

Media Analysis on Mideast Situation 2-7-10

Sunday, 07 February 2010

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The A-O Report:

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WAR WATCH

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As Of February 6, 2010

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Editor's Note: This page focuses on various news media outlet's providing articles analyzing the war tensions in the Middle East and prospects for some sort of military clash. Other pages on the website are dealing with geo-political developments and military movements/developments.

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Looming Regional War or Hot Air?

The Los Angeles Times newspaper raises the specter of war looming over the horizon in the Mideast. The newspaper notes that rumors of war have gained consideration since the beginning of the year when Iran rejected a UN compromise deal on Iran's nuclear program.

Middle East news outlets are awash with talk of war and the L.A. Times article notes this development and cites examples. The L.A. Times article is an important and worthwhile look at the developing situation in the Middle East. To read their analysis - [LINK HERE](#).

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Arab Newspaper Asks:

Is Israel Bracing for War?

The Khaleej Times newspaper in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has posted an article speculating on the possibilities for a regional war in the Middle East.

The newspaper states:

"It is feared that the next outbreak of conflict is likely to escalate into a regional war. With the situation in Iraq still fragile and Iran undecided on how to play its cards vis-a-vis its nuclear programme, a conflagration at this juncture is dangerous, to say the least."

Read the Khaleej Times entire article and assessment of the situation. [LINK HERE.](#)

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One View from Israel

No War in 2010

US Waits Til 2011

An Israeli Op-Ed article indicates that Israel is not ready to attack Iran until

#1. IDF Commanders Can Guarantee Strike Success

#2. Israel's Political Leadership is Politically Stronger

#3. The US Approves a Strike

The article, published by Israel's Haaretz Newspaper cites US military officials who've quietly indicated that White House wants to wait until after the mid-term elections in November of 2010. This means that President Obama will wait until 2011 before agreeing to allow Israel to strike Iran. Obama wants to get American military forces squared away in the region before any military action with Iran.

The Haaretz article may be indicative of US and Israeli strategy to wait or it may be a smokescreen article intended to put Iran and its allies, off-guard for an impending Israeli strike. We tend to suspect the article's purpose is to reflect the former rather than the latter. It bears in mind that the prospects for war may not rest with America and Israel, but rather with Iran. There remains a lot of intelligence chatter and indications to suggest that Iran may order its proxy forces, Hezbollah and Hamas to launch attacks against Israel sometime in 2010. If this is so, then the Haaretz article has little import as to what will pan out for the year.

To read the Haaretz article, "Holding Fire" -- [LINK HERE](#).

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What's Behind the War Jitters?

Tensions are running high as Israel and her neighbors exchange a war of words. The saber-rattling from both sides is part of the relentless psychological war between the two bitter foes, and shows that tensions continue to exist despite the fact that the border between them has experienced its longest period of calm in more than four decades. The United Nations peacekeeping force in south Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, says there is no indication that another war is

imminent.

Read an analysis of the situation from The Christian Science Monitor - [LINK HERE](#).

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Jerusalem Post Op-Ed

The Next War

A regional war may well be approaching. The actions and statements of Iran and its Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian proxies over the past week or so indicate that this is what Israel's enemies are gunning for.

In preparing for this growing threat, Israel's leaders need to consider more than just the military challenges it faces. They must consider the political actors at home and abroad that limit the IDF's ability to fight to victory and develop strategies for neutralizing those actors.

The latest developments are menacing. Last Saturday, Iran's unelected president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad threatened to open up a new round of hostilities on February 11. Then Wednesday, Iran launched a new missile into space. Israeli and US missile experts claim that the missile launch signals that Iran is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles and building the capacity to launch nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles.

Following the missile launch, Syria's president and foreign minister issued incendiary comments threatening Israel with war. Notably, they did so the same day the US informed Syria of its intention to send an ambassador to Damascus for the first time in five years.

Hamas, for its part, sent barrels of explosives drifting to the Israeli coastline – exposing new ways it can kill us. And Fatah, for its part, decided to kiss Hamas's ring this week. Senior Fatah official Nabil Shaath's obsequious visit to Gaza Wednesday was a graphic demonstration of Hamas's preeminence in Palestinian society.

Then there is Hizbullah. In a speech on January 15, Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah pledged that the next war will "change the face of the region."

This may not be an exaggeration. It isn't simply that under the blind eye of UN peacekeepers Hizbullah has replenished and expanded its arsenal to include long-range missiles. It isn't simply that in the three and half years since the war Hizbullah has taken control over the Lebanese government. Hizbullah has also built up a formidable ground force. In the event of war, these forces may be deployed as an expeditionary force inside northern Israel.

There is much more to this article - as the Post continues on to describe the political situation in Israel and the risks involved in a military conflict. [LINK HERE](#).

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Tension With Syria Could

Turn Into Instant War

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