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IRAN RECRUITS 'HUMAN SHIELD' FOR NUCLEAR REACTOR

September 9, 2004 The Jerusalem Post reported: Alran is seeking volunteers to act as a massive human shield around Iran's nuclear reactor in case of a military attack against the facility.

About two weeks ago Iran announced its plans build more nuclear power plants with Russian help in the southern port city of Bushehr, ignoring US and Israeli concerns that by-products from the plants could be used to manufacture atomic bombs. The US and Israel strongly suspect Iran of seeking nuclear weapons, but Iran has consistently denied the charges.

The Committee for the Commemoration of Martyrs of the Global Islamic Campaign is organizing the human shield campaign to protect Bushehr reactor, the Sydney Morning Herald reported Wednesday. According to a spokesman for the group, 25,000 people have already signed up to participate in the shield campaign, Army Radio reported.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami continues to insist that Iran's nuclear program is geared only toward the production of electricity. Iran's Nuclear Energy Council has decided the country needs to produce 7,000 megawatts of electricity through nuclear power plants by 2021 to meet Iran's increasing electricity demands.

Khatami issued a "guarantee" not to seek atomic weapons, and warned Washington that it can't stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan without Teheran's help.

Iran began assembly of an "army of martyrs" in June, recruited by The Committee for the Commemoration of Martyrs of the Global Islamic Campaign. In the first week of its June campaign, officials of the group said 10,000 young volunteers registered for "martyrdom operations" against Israel and US forces in Iraq.

Iran has also issued threats in the past, including one in the past month, that it would destroy Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor if the Jewish state were to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

"If Israel fires a missile into the Bushehr nuclear power plant, it has to say goodbye forever to its Dimona nuclear facility, where it produces and stockpiles nuclear weapons," said the deputy chief of the elite Revolutionary Guards, Brig.-Gen. Muhammad Baqer Zolqadr, in a statement a month ago.≡

HAMAS LEADERS FLEE SYRIA

September 8, 2004 The Middle East Newslite: A Hamas leaders have fled their headquarters in Syria for neighboring Lebanon as Israel carried out a major strike against the insurgency group.

Israeli and Arab diplomatic sources said Hamas leaders left Damascus last week in wake of the double suicide-bombing in the Israeli city of Beersheba on Aug. 31. Sixteen Israelis were killed in the bombings of commuter buses in which Hamas claimed responsibility.

"This is apparently correct," Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said. "I can't go into details. But it's good that they know that our reach is long."

Overnight Tuesday, Israeli combat helicopters fired missiles toward a suspected Hamas training facility in Gaza City. Palestinian sources said 14 Hamas operatives were killed and another 45 were injured.≡

U.S. ARMY WORKS ON LIQUID BODY ARMOR

September 8, 2004 The Middle East Newslite reported: AThe United States has been developing liquid body armor meant to facilitate the mobility of soldiers.

The U.S. Army Research Laboratory has been developing liquid armor for Kevlar vests to ensure a light and flexible armor. Officials said the program fulfills a need for body armor that would not hinder a soldier from running or aiming his weapon.

The key to the research is a fluid called shear thickening fluid, or STF. Termed as the key component of liquid armor, STF is composed of hard particles suspended in a non-toxic liquid, polyethylene glycol.

STF also contains hard nano-particles of silica that comprise the other components of STF. The STF remains a liquid until a bullet or fragment strikes the vest. This would allow for vests that can protect the lower part of the body.≡

US WANTS SECURITY COUNCIL TO TAKE UP ISSUE OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

[September 8, 2004](#) The Voice of America reported: A Secretary of State Colin Powell Tuesday reaffirmed the United States' intention to try to get the issue of Iran's nuclear program referred to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions. The International Atomic Energy Agency begins a critical meeting on the matter next week in Vienna.

Iran has floated the idea this week that it might suspend production and testing of centrifuges for enriching uranium as a gesture to the international community.

But at an impromptu news conference here, Mr. Powell made clear the Bush administration is unimpressed and will seek a referral to the Security Council when the 35-member IAEA board of governors convenes September 13.

Mr. Powell said the United States was prepared to recommend a referral a year ago, and only accepted a delay to give the IAEA and the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany another chance to persuade Iran to come clean with its nuclear activities.

"They have been working on that for the last, almost a year," he said. "And unfortunately I don't think the response from Iran has been very positive or constructive, either to what the EU-Three commitments were, or to the IAEA. We believe that we have seen enough, that action is warranted, and the IAEA should refer the matter to the Security Council at its upcoming meeting next week."

Mr. Powell said it remains to be seen whether the IAEA board, which normally operates by consensus, will follow the U.S. lead and recommend a referral. He noted that the board also plans a follow-on meeting in November.

Iran has in the past threatened to break off cooperation with the IAEA if the governors sought a referral. While Iran insists that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful, the United States has long held that it has a covert weapons component.≡

ARAB NATIONALS PART OF CHECHEN FORCE

[September 7, 2004](#) The Middle East Newsline reported: A Arab operatives linked to Al Qaida have been identified as playing a major role in the takeover of a Russian school in which 400 people were killed.

Russian officials said authorities have determined that nationals from several Arab countries comprised 10 of the 32 suicide attackers who took over a high school in Beslan in North Ossetia last week. Most of the attackers were Chechens and Ingush.

The 10 Arab nationals came from Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria, officials said. They said security forces seized notebooks in Arabic in the school taken over by insurgents. Officials said survivors told authorities that some of the captors spoke Arabic during the three-day hostage ordeal. All of the captors were said to have been killed, but three accomplices were arrested, officials said.

"We're hoping to release additional information over the next few days," an official said. "But precise details will require cooperation from our allies."

EU CRITICIZES ISRAELI THREATS AGAINST SYRIA

[September 4, 2004](#) The Voice of America reported: A European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana has criticized an Israeli threat against Syria following Palestinian suicide bombings Tuesday that killed 16 people.

Mr. Solana said in Valkenburg, Netherlands, Friday he does not think its helpful to start talking about attacking other countries. He said the situation in the Middle East is complicated enough already.

Mr. Solana was responding to remarks by Israeli officials that they would hold Syria responsible for attacks in Israel by the militant group Hamas.

Hamas claimed to have carried out Tuesday's suicide bombings, and has offices in Syria.≡

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