

PROPHETIC TIMES

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ABBAS TO MKS: JERUSALEM ON THE TABLE

January 25, 2008 The Jerusalem Post reported: "Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas did not help Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's chances of surviving next week's publication of the Winograd Report when he told Kadima MKs who visited him in Ramallah Thursday that Jerusalem was on the table in diplomatic talks.

Shas chairman Eli Yishai told Olmert this week that if the Jerusalem issue was raised in negotiations, his party would leave the coalition, which is also threatened by Labor chairman Ehud Barak's vow to remove his party upon Winograd's publication.

"Everything is on the table and nothing is excluded," Palestinian chief negotiator Ahmed Qurei told reporters when asked whether Jerusalem would be a subject for negotiations.

"Jerusalem, borders, settlements, refugees water, everything," Abbas added. "It's important for both sides to continue talking. We are talking constantly."

Asked whether the Palestinians would accept Shas's demand that the Jerusalem issue be raised last in the talks, Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told *The Jerusalem Post* "All on the table means everything from the beginning. We haven't started negotiations yet, but that's what was decided in Annapolis."..."

EU BLAMES US SPENDING FOR MARKET TURBULENCES

January 23, 2008 EU Observer reported: "The European Commission has pointed to unhealthy public spending in the US as the main cause of the current global market turbulences and urged Washington to cut expenditure and boost savings, while praising Europe's own "solid and sound" economy and the positive effect of the common currency.

The topic dominated a regular meeting of EU finance ministers in Brussels on Tuesday (22 January), shortly after the biggest plunge of global stock markets since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

While evidently concerned about the possible consequences for the region - mainly if there is a recession in the US, where most of Europe's exports are heading - both the finance chiefs and the commission were keen to avoid pessimistic statements.

"This is not about a global recession, but about the risk of a recession in the US, as during the last years, big imbalances have been created in the US economy - a big current account deficit, a big fiscal deficit, a lack of savings," said EU economy commissioner Joaquin Almunia.

Mr Almunia suggested that US policy-makers should tackle the current crisis with measures that would secure "reducing the external deficit and the fiscal deficit, and increasing domestic saving in the US both in the public and the private sectors."

He maintained that Europe's own previous reforms and pressure for cuts in public finances have paid off, leaving the fundamentals of the bloc's economy - in contrast to the situation across the Atlantic - as "solid and sound".

"So we are well prepared to weather this situation even if we cannot ignore the risk of our growth rates being affected by this turmoil," he added.

German chancellor Angela Merkel also urged for calm, describing Europe as an "anchor of stability for the global economy."...

But Berlin is expected on Wednesday (23 January) to announce a downward revision of the country's economic forecast in 2008 for the third time in less than a year, down to 1.7 percent from 2.5 percent last year."..."



EPIDEMIC SUPERBUG STRAINS EVOLVED FROM ONE BACTERIUM: STUDY

January 22, 2008 Breitbart.com reported: "The drug-resistant "superbugs" that have cut a swathe through day care centers, schools, locker rooms and prisons across the United States in the last five years stem from one rapidly evolving bacterium, US scientists said Monday.

Scientists studying the genetic make-up of these bugs, which are resistant to almost all antibiotics, say they are nearly identical clones that have emerged from a single bacterial strain, which they have dubbed USA300.

"The USA300 group of strains appears to have extraordinary transmissibility and fitness," said Frank DeLeo, a researcher with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in Hamilton, Montana.

"We anticipate that new USA300 derivatives will emerge within the next several years and that these strains will have a wide range of disease-causing potential."

Most drug-resistant staph infections cause soft-tissue infections such as boils that are readily treatable, but a skin infection can become a deadly pneumonia or blood or bone infection in a matter of days if the patient doesn't get the right drugs. What's particularly worrying to health authorities is that the MRSA infections, (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) have spread beyond their traditional hospital setting, seeding an epidemic in the wider community.

The NIAID scientists studied the DNA of 10 patient samples of the USA300 bacterium taken from individuals treated at different US locations between 2002 and 2005. They compared the genetic sequences of the bugs to each other and to USA300 strains used in earlier studies.

The genomes of eight of the 10 patient samples were virtually identical, indicating they came from a common strain. The remaining two bacteria were related to the other eight, but more distantly.

The study appears in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.”

PRE-EMPTIVE NUCLEAR STRIKE A KEY OPTION, NATO TOLD

January 22, 2008 The Guardian reported: “The west must be ready to resort to a pre-emptive nuclear attack to try to halt the "imminent" spread of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, according to a radical manifesto for a new Nato by five of the west's most senior military officers and strategists.

Calling for root-and-branch reform of Nato and a new pact drawing the US, Nato and the European Union together in a "grand strategy" to tackle the challenges of an increasingly brutal world, the former armed forces chiefs from the US, Britain, Germany, France and the Netherlands insist that a "first strike" nuclear option remains an "indispensable instrument" since there is "simply no realistic prospect of a nuclear-free world".

The manifesto has been written following discussions with active commanders and policymakers, many of whom are unable or unwilling to publicly air their views. It has been presented to the Pentagon in Washington and to Nato's secretary general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, over the past 10 days. The proposals are likely to be discussed at a Nato summit in Bucharest in April.

"The risk of further [nuclear] proliferation is imminent and, with it, the danger that nuclear war fighting, albeit limited in scope, might become possible," the authors argued in the 150-page blueprint for urgent reform of western military strategy and structures. "The first use of nuclear weapons must remain in the quiver of escalation as the ultimate instrument to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction."

The authors - General John Shalikashvili, the former chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff and Nato's ex-supreme commander in Europe, General Klaus Naumann, Germany's former top soldier and ex-chairman of Nato's military committee, General Henk van den Breemen, a former Dutch chief of staff, Admiral Jacques Lanxade, a former French chief of staff, and Lord Inge, field marshal and ex-chief of the general staff and the defence staff in the UK - paint an alarming picture of the threats and challenges confronting the west in the post-9/11 world and deliver a withering verdict on the ability to cope.

The five commanders argue that the west's values and way of life are under threat, but the west is struggling to summon the will to defend them. The key threats are:

- Political fanaticism and religious fundamentalism.
- The "dark side" of globalisation, meaning international terrorism, organised crime and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.
- Climate change and energy security, entailing a contest for resources and potential "environmental" migration on a mass scale.
- The weakening of the nation state as well as of organisations such as the UN, Nato and the EU.

To prevail, the generals call for an overhaul of Nato decision-taking methods, a new "directorate" of US, European and Nato leaders to respond rapidly to crises, and an end to EU "obstruction" of and rivalry with Nato.”...”

US FIRM SAYS IT USED CLONING TO CREATE HUMAN EMBRYOS

January 18, 2008 VOA News reported: “Scientists at a U.S.-based private research firm say they have developed five human embryos using cloning technology. Researchers from the California-based company Stemagen announced their findings Thursday in the journal Stem Cells. The scientists say they took the skin cells from two adult males and implanted the nuclei of those cells in human egg cells.



The scientists say they determined through genetic testing that at least three of the embryos were true clones. They say the genetic material in the other two embryos did not develop enough to draw conclusive tests.

Other scientists have greeted the news cautiously. South Korean scientist Hwang Woo-suk claimed in 2004 that he had used cloning technology to make human embryos, but he was later found to have faked parts of his research.

Human embryos are a source of stem cells that can be used to develop a number of different kinds of tissues. Doctors hope they could be used to treat diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

But opponents to the research, including President Bush, argue that destroying an embryo is tantamount to taking a human life. Last year, Mr. Bush vetoed legislation that would have eased restrictions on federally-funded medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos.”...”