



PROPHETIC TIMES

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KREMLIN: BATTLES OVER ENERGY MAY LEAD TO WARS

May 13, 2009 The Associated Press reported: "A Kremlin policy paper says international relations will be shaped by battles over energy resources, which may trigger military conflicts on Russia's borders. The National Security Strategy also said that Russia will seek an equal "partnership" with the United States, but named U.S. missile defense plans in Europe among top threats to the national security.

The document, which has been signed by President Dmitry Medvedev, listed top challenges to national security and outlined government priorities through 2020.

"The international policy in the long run will be focused on getting hold of energy sources, including in the Middle East, the Barents Sea shelf and other Arctic regions, the Caspian and Central Asia," said the strategy paper that was posted on the presidential Security Council's Web site. "Amid competitive struggle for resources, attempts to use military force to solve emerging problems can't be excluded," it added. "The existing balance of forces near the borders of the Russian Federation and its allies can be violated."...

Medvedev's predecessor Vladimir Putin, who is now Russia's powerful prime minister, often accused the West in the past of trying to expand its clout in the ex-Soviet nations and push Russia out of its traditional sphere of influence. The Kremlin has fiercely opposed NATO's plans to incorporate its ex-Soviet neighbors, Ukraine and Georgia. Russia currently controls most natural gas export routes out of the former Soviet region, but that grip is coming under growing pressure from China and the West.

The European Union, which depends on Russia for about one-quarter of its gas needs, has sought alternate supply routes, including the prospective Nabucco pipeline that would carry the Caspian and Central Asian gas to Europe but skirt Russia.

Intensifying rivalry for influence in the ex-Soviet region fomented tensions and helped stage the ground for last August's war between Russia and Georgia, which sits astride a key export pipeline carrying Caspian oil to Western markets.

The war erupted when the U.S.-allied Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili sent troops to regain control over the separatist province of South Ossetia, which had close links with Russia. After routing the Georgian army in five days of fighting, Russia recognized both South Ossetia and another Georgian rebel province of Abkhazia as independent nations and permanently stationed nearly 8,000 troops there.

The war in Georgia has badly strained Russia's ties with the West."..."

SEVERE SWINE FLU PROJECTIONS DIVIDE SCIENTISTS

May 14, 2009 Reuters reported: "Leading modellers who predict that swine flu, influenza A (H1N1), could eventually infect a third of the world's population have received a mixed response from other scientists.

Researchers from Europe and Mexico published a study in Science this week (11 May) stating that the virus has full pandemic potential and could kill four in every 1,000 infected people, though they did not estimate the total death toll. This makes the virus about as dangerous as the strain responsible for the 1957 pandemic that killed two million people but far less deadly than the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.

"This virus ... is likely to spread around the world in the next six to nine months and when it does so it will affect about one-third of the world's population," lead author Neil Ferguson, from the UK-based Imperial College London, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

But influenza epidemiologist Lone Simonsen of the US-based George Washington University describes the Imperial study as the worst case scenario. She says there is an approximately ten-fold uncertainty in the estimate of the number of deaths and a one- to two-fold uncertainty in the number of infected cases in the study. "I think it's a completely difficult estimate to make at this point," she says.

However, new studies of past flu pandemics are beginning to reveal some commonalities about how influenza viruses evolve and spread, she says. One common feature is that the viruses cause disease in waves and often become more virulent months after they first appear."..."



SPANISH STUDY SHOWS COCAINE IN THE AIR IN 2 CITIES

May 14, 2009 The AP reported: "Air pollution has long been a fact of life in Spanish cities, but scientists now say it is not just smog that chokes people as they walk to work or stroll through the park. A new study has found the air in Madrid and Barcelona is also laced with at least five drugs most prominently cocaine.

The Superior Council of Scientific Investigations, a government institute, said on its Web site Thursday that in addition to cocaine, they found trace amounts of amphetamines, opiates, cannabinoids and lysergic acid a relative of LSD in two air-quality control stations, one in each cities. But it said there was no reason for alarm.

"Not even if we lived for a thousand years would we consume the equivalent of a dose of cocaine by breathing this air," scientist Miren Lopez de Alda said in a statement.

The scientific group stressed that "in no case should these levels be considered representative of the air in the two cities." It said the tests were done in areas where drugs were likely to be consumed. In Madrid, the test site was close to a ruined building believed to be frequented by drug dealers. And in both Madrid and Barcelona, the studies were carried out close to universities."..."

BIBI: NO SURPRISE ATTACK ON IRAN

May 14, 2009 IsraelNationalNews.com reported: "The office of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu Wednesday night quickly calmed the fears of U.S. President Barack Obama that Israel is planning to attack Iran without coordinating with the United States. The reassurance, reported on Voice of Israel government radio, was attributed to unnamed aides in the Prime Minister's office.

Israeli media early Thursday ran screaming headlines about the American fears although virtually none of the foreign media mentioned the issue.

Phillip Weiss, a long-time foe of the Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria, wrote on his Mondoweiss blog Thursday, "The Israeli press seems to be on the edge of its seat in the buildup to the meeting, and is expecting the worst. Each day Israeli newspapers are full of prognosticators and politicians reading Obama White House tea leaves, making dire predictions and giving urgent advice for the Prime Minister."

Israeli media referred to several election campaign proclamations by the Prime Minister that all means must be taken to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power. However, both Labor party chairman Ehud Barak and Kadima chairwoman Tzipi Livni made similar statements.

Senior American leaders also have said that the "military option" is not off the table if diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions do not convince Iran to halt its nuclear development without international supervision and guarantees.

National Security Council head Uzi Arad, the Prime Minister's special envoy Yitzhak Molcho, and head of the strategic communication wing Ron Dermer are en route to Washington to prepare for next week's meeting between the Israeli and American leaders.

They will meet with President Obama's Middle East chief, Dan Shapiro, who recently returned from Syria after talks on the possibility of renewing direct negotiations between Damascus and Washington."

AL QAIDA PLANS STRIKES IN EU STATES

May 14, 2009 Middle East Newline reported: "Al Qaida was said to have planned a series of mass-casualty strikes in the European Union. Officials said Al Qaida has organized an operational cell ordered to carry out major attacks in Britain and France. They said the cell was based in Italy and included Arabs and Europeans, including those who fought in Afghanistan.

"This was to have been the kind of attack that would have exceeded that in Spain," an official said.

CHINESE IMPORTS COULD BRING GM POLITICAL TROUBLE

May 13, 2009 WorldNetDaily reported: "As thousands of GM workers await word on more U.S. plant closures, reports that the company plans to import Chinese-made vehicles to the U.S. have created a political problem for the automaker and the White House.

The reports, which General Motors will neither confirm nor deny, could mean trouble because GM is supported by \$15.4 billion in U.S. government loans, largely due to the Obama administration's desire to preserve the company's 90,000 U.S. jobs.

The United Auto Workers charged last week that the Detroit automaker intends to almost double over the next five years the number of vehicles it imports to the U.S. from Mexico, South Korea, China and Japan. "GM should not be taking taxpayers' money simply to finance the outsourcing of jobs to other countries," Alan Reuther, the union's Washington lobbyist, wrote in a letter to U.S. lawmakers.



The carmaker, which was in danger of running out of cash early this year, faces a June 1 government deadline to cut costs and complete other restructuring measures or go into Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. It also has requested another \$11.6 billion in government loans to make it through this year, and faces the prospect that the government will soon be its largest shareholder.

On Wednesday, Shanghai Securities News and other Chinese media reported that GM plans to begin exporting vehicles from China to the U.S. within two years, ramping up sales to more than 50,000 by 2014. GM spokesman Tom Wilkinson in Detroit would not comment on the reports. The White House and Treasury Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"GM is reviewing various options," GM's China office said in a written statement received Thursday. "We are not discussing details of our future portfolio, beyond what we have disclosed in auto shows and our viability plans."

But the report reiterated the company's emphasis on first meeting demand in the Chinese domestic market."..."