F-35 is significantly inferior to the Russian Su-27 and MiG-29 in regard to wing loading (exception - F35C), acceleration and thrust-weight ratio (the ratio of thrust to weight of the aircraft)," said the analyst.

Besides, all of the F-35s have significantly lower maximum speed as compared to the Soviet aircraft.

Mr. French also wrote that in a simulated air combat, the results drew an even "grimmer picture."

According to him, despite the superiority of the F-35 with regard to stealth technology and avionics, if compared to the Su-27 and MiG-29 the loss ratio is to be expected at 3:1. That is, for each destroyed Su-27 or MiG-29 there would be three F-35 destroyed.

The report said that the F-35 was only slightly better than the veteran F-16 and F-18 jets."

IRAN SAYS RUSSIA TO DELIVER S-300 MISSILES BY NEXT WEEK

August 18, 2015 Arutz Sheva reported: "A top Iranian official has said that Iran will sign a deal to purchase advanced S-300 missile systems from Russia by next week.

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan claimed Tehran and Moscow have already reached an agreement on the terms of the deal, and could even formalize the purchase as early as this week, according to Iran Students News Agency (ISNA).

'We will go to Russia next week to sign the deal and there is no barrier hindering the agreement,' following which the missiles will be transferred to Tehran, Dehghan said.

His comments confirm reports late last month that Russia was upgrading some elements of the S-300 system in preparation for an imminent delivery to Iran..."

IRANIAN, RUSSIAN WARSHIPS HOLD JOINT 'WAR GAMES'

August 17, 2015 Arutz Sheva reported: "Iranian and Russian warships took part in joint 'war games' training exercises on Tuesday in Iranian waters, giving clear expression to the military cooperation between the two states.

Commander of Iran's fleet in the Northern Gilan province Admiral Ahmad Reza Baqeri told Fars News Agency ahead of the war games that the Iranian destroyer Damavand and missile ships Joshan and Peikan took part in the drills, manned by 200 Iranian naval forces members.

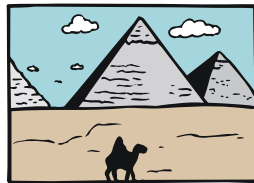
From the Russian side, the warships Volgodonsk and Makhachkala which docked in Anzali Port near the Caspian Sea on Sunday took part in the drills. After the drills the Russian ships are to depart Iranian waters and head for Azerbaijan, according to Baqeri.

Russian backing has been a key source of support for Iran; late last month a senior Russian official said the advanced S-300 anti-missile system is being upgraded prior to delivery to Iran.

Western pressure has until now delayed the sale of the advanced system, which experts say could prevent an airstrike on Iran's nuclear program, but Russia is showing signs it may transfer the weapon in any case – and Iran is preparing to unveil its own domestic version of the system in early September..."

EGYPT'S SISSI SIGNS ANTI-TERROR LAW

August 17, 2015 Voice of America News reported: "Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi signed a new anti-terrorism law Sunday that calls for the death penalty and life sentences for some offenses while also threatening hefty fines for 'false reporting' on terror attacks.



Sissi promised in June to strengthen Egypt's anti-terror laws after a bomb killed the country's top prosecutor. He blamed that attack on the Muslim Brotherhood, a group his government has labeled as a terrorist organization and cracked down upon since he led the ouster of Islamist President Mohamed Morsi in July 2013.

Under the new law, those who form or lead a terror group face punishment up to death. Financing terrorism can bring a life sentence, while inciting a terrorist act or preparing to incite an attack are also subject to prison terms.

For journalists, going against the official version of an attack can mean fines of between \$25,000 and \$64,000. The original draft of the law called for jailing journalists, but that portion was scrapped after an outcry from critics.

Amnesty International called the law 'draconian' and said it 'represents a flagrant attack on the rights of freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.'..."

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