

Mideast Military Developments 2-7-10

Sunday, 07 February 2010

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The Alpha-Omega Report

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War Watch Coverage

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Through February 7, 2010

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Editor's Note: This page contains news relating to the latest military developments in the Mideast as heightened tensions suggest a possible outbreak of military hostilities perhaps this week. We have separate pages covering the diplomatic angles and news media analysis of the situation.

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Syria On HIGH ALERT

Lebanese Daily: Syria Will Respond If Israel Attacks Hizbullah

An article in the Lebanese daily Al-Safir, which is close to Syria, stated that the Syrian army is today on military alert, making it possible for Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Al-Mu'alem to threaten Israel with war. It added that Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad has reinforced the army with missiles and land capabilities.

The paper said that Syria would also become involved in a war in the event that Israel attacked Hizbullah, not it directly – but that Syria and Hizbullah do not expect such a war any time soon.

Ibrahim Al-Amin, chairman of the board of directors of the Lebanese daily Al-Akhbar, which is close to Syria, said that Al-Mu'alem's threat to Israel was not a response to statements by Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, but that it expressed the assessment that Israel wants to attack Syria for its support of the resistance and that it was a message that any such attack would spark conflict that would go beyond its local dimensions.

The Saudi daily Al-Watan stated that the Arabs are realizing that concessions to Israel have been disappointing, and that they must examine whether they have made a mistake by abandoning the option of the rifle. [LINK HERE](#).

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Hezbollah Raises Alert Level

Hezbollah has raised the alert level among its fighters, Saudi newspaper Okaz reported Saturday, citing Lebanese sources.

According to the report, the Shiite group's leaders were instructed to take precautionary measures for fear of an Israeli strike.

The Lebanese sources told the newspaper Hezbollah believes the chances of an Israeli attack have increased in light of the belligerent back and forth between Israel and Syria.

For the most part, Hezbollah has so far refrained from directly addressing the war of words between Jerusalem and Damascus.

Also on Saturday, Syria's state-run Tishreen newspaper published an editorial saying that Damascus believes the recent threats made by Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman reflect the Israeli government's intention to wage new wars in the Middle East.

More details, [LINK HERE](#).

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Israel Dispatches 2 Warships

To Persian Gulf Via Suez Canal

Two Israeli missile boats reportedly passed through the Suez Canal Thursday morning, according to Arab media reports over the weekend.

Egyptian authorities reportedly adopted strict security measures to ensure the ships' safety. According to the reports, the two Navy ships traveled through the canal en route to the Red Sea.

The sources did not provide the exact ultimate destination of the missile boats. However, Egyptian maritime sources quoted in the Arab media estimated that both ships were headed to the Persian Gulf and may reach it within four days. The veracity of these estimates is unclear.

The sail through the Suez Canal was coordinated with Egyptian authorities, which reportedly adopted strict security arrangements to ensure the safe passage of the two Israeli ships. According to Arab media, Egyptian forces prevented any vessels from passing through the Canal and also stopped the vehicular traffic on the road leading to it.

According to the reports, one Israeli missile boat already passed through the Suez Canal in June and July of last year. In one case, the Israeli ship was said to have been accompanied by an Israeli submarine.

Last week, Egyptian newspaper al-Shuruq reported that the US has been holding extensive maneuvers in the Persian Gulf, including some across Iran's shores. The report was based on information provided by senior Egyptian sources.

In addition, the newspaper reported that Israeli vessels have been mapping the Persian Gulf's waters in the past six

months in cooperation with American forces belonging to the Fifth Fleet. However, it appears the report regarding Israel was baseless, and that it was leaked in an attempt to gauge Jerusalem's response. Story confirmation, [LINK HERE](#)

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Israel's Rocket Shield

Not Going to Gaza Front

Israel's new rocket-interceptor system will not be deployed near the Gaza Strip as expected but kept on standby, possibly to counter attacks from the north by Lebanese Hezbollah should conflict erupt with its backer, Iran.

News this week on deployment of "Iron Dome," a short-range system to be ready by June, disappointed Israelis in southern towns who hoped it would be set up to protect them from rockets fired by Gaza's Islamist Hamas fighters.

Read the full story from Reuters - [LINK HERE](#).

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US Intel: Iranian Missiles Nuke Capable

U.S. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair told Congress on Tuesday (2-2-10) that Iran has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East and that it continues to improve and increase the amount of its ballistic missile forces.

Blair also said that many of Iran's missiles are capable of carrying a nuclear payload. More details, [LINK HERE](#).

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Russia To Sell AA Missiles To Iran

Iran's ambassador to Russia says Moscow has guaranteed that it will deliver the S-300 missile defense system to Iran.

"Iran is ready to receive this system and our Russian colleagues have assured us that they will meet their obligations," Ambassador Seyyed Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi said at a press conference at the main office of RIA Novosti in Moscow on Thursday.

"Several technical issues [in the contract's implementation] have emerged, and we hope they will be resolved soon," the diplomat said without giving details about the problems.

The S-300 system, which can track targets and fire at aircraft 120 kilometers (75 miles) away, features high jamming immunity and is able to simultaneously engage up to 100 targets.

Russia and Iran have signed a deal for the sale and delivery of the missile system. [LINK HERE](#). See also Tehran coverage - [LINK HERE](#).

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Report: Ex-Soviet Scientist Helped

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Iran on Nuclear Development

Berlin - A foreigner alleged to have helped Iran towards developing nuclear weapons is from the former Soviet Union, according to a report in a German newspaper, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung, on Friday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has already mentioned the employment of a foreigner in the nuclear programme. The crisis has put Teheran at loggerheads with the international community.

Quoting a new IAEA summary, the Sueddeutsche said the scientist had previously worked in a Soviet nuclear weapons laboratory on advanced warheads. It said both western intelligence services and diplomats had confirmed the connection.

The newspaper added that Iran was trying to make a nuclear weapon small enough to fit into one of its Shahab 3 medium-range missiles and was designing a so-called two-point implosion system, which requires only two simultaneously exploding detonators to trigger a nuclear blast.

The former Soviet scientist was an expert on the high-speed cameras needed to test if both detonations were symmetrical, and had worked for Iran from the mid-1990s till 2000

Read more- [LINK HERE](#).

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Iran To Unveil 5 Space Projects

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Iran Launches Animals Into Space

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Launch Demonstrates Military Capabilities

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Tension With Syria Could

Turn Into Instant War

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Iran Begins High Grade Enrichment

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Sunday, February 7, ordered the Iranian nuclear program to begin high-grade uranium enrichment processing. The new higher grade processing could begin to stockpile uranium for weapons-grade material for nuclear weapons.

The go-ahead for high-grade production comes just after the Western powers turned down a last minute Iranian counter-compromise offer. The move to higher grade enrichment is a "red-line" which Israeli authorities have said Israel could not and would not tolerate. It remains to be seen what kind of response Israel will take to this latest Iranian move.

The Iranian move also violates 5 UN Security Council resolutions, but China and Russia continue to resist the call from America for a new round of punishing sanctions against Iran.

For more details, [LINK HERE](#). Still more details, from the BBC, [LINK HERE](#).

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