

## Middle East Update: 2 Jun 11

A lot has happened in the Middle East over the past few days. Iran has received nuclear capable warheads. Supreme Guide Ali Khamenei has ordered the speedup of the Iranian nuclear program. President Ahmadinejad has appointed a caretaker oil minister. There are other items that must be examined also but I will start with these.

Reza Kahlili reported on Fox News (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2011/05/31/iran-nuclear-warheads/>) that the Iranian revolutionary Guards Corps has obtained two nuclear capable missile warheads.

*According to reports from [Iran](#), two missile warheads with nuclear capability have been delivered to the [Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps \(IRGC\)](#).*

*Based on reports received by the [Green Experts of Iran](#), the range of the missiles, produced by the Ministry of Defense Industries, has also been boosted and can now travel a distance of 2,000 miles. Simultaneously, a joint military-industrial project with Iran, [Pakistan](#), [China](#) and the [Ukraine](#) has begun to produce nuclear warheads, including the first manufactured nuclear-capable warheads. These are now in the possession of the Revolutionary Guards.*

*The Ukrainians provided the design for the warheads, while the Chinese and Pakistanis delivered the technology, machining and tooling. The Iranian Ministry of Defense coordinated the interface with all three.*

The article goes on to state that Iran intends to have these warheads weaponized by early 2012.

On his blog this morning (<http://atimetobetray.com/blog/khamanei-orders-an-acceleration-of-the-nuclear-program/>), Mr. Kahlili reports that Ali Khamenei has ordered Iran's nuclear program to be accelerated.

*Iranian dissident Reza Kahili, former member of the IRGC (Pasdraran), who received political asylum in the United States, presented an emergency report (to the Intelligence Committee in Congress), based on secret information forwarded from inside Iran, that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ali Khamenei has issued orders to the specialized authorities to accelerate the practical production of the Iranian nuclear program.*

*The correspondent of al Qanat in Washington learned via a short phone conversation with Kahili that the acceleration of the Iranian nuclear program necessitate the production of tactical nuclear warheads likely before the end of this summer. It was also known that the Guide Khamenei ordered is to buy all what needs to be bought at any price to execute the acceleration of the project.*

Also in Iran President Ahmadinejad appointed a caretaker oil minister to replace the oil minister he had fired to allow him to become the oil minister. Asharq al-Awsat reports (<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=25407>):

*A day after Iran's parliament voted to take Ahmadinejad to court for taking over the ministry, the president handed the job to 54-year-old Mohammad Aliabadi. He has served as head of Iran's national Olympic committee, vice president in charge of physical education and head of the fishery organization.*

*The threat to take Ahmadinejad to court reflected the escalating power struggle between the president and the hard-line establishment that has turned on him in advance of parliamentary election next March and the presidential vote in mid-2013.*

*Lawmakers were infuriated when Ahmadinejad consolidated a series of ministries without parliamentary approval, fired the oil minister and named himself to the job. The move also technically*

*put Ahmadinejad at the helm of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. Iran holds the OPEC rotating presidency this year.*

I suspect that Ahmadinejad wanted to be the President of OPEC to cause the Saudis problems as well as the rest of the World. As President of OPEC he would be in a strong position to press for price increases or quota cuts or both. Iran needs the money for its economy and to support its nuclear weapons plans.

In addition, Debka is reporting as a teaser to their weekly paid product that the Saudis are forming a *Legion Etranger*, or foreign legion, whose purpose is to combat Iranian expansion and the spread of revolts in Arab countries. It is most likely that the major focus of this legion will be Iran and most probably in Bahrain and Iraq. Saudi support for the revolt against Bashar Assad is carried on by other means.

**Analysis.** Any advance by the Iranians towards functional nuclear weapons should be treated with the same attention one would give to a personal diagnosis of brain cancer. Not only does it accelerate the graveyard spiral towards war in the Middle East, it ups the ante considerably. Nuclear weapons are not toys. I have personally dealt with enough of them to understand this. Yet I believe that the insanity of the current leadership of Iran as portrayed in *The Coming Is Upon Us* will cause the offensive use of these weapons. Not even in the darkest days of the Cold War did either the Soviet Union or the United States seriously contemplate the offensive use of nuclear weapons.

The Saudis know what is coming and are generating forces to repel boarders. What is at stake for them is the leadership of Islam based upon the Guardianship of the Two Mosques. The Saudis are aware that their population by itself is not sufficient to generate the level of forces necessary to protect the kingdom. They have already recruited at least two thousand Pakistanis into their National Guard and sent them to Bahrain to help maintain the al-Kahlifa family rule of, and Sunni supremacy in, that country.

At the same time the Saudis are well aware that it will take one heck of a foreign legion to repel the numbers that the Iranians and the Syrians can throw at them. The Saudis were expecting that the Egyptian field armies would be available for the defense of the kingdom and the Two Mosques against the Iranian and Syrian Shiites. With the removal of Mubarak in Egypt, that may no longer be the case. Both the GCC countries on the Persian Gulf front and the Jordanians the western front will require serious augmentation to stave off the offensives on their respective fronts.

As for the conflicts between Ali Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, there is undoubtedly serious conflict between them. The real conflict appears to be around the release to the world of *The Coming Is Upon Us*. However, I also believe that a lot of this conflict is nothing more than political theater designed to take our attention away from their nuclear program and other offensive plans. Ahmadinejad is the "front man" for Mesbah Yazdi and the help the Mahdi return faction. His job may be to deflect criticism away from Ayatollah Yazdi while Yazdi and the Revolutionary Guards prepare to assault Iraq and gain custody of the Imam Hussein and Imam Ali mosques.

It appears as though Bashar Assad will survive as leader of Syria. This he has done with the great assistance of some reputed 20,000 members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force. It appears that the civil disobedience will continue but not at a level sufficient to threaten the regime. What this revolt has done is perhaps cause the postponement of the offensive on the western front. It is essential that the assaults on both fronts be coordinated to prevent them being defeated one at a time. I

estimate that it will take four months for the Syrian Fourth Armored Division to be ready for combat after they are withdrawn from civil suppression duties.

Israel continues to be under stress. Egyptian natural gas is still not reaching them. The Debka crawl is reporting that Israel has warned its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians not to try and cross its borders as happened on Nabka day. This Sunday marks the day that the Arab armies were defeated in the Six Day War. Lebanon has closed its border with Israel by making it a military zone. Another interesting weekend in Israel.

I estimate that events continue to point towards war in the near future. I believe that the weaponization date of early 2012 for the nuclear capable warheads is long on purpose. I believe that the Iranians may well try for sometime this year and succeed depending on how much foreign assistance they get. We have known for some time that Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs are in essence a joint program. I would expect North Korea to conduct a nuclear test before the end of June as a final step in the weaponization process for both countries.

I believe that good leading indicators are attempts by Iran to cause popular uprisings in the Persian Gulf GCC countries especially Bahrain. Another flotilla would be a strong indicator that the Iranians are ready to challenge the Saudis. Increasing pressure on Israel by Hezbollah in Lebanon is another indicator. Hezbollah will not do anything not approved in Tehran. Hamas will continue provocations from Gaza. Again, these will be at the behest of Iran.

Also take a look at Brian M. Downing's article *Pakistan Marches to Saudi Tune in Asia Times on Line* ([http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/MF03Ak02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/MF03Ak02.html)).

Earthquake preparedness.