

PROPHETIC TIMES

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ISRAEL'S TECHNION LAUNCHES RAMJET ROCKET

May 11, 2006 The Middle East Newsline reported: "Students from Israel's leading technical institute have designed and launched an advanced rocket engine.

On Tuesday, Israel's Technion launched and operated the ramjet rocket, a solid-fuel platform meant to travel faster and for longer distances than standard rockets. The five-year student project, touted as a breakthrough in Israeli technology, was undertaken in cooperation with the state-owned Rafael, Israel Armament Development Authority.

"All of the systems worked exceptionally well," Alon Gany, a Technion professor and head of the project, said. "The launch was very smooth."

The two-stage hypersonic rocket, entitled Ramtech, was launched from the Israel Air Force base at Palmahim, south of Tel Aviv. The 3.7-meter-long rocket, which weighs 90 kilograms, underwent separation and the second-stage ramjet engine was operated. The rocket traveled 18 kilometers over the Mediterranean Sea..."

IRAN LETTER PRECURSOR TO WAR?

May 11, 2006 WorldNetDaily reported: "Some Middle East observers believe Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's letter to President Bush could be a precursor to war, based on a traditional Muslim pattern of offering acceptance of Islam before establishing it by force.

Robert Spencer, editor of Jihad Watch, says Ahmadinejad appears to be following the teachings of Muhammad, who gave specific instructions to followers as they engage in "holy war" against "those who disbelieve in Allah."

In a Hadith, regarded by Muslims as sacred writings about Muhammad, the Islamic prophet says a series of offers should be made to "enemies" to embrace Islam, or at least accept Islamic rule, and if they are rejected, "seek Allah's help and fight them."

In his letter, Ahmadinejad argues only Islam can "overcome the present problems of the world" and asks Bush, "Will you not accept this invitation? That is, a genuine return to the teachings of prophets, to monotheism and justice, to preserve human dignity and obedience to the Almighty and His prophets? Mr President, History tells us that repressive and cruel governments do not survive."

Another observer of Islam, journalist Stephen Adams, said the letter seems to parallel a missive from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden to Americans prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Interviewed on the Michael Medved radio show yesterday, Adams noted bin Laden stated his grievances against the United States and gave Americans the opportunity to "repent."

Based on precedent, Adams continued, he expects the next step will be for Iran to make the invitation public. Then the "crimes" of the U.S. will be published and the grievances will be cited at Friday prayers in mosques. Finally, comes a fatwa, amounting to a declaration of war. Adams, associate editor of Citizen magazine, said it's possible this scenario could unfold in a matter of weeks..."

KUWAIT SAID TO UNCOVER IRANIAN SPY RING

May 11, 2006 The Middle East Newsline reported: "Kuwait was said to have uncovered an Iranian espionage ring.

Kuwait newspapers reported that authorities discovered an Iranian spy network that was operating in the sheikdom. The media reports asserted that the Iranian network was monitoring U.S. and other military activities.

This was the first time Kuwait was reported to have found an Iranian espionage ring. Kuwait has a huge Shi'ite minority said to comprise about 45 percent of the sheikdom's population.

So far, five members of the Iranian network were reportedly arrested. The five were said to have been detained in early April, and newspaper reports said the suspects admitted to conducting reconnaissance of U.S. bases and areas used by American soldiers and civilians..."

EUROPEANS PREPARING 'CARROT AND STICK' APPROACH TO IRAN

May 10, 2006 VOA News reported: "European powers France, Germany and Britain are planning to offer Iran a fresh package of incentives for curbing its nuclear program. But, the European strategy would threaten sanctions should Iran refuse. British, French and German diplomats are said to be developing what is called a "carrot and stick" approach aimed at persuading Iran to halt its uranium enrichment program.

Word of the fresh initiative came after ministers of key U.N. Security Council nations and Germany failed to resolve differences over Iran strategy. Diplomats say the new initiative would postpone further consideration of a European-sponsored draft resolution that would legally require Tehran to give up its controversial nuclear activities.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the United States supports the European effort, and an earlier proposal by Russia, to help Iran achieve a civilian nuclear capability.

"The United States has long supported an effort by Russians, and efforts by the European Union to make available to the Iranian regime should they choose to do so, a way to fulfill aspirations for a civil nuclear program, and that is what is being discussed, is how that might be made available again," said Condoleezza Rice.

President Bush Tuesday reaffirmed that diplomacy remains the primary option in dealing with Iran. But he said the international community would isolate the Tehran government if it refuses to give up uranium enrichment.

Secretary Rice later attempted to reassure the Iranian people that efforts to prevent their government from gaining nuclear weapons were not aimed at them.

"I would just like to say to the people of Iran, obviously, if there is a way for Iran to accept the will of the international community, to accept proposals for civil nuclear power, this is the time for Iran to take that possibility, because no one wants to isolate the Iranian people," she said. "The Iranian regime is isolating the Iranian people. The international community is not doing so."

European diplomats on the Security Council say the carrot of incentives offered to Iran would be backed up by the stick of penalties if Iran refuses to halt its uranium enrichment."

But Russia and China expressed skepticism about the proposal. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov cautioned that any threat of penalties could backfire, and suggested it would be better to demand Iranian cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"I don't like terms like carrots and sticks, I prefer to speak about reasonable proposals which would show a positive alternative," said Sergei Lavrov. "Iran should cooperate with the IAEA Board of governors, and I'm convinced that if Iran cooperates, with the governing board of the IAEA and IAEA inspectors, as is required of Iran, this would be possible."

The Vienna-based IAEA has said it cannot confirm whether Iran's nuclear power program is entirely for peaceful purposes. The United States suspects the Tehran government is attempting to achieve a nuclear weapons capability, but Iran maintains its program is for civilian energy use."

WARLORD VIDEO MAY SIGNAL UPSURGE IN VIOLENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

May 6, 2006 The Voice of America News reported: "Security experts warn Afghan insurgents are intensifying their anti-government fight on several new fronts in the country. A powerful fugitive warlord in eastern Afghanistan released a new video this week pledging his support for al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and issuing a call to arms against U.S.-led coalition forces.

The video was aired on the Al Jazeera television network on Thursday. On the tape, Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar says he is ready and willing to join al-Qaida in its fight against so-called Western "infidels."

He pledged allegiance to terrorist Osama bin Laden and called on Islamic groups to help expel a U.S.-led coalition providing security for Afghanistan's fledging democratic government.

The fugitive leader twice served as Afghanistan's prime minister in the 1990s. He still heads the powerful Hizb-e-Islami, a militant Islamic party, which helped force the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan in the late 1980s.

U.S. officials describe him as a dangerous terrorist with significant influence over Afghanistan's eastern provinces. Security experts say his latest videotaped message could signal a dangerous new partnership between Hekmatyar in the east and Taleban insurgents in the south.

Samina Ahmed, Pakistan-based analyst for the International Crisis Group, says the alliance comes as NATO peacekeepers prepare to expand their role in both regions by the end of the year.

"And so what they are trying to do is to create tensions within NATO," said Samina Ahmed. "They are hitting out selectively at high profile targets, killing Canadian soldiers, in an attempt to dissuade NATO from maintaining a presence in the south and create problems in the NATO expansion to the east."

Washington plans on downsizing U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan from 19,000 to about 16,000 soldiers by the end of the year. At the same time, the separate NATO-led peacekeeping force is scheduled to grow to around 16,000 troops..."

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