

NOT THE ONION? PRESSTV CLAIMS BRITISH, ISRAELI SCIENTISTS DEVELOPING SARS VIRUS TARGETING ARABS

After Iran's Fars News Agency was fooled last month by an article in The Onion, you might think Iran's press would be a bit more careful in what it chooses to publish, but PressTV today seems to have topped "rural white American voters prefer Ahmadinejad over Obama" by choosing to publish accusations that British and Israeli scientists are hard at work developing a version of the SARS virus that attacks only Arabs.

The article opens with its wild charge:

British and Zionist health experts are working on a SARS-like race-specific bio-weapon, which could be capable of creating a global threat through triggering a massive ethnic cleansing, it has been claimed.

The claim was made following the identification by the World Health Organization (WHO) of a new SARS-like race-specific virus that targets people of Middle Eastern decent. [sic] The original SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) resulted in the death of numerous people in Hong Kong.

PressTV is assigning remarkable power to these scientists, because the accusation is based on a new virus that has been seen only in a grand total of two cases, with the first being in June. The claim that the virus is "race-specific" appears to come from the WHO

description of the virus, but in fact PressTV and the accusers miss a key part of the description:

travel to or residence in an area where infection with novel coronavirus has recently been reported or where transmission could have occurred;*

The asterisk is linked to:

* Currently, these areas would include only Qatar and Saudi Arabia (as of 29 September 2012).

The two known cases involve residents of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, but the accusation that this virus has been magically engineered to be race-specific completely overlooks that WHO would consider this virus to be involved for any person of any race who recently traveled to Saudi Arabia or Qatar and displayed the other diagnostic criteria they describe.

It appears that PressTV is crediting "intelligence sources" for the accusations. The article continues:

The Zionist-led Israeli regime has been seeking to spot specific genes carried by human of Arab decent in an attempt to develop a race-specific bio-weapon that could covertly be exposed to Arab populations in order to commit a massive ethnic cleansing whenever necessary.

Anonymous intelligence sources have also claimed that work is underway to create genetically modified bacterium/virus as a bio-weapon which could be deployed through the air or water supply.

According to intelligence sources Israeli Defense, working with a British defense apparatus at Porton Down, is seeking to produce this race-specific bio-weapon.

The latest news from WHO puts even more of a damper on claims that this virus is a new super biological weapon:

WHO has continued to monitor the situation. No additional confirmed cases have been reported and there is no evidence so far of person to person transmission of the novel coronavirus.

In order for the virus to achieve “massive ethnic cleansing” it would be necessary for it to spread from person to person quickly and efficiently before killing those infected. Instead, the two known cases of the virus have been isolated, with no known persons with whom the infected people came into contact developing symptoms of the disease.

Should US scientists consider it an insult that they were not included in the conspiracy theory?