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Mossad trains its gun on Iran: UAE daily



Emirates News Agency

Abu Dhabi, Mar. 7, 2007 (WAM) -- A major UAE English daily today commented on the covert operation by the US and its Israeli ally for military showdown with Iran over the latter's controversial nuclear programme.

Commenting editorially in its issue of today, the Sharjah-based "The Gulf Today" said: "THE 'disappearance' of a former deputy defence minister of Iran with detailed information about his country's military programmes adds to the intricacies of the Middle East. It comes at a time when speculation is rife over the shape and nature of a possible American/Israeli military action against Iran in the name of that country's controversial nuclear programme.

"Ali Reza Asgari, 63, went missing after checking into an Istanbul hotel on Feb.7 at the outset of a visit to Turkey. According to Turkish officials, the Israeli secret service Mossad and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) might have had a hand in the disappearance.

"Some accounts claim Asgari, who was a commander in the Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon before being deputy defence minister, 'defected' and is now somewhere in Europe with his family and 'singing like a carary' about his country's military secrets.

"Other reports say that Mossad spirited him out of Turkey and now he is in Israeli custody undergoing interrogation about his country's nuclear programme and defence capabilities. Another speculation is that Israelis are seeking information from him about Ron Arad, an Israeli air force pilot who went missing in Lebanon in the 80s when Asgari headed a Revolutionary Guards unit there.

"Another theory, propagated mainly by Israeli intelligence, places the blame right at the American door. According to an Israeli intelligence report, Asgari was the officer in charge of Iranian undercover operations in central Iraq. He is believed to have been linked to -- or participated in -- the armed group which stormed the US-Iraqi command centre in Karbala south of Baghdad Jan. 20 and snatched five American officers. They were shot outside the Shiite city.

"The theory goes on to explain that the Americans could not let this "premeditated outrage" go unanswered and had been hunting the Iranian general ever since, and thus the alleged CIA connection to his disappearance. Indeed, there could be a far simpler explanation as to how and why Asgari went missing, but the world at large is not privy to that yet.

"The former Iranian minister's disappearance becomes all the more intriguing when seen coupled with the death under mysterious circumstances of an Iranian nuclear scientist in January. Professor Ardashir Hosseinpour, 45, who was described as a world authority on electromagnetism, was working on uranium enrichment at the facility in Isfahan, one of the central processing sites in Iran's nuclear programme, when he died.

"According to the US website -- Stratfor.com -- which features intelligence and security analysis by former US intelligence agents, Hosseinpour was killed by Mossad agents.

"A website of expatriate Iranian communists reported that several other scientists were killed or injured in the operation to kill Hosseinpour at Isfahan, and were treated at nearby hospitals.

"The Stratfor.com report says that Hosseinpour died from "radioactive poisoning" as part of a Mossad effort to halt the Iranian nuclear programme through 'secret operations'. That is indeed a tall claim because it is difficult to accept that Iran's nuclear activities depended solely on a scientist. Iranian reports of Hassanpour's death gave the cause as 'gas poisoning', but did not say how or where he was poisoned.

"At the same time, the claims that he was murdered could not be dismissed out of hand since Mossad does have a long record of eliminating whoever is deemed to be instrumental in posing a challenge to Israel.

"It is a well-known secret that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Mossad agents were behind the deaths of scientists involved with the Iraqi nuclear programme. In 1980, Yahya Meshad was found dead in his Paris hotel room and two other Iraqi nuclear scientists were also killed as a result of poisoning in the same year. All killings bore Mossad hallmarks.

"Indeed, Israel leaders have publicly vowed that they would stop at nothing to remove all potential threats to its ambitions in the region, and what we are seeing today is yet another manifestation of those 'warnings'. And the world, it seems, is unable to prevent Israel from getting what it wants."

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