



# PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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## IRAN TESTS MISSILE CAPABLE OF HITTING ISRAEL

**August 12, 2004** Reuter=s reported: AIran's defense ministry said on Wednesday it had carried out a field test of the latest version of its Shahab-3 medium-range ballistic missile which defense experts say can reach Israel or U.S. bases in the Gulf. Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani said last week Iran was working on improvements to the range and accuracy of the Shahab-3 in response to Israel's moves to boost its anti-missile capability.

A defense ministry spokesman confirmed a state television report that the test was carried out "to assess the latest developments implemented on this missile." He declined to give any further details. Iran says its missile program is purely for deterrent purposes. Tehran also denies U.S. and Israeli accusations that it is seeking to develop nuclear warheads which could be delivered by the Shahab-3.

Based on the North Korean Nodong-1 and modified with Russian technology, the Shahab-3 is thought to have a range of 810 miles which would allow it to strike anywhere in Israel. Shahab means meteor in Persian.

Amid media speculation that Israel may try to halt Iran's nuclear program by carrying out air strikes on some atomic facilities in Iran, Iranian officials have said Tehran would retaliate promptly and strongly to any such attack.≡

## SCIENTISTS GIVEN CLONING GO-AHEAD

**August 12, 2004** The BBC News reported: ABritish scientists have been given permission to perform therapeutic cloning using human embryos for the first time. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority granted the licence to experts at the University of Newcastle.

They are investigating new treatments for conditions including diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. The controversial decision could open a new era of research by scientists looking for remedies for diseases. The research will take place at the International Centre for Life in Newcastle, involving experts from the Institute of Human Genetics at Newcastle University, and the Newcastle Fertility Centre.

Scientists there believe this is the first time such a licence has been granted in any European country. They warn it will be at least five years - if not many more - before patients could receive stem cell treatments based on their work.

But the ProLife Party has said it is considering mounting a legal challenge against the HFEA's decision to allow the research to go ahead. ..≡

## IRAN SAID TO BE ARMING MAHDI ARMY

**August 11, 2004** The Middle East Newsline reported: AIraq has accused Iran of arming the Shi'ite insurgency. The interim government in Baghdad said Teheran has been sending a range of weapons to the Mahdi Army, headed by Shi'ite cleric Moqtada Sadr. Officials said Iran has ignored numerous Iraqi appeals to halt the weapons flow to Shi'ite insurgents.

"There are Iranian-made weapons that have been found in the hands of criminals in Najaf who received these weapons from across the Iranian border," Iraqi Defense Minister Hazem Shaalan said. "From far and near, the facts that we have say that what has happened to the Iraqi people is done by the one regarded as the chief enemy."

Shaalan's remarks, made during an interview with the Dubai-based Al Arabiya satellite channel, was the latest in a litany of accusations by Baghdad against Teheran. Iraqi officials said Teheran has also sent thousands of operatives to Iraq to foment unrest and support the Shi'ite and Sunni insurgency.≡

## INTERNATIONAL PANEL WARNS OF DEADLIER BIRD FLU VIRUS

**August 11, 2004** The Voice of America reported: AAn international team of scientists is warning that a lesser-known strain of bird flu common among poultry in Asia is becoming deadlier and could mutate into a virus that kills humans.



The panel of U.S. and Hong Kong scientists issued a study paper Tuesday saying the so-called H9N2 virus is more widespread than the strain that ravaged poultry farms in the region earlier this year, killing 24 people. They said the lesser-known strain has a greater likelihood of passing between species, including humans.

In their report, the experts said tests performed on samples from Hong Kong poultry found that the H9N2 strain has already mixed with other strains. They said this indicates an increasing chance of mutation with

a human virus. A

### IRAN'S BUSHEHR IS 90% READY

**August 10, 2004** The Middle East Newslite reported: A Russia has completed more than 90 percent of the Bushehr nuclear reactor in Iran. Russian officials said Moscow has accelerated work on the Bushehr power reactor. They said 1,500 Russian nationals and personnel from the former Soviet Union were sent to Iran to complete the \$1 billion nuclear project.

So far, officials said, Russia has completed procurement for Bushehr. They said the remaining work includes the assembly of the equipment, systems integration and preparing for operations.

"By now, the first power unit of the Bushehr nuclear station is 90 percent ready," a Russian Atomic Agency official told the Moscow-based Tass news agency. "All heavy equipment, including the reactor, has been brought and assembled at the station building."

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### US LOOKING AT OPTIONS ON IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

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**August 9, 2004** The Voice of America reported: A The White House says it will continue to rely on international diplomatic pressure to deal with Iran's nuclear intentions. White House National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice says diplomacy is still the first choice.

"The United States has been very actively and aggressively involved in a diplomatic strategy to try and deal with threats of nuclear weapons development in Iran and North Korea," she said.

She says the international community is beginning to respond to American concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions, noting the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency is involved. On North Korea, she points to the creation of six-party talks with strong participation from China. "These are tough problems. These are problems that developed in the 1990's. These are problems that we have been working on," said Ms. Rice. "And we will use many means to try and disrupt these programs."

During an appearance on the NBC television program, Meet the Press, Ms. Rice was asked about the possibility of covert action to disrupt Iran's nuclear program.

The question stemmed from a front page story in Sunday's New York Times, which quotes unnamed administration and intelligence officials as saying the diplomatic approach has had little impact. The Times says these officials believe the time is right to intensify covert efforts in Iran.

Condoleezza Rice did not specifically address the possible use of covert activity. She did, however, stress both the administration's reliance on diplomacy, and its willingness to look at other options if necessary.≡

### EUROPEAN TEAM TO OBSERVE US ELECTION

**August 9, 2004** The EUobserver reported: A The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will monitor the US election on 2 November. It will be the first time such a team has been present for a US presidential election.

Thirteen Democratic members of the House of Representatives had requested UN monitors for this year's presidential elections in an effort to avoid possible voting irregularities that plagued the 2000 election, the closest in history. In a letter to the 13 Democrats, Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kelly did not mention their request for UN observers but said the United States had already invited the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to observe the 2004 presidential elections.

The OSCE, based in Vienna, Austria, has sent more than 10,000 personnel to monitor more than 150 elections and referenda in more than 30 countries during the past decade, spokeswoman Urdur Gunnarsdottir told CNN. She also said the observer team would go to the US in September to plan how to monitor the election, including how many observers to send and where to deploy them.

The OSCE is the largest regional security organisation in the world with 55 participating States from Europe, Central Asia and North America. OSCE members, including the United States, agreed in 1990 in Copenhagen to allow fellow members to observe elections in one another's countries. In November 2002, the organisation sent 10 observers on a week-long mission to monitor the US midterm elections...≡

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