

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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SMUGGLER'S PLOT HIGHLIGHTS FEAR OVER URANIUM

January 25, 2007 The International Herald Tribune reported: "Last January, a Russian man with sunken cheeks and a wispy mustache crossed into Georgia and traveled to Tbilisi by car along a high mountain road. In two plastic bags in his leather jacket, Georgian authorities say, he carried 100 grams of uranium so refined that it could help fuel an atom bomb.

The Russian, Oleg Khinsagov, had come to meet a buyer who he believed would pay him \$1 million and deliver the material to a Muslim man from "a serious organization," the authorities say.

The uranium was a sample, and the deal a test: If all went smoothly, he had boasted, he would sell a far larger cache stored in his apartment back in Vladikavkaz, two two three kilograms of the rare material, four and a half to six and a half pounds, which in expert hands is enough to make a small bomb.

The buyer, it turned out, was a Georgian agent. Alerted to Khinsagov's ambitions by spies in South Ossetia, Georgian officials arrested him, confiscated his merchandise and eventually turned it over to American officials for analysis. After a secret trial, the smuggler was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison.

The case of Khinsagov has alarmed Georgian and American officials because they had thought that an array of new security precautions had tamped down the nuclear black market that developed in the 1990s, after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Until now, all but the vague outlines of the case have remained secret. But an examination of the episode, and a similar one in 2003, suggests that the region's political instability and culture of rampant corruption continue to provide a fertile breeding ground for illicit commerce in atomic materials.

Interviews with Georgian and American officials, along with a review of confidential government documents, provide a glimpse into a world of smugglers who slip across poorly policed borders and the agents who try to stop them.

The illicit trade — not just in atomic goods but in everything from stolen cars to furs to counterfeit \$100 bills — thrives especially in Georgia, where tiny separatist regions have broken away to become lawless criminal havens. This latest uranium seizure, said the American ambassador here, John F. Tefft, "highlights how smuggling and loose border control associated with Georgia's separatist conflicts" pose a threat "not just to Georgia but to all the international community."

DEADLY STRAIN OF BIRD FLU CONFIRMED IN HUNGARY

January 25, 2007 The VOA News reported: "European Union officials have confirmed the first outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu in an EU country this year.

European Commission officials say laboratory tests have confirmed the presence of the deadly strain in geese found dead in Csongrad County in southeastern Hungary. They say tests were conducted because of an abnormally high mortality rate among the birds. Hungarian officials have slaughtered all 3,000 birds in the affected flock. They also have set up a three-kilometer protection zone and a 10-kilometer surveillance zone around the area.

The discovery is the first in an EU country since last August. EU experts are to meet Friday to review the situation.

Meanwhile, Croatia has banned poultry imports from Hungary following the announcement.

Bird flu has killed more than 150 people worldwide since 2003, mostly in Asia."

RUSSIA COMPLETES SAM DELIVERY TO IRAN

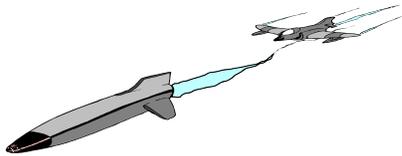
January 24, 2007 The Middle East Newsline reported: "Russia has confirmed the completion of anti-aircraft deliveries to Iran. A senior Russian official asserted that Moscow delivered all 29 TOR-M1 mobile, short-range surface-to-air missile systems to Iran in late December 2006. The official confirmed a previous statement by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, who reported that

the deliveries to Iran had been completed.

"Russia has fulfilled its contract obligations and fully completed deliveries of TOR-M1 air defense systems to Iran," Sergei Chemezov, the director of the state arms export agency Rosoboronexport, said on Tuesday. "The systems were delivered in late December of last year."

Chemezov confirmed the completion of the TOR-M1 deliveries during a visit to India. The Rosoboronexport chief was accompanying Ivanov in a tour of Bangalore, where Russia has offered India advanced MiG-35 fighter-jets as well as satellite cooperation."..."

REPORT: IRAN PLANNING NUCLEAR TEST WITH N. KOREAN ASSISTANCE



January 24, 2007 Haaretz.com reported: "North Korea is helping Iran prepare an underground nuclear test similar to the one Pyongyang carried out last year, the British newspaper the Daily Telegraph reported Wednesday.

Under the terms of a new understanding between the two countries, the Telegraph said, North Korea has agreed to share data and information derived from its test last October with Iran's nuclear scientists. The newspaper quoted a senior European defense official as saying North Korea had invited a team of Iranian nuclear scientists to study the results of North Korea's underground nuclear test to help Iran prepare its own test, possibly by the end of 2007.

According to the Telegraph, senior western military officials are concerned that North Korea's technical superiority will allow Iran to accelerate development of its nuclear weapon. The European defense official told the Daily Telegraph that "the Iranians are working closely with the North Koreans to study the results of last year's North Korean nuclear bomb test."

He added that increased activity has been identified in Iranian nuclear facilities since the beginning of 2007.

"All the indications are that the Iranians are working hard to prepare for their own underground nuclear test," the official told the Telegraph.

The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously on December 23 to impose sanctions on Iran's trade in sensitive nuclear materials and technology in an attempt to stop uranium enrichment work that could produce material that could be used in bombs."..."

GCC WOULD SUPPORT U.S. STRIKE ON IRAN

January 24, 2007 The Middle East Newline reported: "Gulf Cooperation Council states would support a U.S. strike to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons program. A report by the Dubai-based Gulf Research Center asserted that the six Gulf Arab states would not tolerate a nuclear Iran. The report said the GCC regards Iran as a bully that seeks to dominate the region.

"Teheran has to finally realize that if push comes to shove, if the choice is between an Iranian nuclear bomb and a U.S. military strike, then the Arab Gulf states have no choice but to quietly support the U.S.," the report, authored by international studies director Christian Koch, said.

GRC, which on Tuesday held a roundtable that included U.S. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, said Iran has rejection negotiations with the Gulf Arab states. The report cited Iran's military buildup in the Gulf and its refusal to negotiate the seizure of two islets from the United Arab Emirates."..."

U.S. SAID TO PLAN MAJOR STRIKE ON IRAN

January 22, 2007 The Middle East Newline reported: "The United States was said to be planning a major strike against Iran. A former U.S. intelligence analyst has asserted that the Bush administration has prepared options for a major strike against the Teheran regime. The analyst said the plans included a full-fledged war against Iran.

"I've seen some of the planning," Wayne White, a leading State Department analyst until 2005, said. "You're not talking about a surgical strike."

White, who served as deputy director for the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, addressed the Washington-based Middle East Policy Council on Jan. 19. He said the U.S. military was preparing to destroy most of Iran's arsenal in the Gulf."..."



ISRAEL FACES NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST WARNS GINGRICH

January 24, 2007 YnetNews.com reported: "The Israeli people are facing the threat of a nuclear Holocaust, former US Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich warned the Herzliya Conference held by the Institute for Policy and Strategy at IDC Herzliya on Tuesday afternoon. Meanwhile, he said, the United States could lose a few million people or a number of cities to a terrorist attack with weapons of mass destruction.

Gingrich, who addressed the conference via satellite from the United States, said he thought Israel's existence was under threat again for the first time in 40 years.

"Israel is in the greatest danger it has been in since 1967. Prior to '67, many wondered if Israel would survive. After '67, Israel seemed military dominant, despite the '73 war. I would say we are (now) back to question of survival," Gingrich said. He added that the United States could "lose two or three cities to nuclear weapons, or more than a million to biological weapons."

Gingrich added that in such a scenario, "freedom as we know it will disappear, and we will become a much grimmer, much more militarized, dictatorial society."

"Three nuclear weapons are a second Holocaust," Gingrich declared, adding: "People are greatly underestimating how dangerous the world is becoming. I'll repeat it, three nuclear weapons are a second Holocaust. Our enemies are quite explicit in their desire to destroy us. They say it publicly? We are sleepwalking through this process as though it's only a problem of communication," Gingrich said.

The former House speaker expressed concern that the Israeli and American political establishments were not fully equipped to take stock of the current threat level."..."

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