

Column One: Don't worry, be happy!

Caroline Glick , THE JERUSALEM POST

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Any doubt that Hamas is an Iranian proxy was dispelled this week by a snippet on the Middle East Media Research Institute's blog.

MEMRI reported: "An article in the Iranian weekly *Sobh-e Sadeq*, circulated among the Revolutionary Guards, states that Fatah documents captured by Hamas have revealed that Egypt played a role in instigating the clashes which led to the Hamas takeover of Gaza. The article added that this is the second time Egypt has betrayed the Palestinians, the first being [the slain Egyptian president Anwar] Sadat's betrayal at the Camp David summit."

So Hamas is sharing the treasure trove of intelligence it captured during its takeover of Gaza with Iran. In the greatest intelligence victory ever accomplished by a jihadist organization, Hamas (and Iran) now possess the files of all of the Palestinian security apparatuses, and the personal papers of Fatah leaders such as Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas and Muhammad Dahlan.

Hamas sources claim that Fatah's abject surrender of the information should come as a surprise to no one. They brag that in the months leading up to their putsch, Fatah operatives were happy to sell them all the weapons and intelligence information they asked for.

Iran's use of the Fatah files against Egypt demonstrates that the emergence of Hamastan in Gaza endangers not only Israel, but regional security as a whole. Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, the US and Israel can all expect reports to surface that will, in the best case, cause them deep embarrassment. Their governments may be destabilized and their security operations may be compromised.

No doubt this state of affairs was central in causing the Egyptians, Saudis and Jordanians to all tell Palestinian Authority Chairman and Fatah chief Abbas not to clash with Hamas but to try to forge a new accord with it.

And so Hamas's position improves by the day. On Sunday, just after Israel made its first payment of \$120 million to Salaam Fayad's Fatah government, Fayad announced that the money will go to pay salaries of PA employees in Gaza.

This tells us two things. First, it shatters the illusion of two distinct PAs - one that is bad and one that is good. By paying PA employees in Gaza, Fayad showed that from Fatah's perspective, there is only one PA, not two.

Second, his move exposes as a lie Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's claim that the money was going only to Fatah. Indeed, it showed that Israel is funding Hamas. After all, if Fayad weren't using Israeli money to pay the Gazans, Hamas would have to pay them out of its own pocket.

BBC reporter Alan Johnston's release on Wednesday was another win for Hamas. After Johnston's release, Britain's new Foreign Secretary David Miliband - whose mother, a Holocaust survivor, is a member of the

radical anti-Zionist organization "Jews for Justice for Palestinians" and whose late father was a Communist - gushed over Hamas. Miliband said that Hamas leaders "denounced the hostage-takers and demanded Alan's release. I fully acknowledge the crucial role they have played in securing this happy outcome."

In comments to Parliament, Miliband left the door wide open to the possibility of Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government recognizing the Hamas government.

Rather than chide the British for their embrace of a movement driven by barbaric hatred for Jews and bent on Islamic global domination, the Israeli government lavished praise on the British for successfully negotiating Johnston's release and tried to make nice with Hamas. Olmert coyly suggested, "As is known, Hamas members holding [IDF soldier Gilad Schalit] are - in effect - preventing the release of Palestinian prisoners as has been agreed upon."

By thus framing the issue of Schalit's release, Olmert signaled to Hamas that Israel is interested in cutting a deal and has already accepted the Iranian-proxy's control over the outskirts of Ashkelon and Ashdod.

Hamas has other new friends - al-Qaida for instance. While just last March al-Qaida was condemning its fellow Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organization for signing the Mecca agreement with Fatah, in the al-Qaida video disseminated this week, the group's deputy commander, Ayman al-Zawahiri, praised Hamas and called for Muslims to join the terror group.

In his words, "We tell our brothers, the Hamas *mujahadin*, that we and the entire Muslim nation stand alongside you, but you must redress your [political] path. Muslims must join Hamas ranks and we will back them by facilitating the passage of weapons and supplies from neighboring countries."

The Olmert government's refusal to take the Hamas-Iranian threat in Gaza seriously fits well with its overall refusal to forge any coherent policies for dealing with any of the mounting threats that Israel faces.

Last week, the Syrians celebrated the 33rd anniversary of the "liberation" of Quneitra on the Golan Heights, which Israel ceded to Syria in the cease-fire agreement that ended the Yom Kippur War. In government ceremonies, ministers in Bashar Assad's government emphasized the dictator's commitment to "liberating" the Golan.

It was also reported that in honor of the anniversary, the Syrians opened the Damascus-Quneitra road to civilian traffic for the first time since 1967. If true, it would appear that the Syrians are setting the stage for terrorist infiltration of the Golan Heights.

Radio Damascus reported Wednesday that the Syrian regime views IDF exercises in the North as a threat. This announcement can only be seen as a Syrian bid to develop a pretext for starting a war against Israel.

And what sort of war awaits us? A missile war.

While the Olmert government argues over the relative merits of overhauling and upgrading the National Security Council, and bolsters our national security by appointing Ruhama Avraham - the woman of many hair colors and stylish outfits - to the cabinet, the main lesson of the Second Lebanon War is being systematically ignored.

THE WAR showed that Israel's enemies' primary target is the home front. This understanding was supposed to propel the government to secure civilian population centers nationwide, since Syrian missiles are capable of

hitting every square centimeter of the country. But one year later, not even Sderot has been reinforced and the bomb shelters in the North remain neglected. It took the Finance Ministry 11 months to release funds to purchase gas masks for the public even though it is well known that Syria has chemical weapons.

Although Olmert said that for him the last war is but "a distant memory," in Lebanon it is living history. Hizbullah is rearming so massively that even the UN has taken notice. Last week, UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon reported to the Security Council that the Syrian-Lebanese border has been completely breached and that shipments of Iranian and Syrian arms transit the country without the slightest difficulty.

On Monday, outgoing Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh effectively told Israel Radio that the government is neglecting the security needs of Israel by starving the IDF of the funds necessary to adequately equip its forces and secure the home front ahead of a possible war with Hizbullah, Syria and Hamas. He also accused the government of mishandling the Iranian nuclear threat.

Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz all lull the public into complacency by claiming that the UN Security Council sanctions against Iran are effective, and that Israel and the US are closely coordinating their policies on dealing with the Iranian nuclear weapons program. In his interview, Sneh called their bluff.

Sneh argued that the sanctions have not prevented Iran from advancing its nuclear program and stated outright that "there is no coordination on the operational level between the Israeli and US militaries on Iran."

Sneh added that the governmental underfunding has left the military bereft of good options for attacking Iran's nuclear installations on its own.

On the other side, Teheran is mobilizing all of its resources for a war against the US and Israel. Risking its own destabilization, the regime instituted gasoline rationing last week. And this week President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran will soon begin rationing electricity.

Intent on ignoring the dangers, Israel's government has opted to attack those who warn of them. Case in point is its treatment of former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton. Last week Bolton told *The Jerusalem Post* that the Bush administration's Iran policy has failed.

In his words, "The current approach of the Europeans and Americans is not just doomed to failure, but dangerous. Diplomacy and sanctions have failed... So we have to look at: 1, overthrowing the regime and getting in a new one that won't pursue nuclear weapons; 2, a last-resort use of force."

Bolton added that there might not be enough time to bring down the regime before the Iranians acquire nuclear weapons.

Israeli officials, snug in their bubble, reacted to the interview by attacking Bolton. One official dismissed Bolton by calling him America's "Avigdor Lieberman." Another patronized, "It is possible that his comments were meant to expedite the process. We would all like to see more aggressive diplomacy."

But as Sneh made clear, not only were Bolton's remarks accurate, but also, thanks to the Olmert government, Israel lacks the means to independently address the threat of its own annihilation, and has no military coordination on the matter with the US.

To their credit, the ministers responsible for dealing with Iran are very busy with pressing concerns. Last week,

Lieberman took a trip to Europe, where he tried to advance his idea of bringing Israel into the anti-Israel EU. And in light of UNIFIL's stunning accomplishments in preventing Hizbullah from rearming, Israel's "Strategic Affairs" minister also used his time to push his idea of deploying NATO forces to Gaza.

On Wednesday, Livni met with her Moroccan counterpart. Livni praised Morocco for its participation in the Saudi Peace Plan that has been disavowed by the Saudis.

Olmert the peacemaker concluded a peace accord this week between his cronies Ronnie Bar-On and Haim Ramon. He also negotiated a temporary cease-fire with his political rival Meir Sheerit. Most critically, Olmert ensured Israel's long-term security by appointing Ruhama Avraham a minister-without-portfolio in his Lilliputian government.

The local media organs, all of which moronically ignore the emerging threats, keep promising the public that the Olmert government will fall as soon as the Winograd Committee issues its final report on the Second Lebanon War, sometime in the next few months. But there is no guarantee that this is true.

In the best case scenario, the report will merely tell us what has been clear for the past year: With or without a restructured National Security Council, our political leaders are incompetent boobs whose only concern is their personal political survival, regardless of the consequences for the nation's security.

But really, why worry? After all, Shas is happy. Lieberman is satisfied. Olmert is rock solid. And Ruhama is moved to tears.

Perhaps we should be crying, too.

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