



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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POPE SAYS HE WILL BE 'HIDDEN TO THE WORLD' IN RETIREMENT

February 14, 2013 New York Times reported: "Saying he would soon be "hidden to the world," Pope Benedict XVI took his leave of parish priests and clergy members of the Diocese of Rome on Thursday as he offered personal, and incisive, recollections of the Second Vatican Council, the gathering of bishops 50 years ago that set the Roman Catholic Church's course for the future. Benedict, who announced his resignation on Monday in a move that stunned the Roman Catholic world, also indicated that he would not hold a public role once his resignation became official on Feb. 28. Benedict is the first pope to step down in nearly 600 years."...

Priests in attendance said they felt they had witnessed a powerful moment in church history, one that also humanized a pope who had often seemed remote. "It moved me to see the pope smile," said Don Mario Filippa, a priest in Rome. "He has found peace within himself."

Father Martin Astudillo, 37, an Argentine priest who is studying in Rome, said, "It was a part of history." He added: "This is a man of God who at the end of his public role transmits his vision of the church and relationship with the church. We saw in a few words a real synthesis of his vision of the church and what he expects from whomever takes over."...



Benedict spoke of how the Second Vatican Council had explored ideas of "continuity" between the Old and New Testaments, and of the relationship between the Catholic and Jewish faiths, a thorny issue during his tenure."...

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano has reported that the pope had decided to retire after returning from that trip. But Father Lombardi rejected La Stampa's suggestion that the episode might have prompted the decision."..."

CENTRAL BANKS BUY THE MOST GOLD SINCE 1964

February 14, 2013 247WallSt.com reported: "Worldwide gold demand in 2012 was another record high of \$236.4 billion in the World Gold Council's latest report. This was up 6% in value terms in the fourth quarter to \$66.2 billion, the highest fourth quarter on record. Global gold demand in the fourth quarter of 2012 was up 4% to 1,195.9 tonnes.

Central bank buying for 2012 rose by 17% over 2011 to some 534.6 tonnes. As far as central bank gold buying, this was the highest level since 1964. Central bank purchases stood at 145 tonnes in the fourth quarter. That is up 9% from the fourth quarter of 2011, and the eighth consecutive quarter in which central banks were net purchasers of gold.

The World Gold Council said: "Central banks' move from net sellers of gold, to net buyers that we have seen in recent years, has continued apace. The official sector purchases across the world are now at their highest level for almost half a century."..."

IRAN ORDERED BANNED MATERIALS TO EXPAND NUCLEAR PROGRAM FIVEFOLD

February 14, 2013 Haaretz reported: "Iran recently attempted to purchase tens of thousands of highly specialized magnets used in centrifuge machines, the Washington Post reported on Thursday. The attempted acquisition indicates that the country is 'planning a major expansion of its nuclear program that could shorten the path to an atomic weapons capability,' said the Post.

According to the report, nuclear researchers obtained purchase orders showing Iran tried buying 100,000 ring-shaped magnets from China last year. However, the Washington Post added, it was unclear as to whether the attempt succeeded.

The magnets in question are banned from export to Iran under UN resolutions. The report, which cited experts and diplomats, noted that Iran has on various occasions attempted to acquire banned items, but that this case is considered unusual due to 'the order's specificity and sheer size - enough magnets in theory to outfit 50,000 new centrifuges, or nearly five times the number that Iran currently operates.'

Analysts cited by the Washington Post said the disclosure of new orders for nuclear-sensitive parts coincides with Iran's announcement of plans to add thousands of more-advanced, second-generation centrifuges that would allow it further expand its production of enriched uranium..."

SOUTH KOREA UNVEILS NEW GUIDED MISSILE TO COUNTER NORTH

February 14, 2013 VOA News reported: "Just days after North Korea declared it had conducted its third nuclear test, South Korea has unveiled a new missile it says is capable of hitting any target in the North.

Officials in Seoul do not specify the cruise missile's range, nor have they given it a name. But they say it can strike 'anywhere at any time' in North Korea. Defense ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok says the new weapon is 'extremely destructive and powerful' and intended to restrain an enemy from carrying out an attack.

Kim says the precision-guided weapon is very accurate, able to hit the 'windows of a North Korean command office.' The ministry released video of test launches from a submarine and a destroyer, showing the weapon hitting targets on land.

Last year, the United States agreed to allow South Korea to expand the range of its ballistic missiles. South Korean military officials have said that is necessary in the face of a growing threat from the North. South Korea and Japan are protected under the American nuclear umbrella and the U.S. has numerous military bases in the two countries, with tens of thousands of military personnel.

South Korea's military has been on a heightened state of alert since Tuesday's underground explosion at North Korea's nuclear test site. Large-scale military drills are underway in South Korea."..."

SOUTH KOREA TO STEP UP MISSILE DEFENCE AFTER NORTH TEST

February 13, 2013 SpaceDaily.com reported: "South Korea said Wednesday it would accelerate the development of longer-range ballistic missiles that could cover the whole of North Korea in response to a third nuclear test by Pyongyang.

'We will speed up the development of ballistic missiles with a range of 800 kilometres (500 miles),' Defence Ministry spokesman Kim Min-Seok told reporters. In October last year, South Korea reached a deal with the United States to almost triple the range of its missile systems -- with Seoul arguing it needed an upgrade to counter the North's missile and nuclear programmes.

The United States has 28,500 troops in South Korea and guarantees a nuclear 'umbrella' in case of any atomic attack. In return, Seoul accepts limits on its missile capabilities. Prior to the October agreement, the South was restricted to missiles with a range of 300 kilometres. The extension will not only bring the whole of North Korea within reach of Seoul's rockets, but also parts of China and Japan..."

CORONAVIRUS: SIGNS THE NEW SARS-LIKE VIRUS CAN SPREAD BETWEEN PEOPLE

February 13, 2013 BBC News reported: "Health officials in the UK believe they have the strongest evidence yet that a new respiratory illness similar to the deadly Sars virus can spread from person to person. Cases of the infection may come from contact with animals. However, if the virus can spread between people it poses a much more serious threat.

One person in the UK is thought to have caught the infection from a relative. However, officials say the threat to the whole population remains very low. There have been 11 confirmed cases of the infection around the world. It causes pneumonia and sometimes kidney failure - five patients have died.

This is the third case identified in the UK. The first was a patient flown in from Qatar for treatment. The second was linked to travel to the Middle East and Pakistan. The virus is then thought to have spread from the second patient to a close relative. There have been suggestions of person to person transmission in earlier cases in the Middle East, but this was not confirmed..."



IRAN: NETANYAHU'S NUKE CLAIMS A 'LAUGHING MATTER'

February 12, 2013 Israel National News reported: "Iran on Tuesday scorned as a 'laughing matter' warnings by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu that Tehran is moving closer to making a nuclear bomb, AFP reported.

'The claim of the Zionist regime, is a laughing matter,' foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said at his weekly news conference. He added that the 'Zionist regime is a great violator and an illegitimate regime' that had 'illegally stockpiled nuclear warheads.'

'They threaten to use these nuclear warheads against other countries,' he said, adding that Israel was the 'biggest obstacle' to the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East.

Netanyahu said on Monday that Iran was now closer to crossing the 'red line' after which it would be able to build a nuclear weapon, but had not yet reached that stage. He also asked for 'stronger pressure and harsher sanctions' on Iran to prevent it from crossing the line..."

UN MEETS AFTER NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TEST

February 12, 2013 SkyNews.com reported: "The UN Security Council is holding urgent talks after the latest nuclear test as Pyongyang calls on troops to prepare for combat. The UN Security Council has opened emergency talks on North Korea's nuclear test, as world powers made calls for swift action against Pyongyang."... The meeting comes after North Korea confirmed on Tuesday that it carried out a third nuclear test. Monitoring agencies had earlier reported an "unusual seismic event"..."

The South Korean defence ministry, which raised its military alert level after the quake, said the blast had an explosive yield of between six and seven kilotons (kt) and was of "enormous destructive power". In comparison, the nuclear weapons detonated above Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 carried estimated yields of 15kt and 22kt respectively."..."

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