



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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IRANIAN GENERAL STEPS OUT OF THE SHADOWS

December 7, 2011 SpaceDaily.com reported: Maj. Gen. Qassem Suleimani, commander of the covert action wing of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps, is stepping out of the shadows as a leading hard-liner, and as tension with the United States heats up, that's a really bad sign.

There is a school of thought among Iran-watchers that Tehran believes the United States and Israel, backed by Britain, are gearing up for a showdown with the Islamic Republic.

The Iranians, several seasoned analysts say, are getting ready for trouble as hard-line conservatives in the ruling elite demonstrated when they stormed and sacked the British Embassy in Tehran Nov. 29.

Some of the so-called students who swarmed over the embassy walls carried portraits of Suleimani, underlining his growing iconic status among the radicals, and more importantly in the Revolutionary Guard, one of the regime's most powerful institutions. That indicated the "students" were probably members of the Quds Force and the paramilitary Basij organization, the regime's strong-arm force, which it controls.

Until recently, Suleimani was known as "the invisible general" because he worked from the shadows, conducting clandestine operations, including assassinations, against Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan. His forces are also operating in Syria and Lebanon and fomenting trouble in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. administration says the al-Quds Force was behind the alleged plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in Washington. Now he's taking a higher profile."...

The Iranians' mindset that a collision is just a matter of time stems, in part at least, from a hard-line policy speech given by U.S. national security adviser Tom Donilon in Washington recently, says veteran analyst M.K. Bhadrakumar."..."We have enhanced our significant and enduring U.S. force presence in the region," Donilon declared.

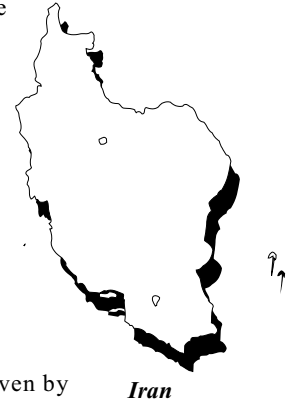
"In addition, we have worked to develop a network of air and missile defenses, shared early warning, improved maritime security, closer counter-terrorism cooperation, expanded the programs to build partner capacity, and increased efforts to harden and protect our partners' critical infrastructure.

"The steps demonstrate unmistakably to Tehran that any attempt to dominate the region will be futile. And they show the United States is prepared for any contingency. A..."

"President Obama has said as recently as last week, we are not taking any options off the table in pursuit of our basic objectives."

Bhadrakumar observed that "in the Iranian estimation, Obama is simply not interested in hearing Iran's narrative. His obsessive concern is his 2012 re-election bid."

The analyst, noting the "amazing degree of belligerence" in Donilon's speech, said Tehran believes the showdown "may take place within Obama's first term as president -- because it may well ensure the success of his bid for a second term."



CHINA'S HU URGES NAVY TO PREPARE FOR COMBAT

December 7, 2011 AFP reports: "Chinese President Hu Jintao on Tuesday urged the navy to prepare for military combat, amid growing regional tensions over maritime disputes and a US campaign to assert itself as a Pacific power.

The navy should 'accelerate its transformation and modernisation in a sturdy way, and make extended preparations for military combat in order to make greater contributions to safeguard national security,' he said.

Addressing the powerful Central Military Commission, Hu said: 'Our work must closely encircle the main theme of national defence and military building.'

His comments, which were posted in a statement on a government website, come as the United States and Beijing's neighbours have expressed concerns over its naval ambitions, particularly in the South China Sea..."

US NAVY STILL ECLIPSES CHINA'S EXPANDED FORCE

December 7, 2011 AFP reported: "China's navy has hundreds of vessels at its disposal, among them nuclear submarines and an aircraft carrier, but it still does not come close to the huge naval firepower wielded by the United States. Chinese President Hu Jintao called Tuesday for the country's navy to "make extended preparations for military combat", further fuelling fears over Beijing's ambitions in the highly strategic maritime area that surrounds it.

The United States, which recently reasserted its role as a Pacific power and said it will post troops in Australia, responded by saying China had the right to develop its military capabilities, but should do so "transparently".

China maintains a high level of secrecy around its People's Liberation Army, the largest armed force in the world with an estimated 2.3 million troops. Around 300,000 of those are thought to serve in the navy, which comprises three fleets and has around 30 large missile destroyers, half a dozen nuclear-powered attack submarines and a small number of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines. This year it unveiled its first aircraft carrier, a 300-metre-long (990-foot) former Soviet naval vessel that had its first sea trial on August 10.

By contrast, India -- another major military power in the region -- has around 132 warships, including an aircraft carrier, and 16 submarines, one of which is a nuclear submarine undergoing sea trials.

Earlier this year, the Pentagon warned that the PLA -- still primarily a land force -- was increasingly focused on its naval power and had invested in high-tech weaponry that would extend its reach in the Pacific and beyond. Nevertheless, experts say China's naval capability pales in comparison with America's huge and technically highly sophisticated maritime force.

The US Pacific fleet is the country's largest, with 79 ships and submarines off America's west coast, 29 in Hawaii, 19 in Japan and four in the Pacific territory of Guam. Six of America's 11 aircraft carriers have their base in the Pacific, including the USS George Washington, which is docked at the Yokosuka naval base in Japan. At any given point, there are around 50 US naval ships in the west Pacific.

America's huge naval operations combined with its geopolitical alliances in the region have enabled it to contain China within what is known as a "brown water navy". "..."

NORTH KOREA MAKING MISSILE ABLE TO HIT U.S

December 6, 2011 The Washington Times reported: "New intelligence indicates that North Korea is moving ahead with building its first road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, an easily hidden weapon capable of hitting the United States, according to Obama administration officials. The intelligence was revealed in a classified Capitol Hill briefing last month. Its existence was made public in a letter to Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta from five House Republicans.

"As members of the House Armed Services subcommittee on strategic forces ..., we write out of concerns about new intelligence concerning foreign developments in long-range ballistic missile development, specifically ballistic missiles capable of attacking the United States," the Nov. 17 letter said.

"We believe this new intelligence reiterates the need for the administration to correct its priorities regarding missile defenses, which should have, first and foremost, the missile defense of the homeland."

Officials familiar with the intelligence said government analysts believe the missile could be a variant of North Korea's new Musudan intermediate-range missile, first disclosed publicly in October 2010. Other intelligence indicates that the new ICBM may be under development at a huge missile testing facility on North Korea's western coast.

Prior to its mobile ICBM, North Korea's long-range missiles were the pad-launched Taepodong-1 prototype, and the Taepodong-2 (TD-2) dual-use ICBM and space launcher. The TD-2 was test-launched in April 2009. "..."

UAE LEADER: ISRAEL WOULD DESTROY IRAN IF ATTACKED

December 6, 2011 Haaretz reported: "Haaretz reports: "The prime minister of the United Arab Emirates has rejected the threat of a nuclear Iran, saying that if Tehran were to attack Israel, it would be destroyed the next day.

In an interview with CNN, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, the absolute monarch of Dubai, said that he does not think Iran would develop a nuclear weapon since it would be of little use to it.

'What can Iran do with a nuclear weapon?' al-Maktoum asked CNN. 'For example, will they hit Israel? How many Palestinians will die? And if you think Iran hits Israel, their cities will be safe? They will be gone the next day.' ..."

OBAMA BACKS PLAN B DECISION

December 8, 2011 UPI.com reported: "U.S. President Obama said he backs a decision against selling the morning-after birth control pill over the counter to girls younger than 17.

"I did not get involved in the process," Obama said Thursday during a brief news conference at the White House. "I will say this, as the father of two daughters, I think it is important for us to make sure that we apply some common sense to various rules when it comes to over-the-counter medicine."

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius Wednesday overruled the Food and Drug Administration, saying there were too many questions about the safety of the so-called "Plan B" morning-after pill for girls who can conceive as young as 10 or 11 years old. Plan B will remain available for girls age 17 and older without prescription, but girls under the age of 17 will need a prescription. Plan B can prevent pregnancy if taken within three days of having unprotected sex.

He said Sebelius decided Plan B should not be available "alongside bubble gum or batteries" because of the potentially adverse side effects if not used properly.

"[The] question is: Can we have confidence that they [girls under 17] would potentially use Plan B properly," Obama said, explaining that, in Sebelius' judgment, there wasn't enough evidence."

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