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JORDANIAN KING: WORLD WILL 'PAY PRICE' IF DIRECT MIDEAST TALKS FAIL

September 5, 2010 Haaretz reported: "Jordanian King Abdullah II warned on Sunday that the entire world 'will pay the price' if the recently renewed direct talks between the Palestinians and Israelis fail.

A royal court statement said he made the remarks during a meeting with the chief editors of local newspapers, whom he briefed on his talks in Washington earlier this week with United States President Barack Obama, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Egyptian President Hosny Mubarak.

'The king cautioned that the failure of the negotiations will reflect negatively on all parties and that all states of the world and the region will pay the price, because the alternative will be more wars and conflicts,' the statement said.

The monarch also said that the direct talks, which were relaunched in Washington on Thursday, 'provide an opportunity for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict if the parties deal with the negotiations in a positive manner, so that all final status issues are addressed within the two-state vision.'..."

ABBAS: WE WILL NOT RECOGNIZE ISRAEL AS A JEWISH STATE

September 7, 2010 The Jerusalem Post reported: "Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas told interviewers that he would not recognize Israel as a Jewish state, Israel Radio reported on Tuesday. Abbas reportedly said that his position is no different from those Arafat present in previous negotiations, and that his staff is the same as Arafat's.

He also hinted that the PA may fall apart if there is no hope for a solution in the near future. He then repeated that the PA will not recognize Israel as a Jewish state."

JORDAN AND SYRIA CALL FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL ARAB LANDS

September 7, 2010 Haaretz reports: "Jordanian King Abdullah II and Syrian President Bashar Assad on Monday stressed the need for Israel to pull out from all Arab territories it occupied in the 1967 war, if peace with the Palestinians is to be achieved.

Abdullah made a whirlwind visit to Damascus to brief the Syrian leader on the outcome of his talks in Washington last week with United States President Barack Obama, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a royal court statement said.

The monarch had attended the six-way meeting on the eve of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians being relaunched Thursday.

Abdullah and Assad 'emphasized that resolving the Palestinian- Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state vision requires the regaining of all Arab rights in accordance with ... the Arab peace initiative,' the statement said.

The Arab peace initiative offered Israel recognition by all Arab states if it pulled out from all Arab territories it occupied in the 1967 Six-Day War, including East Jerusalem..."

IRAN DISMISSES UN REPORT CITING BOOST IN NUCLEAR WORK DESPITE SANCTIONS

September 6, 2010 Haaretz.com reported: "Iran's total production of low-enriched uranium has risen by around 15 percent since May to reach 2.8 tons, according to a United Nations nuclear watchdog report, showing Tehran is pushing ahead with disputed work despite tougher sanctions.

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the IAEA, said the report by new agency chief Yukiya Amano "has damaged the agency's technical reputation" and was "not balanced" compared to those of his predecessor, Mohamed ElBaradei.

He said all of Iran's nuclear activities were under the IAEA's "complete supervision," Mehr News Agency reported.

The confidential report, obtained by Reuters on Monday, said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remained concerned about possible activity in the Islamic Republic to develop a nuclear payload for a missile.

The White House called the findings "troubling" and said it showed Tehran was still trying to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

"The IAEA's latest report on Iran again demonstrates that Iran is refusing to comply with its international nuclear obligations, and continues its effort to expand its nuclear program and move closer to a nuclear weapons capability," White House spokesman Tommy Vietor said.

The IAEA also voiced concern in its report about what it called Iran's "repeated objection" to the agency's choice of inspectors working in the country, after Tehran barred two UN nuclear inspectors from entering in June.

"The agency rejects the basis upon which Iran has sought to justify its objection," the report said, also referring to earlier cases where Iran raised such objections.



"It is also concerned that the repeated objection to the designation of experienced inspectors hampers the inspection process and detracts from the agency's ability to implement safeguards in Iran," it added.

Western powers are likely to see the report's findings as backing up their suspicions that Tehran is seeking to build nuclear bombs and underlining the need for the country to enter serious negotiations to curb its nuclear program."

SOMALI REFUGEES TELL OF HELLISH SCENE IN MOGADISHU

September 9, 2010 The Associated Press reported: "Terrified Somalis fleeing an offensive by Islamist insurgents in their capital described a hellish scene of putrefying corpses, graves hastily dug in gardens and neighborhoods flattened by mortars. Some of the lucky ones who fled Mogadishu have arrived in refugee camps in neighboring Kenya, but poor families unable to take everyone faced agonizing choices over who could go and who must be left behind.



"This is the worst I have ever seen it," said 74-year-old Abdullahi Mohammed Salah, who lost three sons in the past five months to a mortar round and gunfire. "Before it was just bullets. Now they are launching mortars everywhere."

Despite nearly 20 years of warfare, Salah had never fled Mogadishu. But after losing his sons he bought bus tickets for himself, six grandchildren and a daughter-in-law. He couldn't afford to take all his relatives.

"We had to leave more than 20 behind," Salah said as he stroked his red hennaed beard. "I just brought the most vulnerable."

On Thursday, Mogadishu's airport was attacked. Suicide bombers set off a car bomb at the airport gates, allowing a second explosive-packed vehicle to speed toward the terminal in the chaos. At least 14 people were killed in the attack, claimed by the Islamist al-Shabab militia

Somalis who reached the swollen refugee camp at Dadaab this week say bodies are rotting in Mogadishu's streets and hospitals are overflowing, with wounded covering the floors and lying outside.

Salah and his family, who arrived at the camp Wednesday night after a three-day journey, spent the night sleeping in the open on the sand.

Located 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of the Somali border, Dadaab is one of the largest refugee camps in the world, with nearly 300,000 inhabitants living in a cramped area meant to house a third that many. About 6,500 Somalis arrived here in August alone."..."

REPORT: CASTRO SAYS CUBAN MODEL DOESN'T WORK

September 8, 2010 The Associated Press reported: "Fidel Castro told a visiting American journalist that Cuba's communist economic model doesn't work, a rare comment on domestic affairs from a man who has conspicuously steered clear of local issues since stepping down four years ago.

The fact that things are not working efficiently on this cash-strapped Caribbean island is hardly news. Fidel's brother Raul, the country's president, has said the same thing repeatedly. But the blunt assessment by the father of Cuba's 1959 revolution is sure to raise eyebrows.

Jeffrey Goldberg, a national correspondent for The Atlantic magazine, asked if Cuba's economic system was still worth exporting to other countries, and Castro replied: "The Cuban model doesn't even work for us anymore" Goldberg wrote Wednesday in a post on his Atlantic blog.

He said Castro made the comment casually over lunch following a long talk about the Middle East, and did not elaborate. The Cuban government had no immediate comment on Goldberg's account."..."

US LOSES GROUND IN COMPETITIVENESS REPORT

September 9, 2010 The AP reported: "The U.S. has slipped down the ranks of competitive economies, falling behind Sweden and Singapore due to huge deficits and pessimism about government, a global economic group said Thursday.

Switzerland retained the top spot for the second year in the annual ranking by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum. It combines economic data and a survey of more than 13,500 business executives. Sweden moved up to second place while Singapore stayed at No. 3. The United States was in second place last year after falling from No. 1 in 2008.

The WEF praised the United States for its innovative companies, excellent universities and flexible labor market. But it also cited huge deficits, rising government debt and declining public faith in politicians and corporate ethics.

"There has been a weakening of the United States' public and private institutions, as well as lingering concerns about the state of its financial markets," the group said. Mapping a clear strategy for exiting the huge U.S. stimulus "will be an important step in reinforcing the country's competitiveness," it said.

The report was released in Beijing ahead of a WEF-organized gathering of global business executives next week in neighboring Tianjin. The group is best known for its annual Davos meeting of corporate leaders.

The report ranks 139 countries by assessing business efficiency, innovation, financial markets, health, education, institutions, infrastructure and other factors"..."

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