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IRAN'S MILITARY PLANS FOR INVASION BY U.S.

May 31, 2006 The Washington Post reported: "Iran, apparently anticipating an American invasion, has quietly been restructuring its military and testing a new military doctrine that calls for a decentralized, Iraqi-style guerrilla campaign against an invading force.

Iran's military planners are acutely aware that a military confrontation with technologically more advanced U.S. armed forces would be rapid and multifronted, unlike the static and slow-paced 1980-88 war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Therefore, a series of war games have been carried out since late last year to test the army's readiness.

In December, more than 15,000 members of the regular armed forces participated in an exercise in northwestern Iran's strategically sensitive Azerbaijan border provinces that focused on irregular warfare carried out by highly mobile army units, according to the official MENA news agency.

A second exercise was conducted in the majority-Arab province of Khuzestan in September, according to the Iranian press, aimed at quelling insurgencies in areas subject to ethnic unrest and prone to foreign influence.

Involving a reported 100,000 troops, the exercise provided an example of how the Islamic Republic would respond to further disturbances in the strategic, oil-rich province that has been the scene of a year-old terrorist bombing campaign.

Iranian officials, including the interior and the intelligence ministers, as well as several religious leaders, have repeatedly blamed the disturbances on British forces occupying nearby southern Iraq.

At the same time, a European military attache in Tehran told The Washington Times that the Revolutionary Guard is moving away from a joint command with the ordinary army and taking a more prominent role in controlling Iran's often porous borders, even as it makes each of Iran's border provinces autonomous in the event of war.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said he was not aware of any improvement of Iran's military capabilities, but noted that if such developments are taking place, people in the U.S. government are watching.

Defense analysts said it makes sense for the Iranian regime to give the impression of upgrading and modernizing its military, but they questioned the need to prepare for guerrilla-type warfare because a full-blown U.S. invasion is not likely...

HANIYEH CALLS US 'AN ENEMY OF ISLAM'

May 31, 2006 The Jerusalem Post reported: "Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh called the US an "enemy of Islam," an Iranian news agency reported on Wednesday.

"Washington is doing its utmost to ensure the failure of the Hamas-led Palestinian government," claimed Haniyeh. The PA prime minister added that the US's decision to attack Muslims was "influenced by the Zionist lobby."

He rejected the assessments of an imminent civil war between Hamas and Fatah, saying "We have only one enemy - the Israeli occupiers."

Still, PA Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar rejected the ultimatum laid down last week by Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, who warned he would take the initiative, drafted by Marwan Barghouti and other security prisoners, to a national referendum if Hamas did not accept it. Zahar called the referendum a waste of time and a waste of money..."

IRAN TRANSFERS NEW ROCKET TO HIZBULLAH

May 31, 2006 The Middle East Newline reported: "Israel has reported the transfer of an advanced Iranian-origin rocket to Hizbullah. Israeli officials said the unnamed rocket was the most advanced in Hizbullah's arsenal and could strike major population centers. They deemed the rocket the first strategic weapon of Hizbullah.

"Iran is providing Hizbullah with the best and latest of its weapons," an official said. "It's clear that Iran sees Hizbullah as its strategic arm in the Middle East."

The unguided rocket was believed to be an advanced version of the Fajr-5, with a range of more than 100 kilometers. Officials said the latest weapon for Hizbullah has a range of 200 kilometers and is propelled by solid fuel..."

IRAN READY TO TALK TO EUROPE AGAIN

May 31, 2006 The EU Observer reported: "Iran has declared it is ready to resume negotiations over its nuclear programme with the European Union's negotiating troika - Germany, France and the UK - but says the US must "change its behaviour" before Tehran lends an ear to Washington.

From a meeting with non-aligned countries in Malaysia on Tuesday (31 May), the Iranian foreign minister announced the country's

intention to study a package of incentives made by the EU trio to stop uranium enrichment and put an end to the nuclear programme rift.

"Iran is willing to answer positively to a re-launch of negotiations about its nuclear enrichment program without preliminary conditions," foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki told reporters.

The European package includes offering Iran help with building light water reactors that do not produce plutonium waste, a nuclear fuel bank that would guarantee Iran access to reactor fuel and various security guarantees.

In return, Tehran must halt its uranium enrichment program, allow more access for UN inspectors and answer outstanding questions from those inspectors.

Earlier this month, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad criticised the European offer, saying "they can steal our gold and offer some nuts and chocolate in return".

The five security council permanent powers and Germany will meet in Vienna on Thursday (1 June) to finalise the package of incentives for Iran to halt enrichment, as well as sketching out possible penalties if the country keeps defying international pressure.

The US wants the UN to impose sanctions if Iran fails to comply with the demands, but Russia and China are reluctant to support sanctions."..."

HEART MAY BE HOME TO ITS OWN STEM CELLS

May 30, 2006 NewScientist.com reported: "A team of US researchers has discovered the "home" of stem cells in the heart, lending credence to the idea that the heart has the capacity to repair itself. The finding raises the possibility that these cardiac stem cells could one day be manipulated to rebuild tissues damaged by heart disease – still the leading cause of death in the US and UK.

Because fully developed heart cells do not divide, experts have believed the organ was unable to regenerate after injury. But, in 2003, researchers at Piero Anversa's laboratory at New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York, US, discovered stem cells in the hearts of mice, and subsequently humans. However, they still did not know whether these stem cells actually resided in the heart or had merely migrated there from another tissue, such as bone marrow.

So Anversa's colleague Annarosa Leri began to look for tell-tale "niches" of stem cells in the heart, such as a cluster of undifferentiated cells paired with the requisite "nurse" cells – vital for stem cell growth and development.

Using adult mice as a model, she located cardiac stem cell niches, which were especially abundant in the heart's atria. She found the stem cells clustered together with more mature heart cells in niches between cardiac muscle cells.

Leri and her colleagues have now removed tiny numbers of cardiac stem cells from people undergoing heart operations, grown them in the lab and then transplanted them into the damaged hearts of rats and mice.

The results are promising, says Leri, and may eventually give better heart-healing results than bone-marrow derived stem cells. "We think that these are the cells that normally provide new heart tissue and will most likely be better suited for repair of diseased hearts," she says.

But the ultimate goal is to understand how cardiac stem cells really work, says Stephen Minger, director of the Stem Cell Biology Laboratory at King's College London, UK, who was not involved in the research.

"If these cells truly do exist we would like to be able to find out what regulates their activity and whether you can simulate that mechanism to repair heart tissue without having to use cells from elsewhere," he says.

IRAN REJECTS US CONDITIONS FOR NUCLEAR TALKS

June 1, 2006 SpaceWar.com reported: "Iran on Thursday rejected US conditions for talks over its controversial atomic programme, saying it was ready for the unprecedented negotiations but unwilling to freeze sensitive nuclear work.

"We support dialogue in a fair and unbiased atmosphere, but we will not talk about our undeniable and legitimate rights, because this is the right of our people according to international laws and treaties," Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told reporters.

In what has been regarded as a major policy shift, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced Wednesday that Washington was ready to enter the European-led negotiations if Tehran suspended uranium enrichment -- which can be extended to making the fissile core of a nuclear weapon. Rice described the offer as "kind of moment of truth for Iran."

But Iran insists its activities are strictly peaceful and therefore enshrined as a "right" under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."..."