



PROPHETIC TIMES

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BLAIR WANTS MODERN AND COMPETITIVE EU

June 23, 2005 EUobserver reported: UK prime minister Tony Blair made an engaged and passionate presentation on what the EU should look like and on the necessity to modernise it, in a speech before the European Parliament on Thursday. After Mr Blair presented his views on Europe and on the priorities of his presidency of the 25-member bloc, starting on 1 July, the main political parties' leaders said they would support him if he put his words into action.

The British prime minister insisted on the need to modernise and "renew" Europe, as otherwise, he said, it would fail. If European nations decided to "huddle together, hoping we can avoid globalisation, shrink away from confronting the changes around us, take refuge in the present policies of Europe as if by constantly repeating them, we would ... make them more relevant, then we risk failure", Mr Blair told MEPs.

The need to modernise Europe is urgent, he said, as the US is currently "the world's only super power", but countries like China and India "in a few decades will be the world's largest economies". "We have to renew...And we can. But only if we remarry the European ideals we believe in with the modern world we live in", Mr Blair stressed.

Asked by journalists later if he thought that it was realistic to build the Europe he described - a modern and competitive one - with the budget he proposed, the prime minister said that tightening the budget was not a problem, as long as "it is wisely spent"..."

'HIGH RISK' OF WMD ATTACK IN DECADE

June 22, 2005 CNN.com reported: "The chance of an attack with a weapon of mass destruction somewhere in the world in the next 10 years runs as high as 70 percent, arms experts have predicted in a U.S. survey. Most of the more than 80 experts surveyed in the report released on Tuesday believed one or two new countries will acquire nuclear weapons in the next five years, with two to five countries joining the nuclear club during the next decade.



The survey, commissioned by U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, also showed that four out of five people said their country was not spending enough on non-proliferation efforts.

The most likely scenario for a nuclear attack would be for terrorists to use a weapon they made themselves with material acquired on the black market, the survey said. "The results underscore the need to improve security around tactical nuclear weapons and nuclear material in Russia and expand our ability to detect transfer of weapons or materials from rogue states to terrorist organizations," said a summary of a report outlining the survey results.

"Even if we succeed spectacularly at building democracy around the world, bringing stability to failed states and spreading economic opportunity broadly, we will not be secure from the actions of small, disaffected groups that acquire weapons of mass destruction," Lugar said..."

ISRAEL HEADS FOR WAR WITH SYRIA

June 21, 2005 Middle East Newslines reported: "Israel's military has been preparing for the increasing prospect of a war with Syria in a confrontation expected to include Iran and Hizbullah.

The General Staff has discussed an assessment by the military's Northern Command of an emerging threat from Syria and Hizbullah over the next year. Northern Command said a weakened Syria, under pressure from the United States to withdraw from Lebanon, was likely to approve an Iranian-Hizbullah campaign against Israel.

Military sources said this assessment was the latest by several senior officers who envision a major war with Syria by 2007. The sources said Iran and Syria have used Hizbullah to weaken Israel strategically and erode its morale. The sources said the General Staff has not discussed an Israeli strike on Iran.

Hizbullah has been regarded as the leading supporter of the Palestinian war against Israel, which began in 2000. The Shi'ite insurgency group has also infiltrated the Israeli Arab community and recruited citizens for intelligence and other operations..."

BORDER TENSIONS EMERGE BETWEEN IRAN, IRAQ

June 21, 2005 Middle East Newslines reported: "Two years after Iraq established its first post-Saddam Hussein government, relations with Iran have again been fraught with tension.

Iraqi officials said Iranian soldiers have been repeatedly entering Iraqi territory and firing toward Iraqi outposts. They said Iranian soldiers and agents have also been conducting reconnaissance around Iraqi border outposts. "The Iranians are taking increasingly aggressive measures along the Iraqi border," an Iraqi official said. "We've talked to Teheran, but it hasn't helped."

[On Monday, a suicide bomber dressed as a police officer blew himself up outside police headquarters in the northern city of Irbil. At least 11 officers were killed.] ..."

EUROPE IN 'PROFOUND CRISIS' EU PRESIDENT SAYS

June 18, 2005 Voice of America News reported: "The outgoing president of the European Union says the damage from this week's failed budget talks is profound and has placed the 25-nation bloc in what he called 'deep crisis.'

Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, who hands over the reins of the EU presidency to Britain on July 1, said Saturday, a lack of political will by several delegations doomed the budget deal. He pointedly said he would not attend British Prime Minister Tony Blair's address to the European Parliament Thursday laying out Britain's program for the European Union.

A defiant Prime Minister Blair emerged from the summit with London's prized multi-billion dollar annual budget rebate and calling more loudly for fundamental reform of the bloc's spending programs.

Diplomats say the leaders' failure to press forward with ratifying the proposed constitution and inability to agree on spending priorities threatens the very future of the decades old process of European integration..."

EU EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR RATIFICATION OF CONSTITUTION

June 17, 2005 Voice of America News reported: "European Union leaders have agreed to extend the deadline for ratification of the bloc's embattled constitution following its rejection by voters in France and the Netherlands. The leaders decided they need more time to persuade voters in other EU countries of the charter's merits.

Trying to put a good face on the political disarray caused by the constitution's rejection, the leaders of Europe refuse to admit that the charter is dead, even though it has been rejected by two member states and needs to be approved by all of them to go into effect.

They say that the ratification process must continue. But they say the November 2006 deadline for the constitution's approval by all countries is no longer tenable and that nations that have not yet voted on it need more time to gain public backing.

Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, says there is no question of renegotiating the treaty.

He says everybody agrees that the EU needs what he calls a period of reflection, explanation and debate involving all European and national institutions.

Mr. Juncker did not explain how French and Dutch voters would be persuaded to vote again for the constitution that they rejected in recent referendums..."

SUPREME COURT RULES CITIES MAY SEIZE HOMES

June 23, 2005 The Associated Press reported: "A divided Supreme Court ruled Thursday that local governments may seize people's homes and businesses against their will for private development in a decision anxiously awaited in communities where economic growth often is at war with individual property rights.

The 5-4 ruling - assailed by dissenting Justice Sandra Day O'Connor as handing "disproportionate influence and power" to the well-heeled in America - was a defeat for Connecticut residents whose homes are slated for destruction to make room for an office complex. They had argued that cities have no right to take their land except for projects with a clear public use, such as roads or schools, or to revitalize blighted areas.

As a result, cities now have wide power to bulldoze residences for projects such as shopping malls and hotel complexes in order to generate tax revenue. The case was one of six resolved by justices on Thursday. Among those still pending for the court, which next meets on Monday, is one testing the constitutionality of displaying the Ten Commandments on government property..."

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