



# PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 08 2005

## EUROPE BRACES FOR AL QAIDA STRIKES

*October 6, 2005* The Middle East Newline reported: "European intelligence agencies are quietly warning of another major attack by Al Qaida. European intelligence sources said at least one security agency in the European Union has received information of Al Qaida plans to strike either Britain, Italy or the Netherlands this month. The sources said insurgency cells in Europe were being directed by Abu Mussib Al Zarqawi, commander of Al Qaida in Iraq.

"European security services right now are obsessed with the problem of European Muslims going to Iraq and returning to their countries for violence," Daniel Byman, director of Center for Peace and Security Studies, said. "And this is a problem that's likely to grow in the coming years."

The planned Al Qaida strikes were meant to coincide with the Islamic fast month of Ramadan, expected to begin over the next 48 hours. Islamic insurgency groups have reserved Ramadan for major strikes in such places as Algeria, Iraq and Israel..."

## U.S. EXPERTS FEAR RUSSIA -CHINA AXIS

*October 5, 2005* SpaceWar.com reported: "Recent joint military exercises between Russia and China have prompted fears that a new axis is emerging in Asia. There is a real possibility of a sharp deterioration in Sino-American relations, Igor Zevelev, Washington bureau chief for Russia's RIA-Novosti news agency told United Press International.

If the Bush administration misinterpreted Chinese signals of self-assertion as belligerent expansionism, then the prospect of a new hostility between the United States and China reminiscent of the Cold War was not far off, he said.

Zevelev was speaking after a panel last week at Washington's conservative Heritage Foundation. The panel looked at Russia and China's recent joint military maneuvers on China's Shandong peninsula.

The Russian and Chinese governments described the 'Peace Mission 2005' joint military maneuvers, the first large-scale omens the two nations have ever held together from Aug. 18-25, as an anti-terrorism exercise. Coming at the same time as Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and New Orleans, the maneuvers received relatively little attention in the U.S. media.

"The scale of the operation suggests something more than anti-terrorism, as was claimed," said Stephen Blank, professor at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, in a statement to the conference.

The war games involved nearly 10,000 troops including 1,800 Russian military personnel, scores of advanced aircraft including Russian TU-95 and TU-22 heavy bombers, which can carry cruise missiles, and army, navy, air force, marine, airborne, and logistics units from both countries.

The nature of the exercises, involving amphibious landings on a theoretically hostile coast and mass drops of more than a thousand paratroops, raised some concerns that they were a dress rehearsal for a possible future Chinese invasion of Taiwan..."

## AUSTRALIA TO HOST BIRD FLU MEET

*October 5, 2005* CNN.com reported: "Australia is to host a regional meeting at the end of October to discuss an Asia-Pacific response to bird flu, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer has said. The meeting will be held in the northern Australian city of Brisbane on October 31 and November 1 and will be attended by pandemic and disaster management coordinators from the 21 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member countries.

Observers have also been invited from the Pacific Island Forum, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, he said on Wednesday. "The objective of the meeting is to ensure a swift and co-ordinated regional response to contain any outbreak of avian influenza," Downer said.

The H5N1 bird flu strain has killed more than 60 people in four Asian nations since late 2003 and has been found in birds in Russia and Europe.

Downer said the meeting would look at how prepared countries are to combat a bird flu outbreak and what more needs to be done, and how countries can work together if the bird flu mutates into a form that can be passed on by humans..."

## BRUSSELS SEEKS TO SOOTHE NERVES ON DATA EXCHANGE

*October 5, 2005* EU Observer reported: "The European Commission has tabled a new framework proposal on data-retention in the

fight against terror and organised crime, in an attempt to soothe fears over the lack of safeguards on data exchange between member states.

Justice commissioner Franco Frattini said on Tuesday (4 October) that the EU needs new data privacy rights as international law enforcement authorities accelerate anti-terrorist measures. The proposal includes the idea that data will be put into the Schengen Information System (SIS), the supercomputer in Strasbourg that stores information on, among other things, criminals and illegal immigrants.

Data protection laws deal with checks on the use of private information such as a person's name, address, phone number, bank records, medical records or airline passenger lists. Mr Frattini underlined that the right to privacy is one of the fundamental pillars of the European Charter of Human Rights, and that all data should be processed with respect to this principle.

Tuesday's framework proposal is part of a package including three measures to improve the efficiency of data exchange between member states, the two first being data retention backed up by data protection. The third measure, to be presented on a justice minister meeting next week, deals with member states police forces' access to data.

Together the three measures provide a "balanced approach to data protection and privacy", according to Mr Frattini.

The EU passed its first data protection directive in 1998, stating that stored data must be "fairly and lawfully processed for limited purposes, adequate, relevant and not excessive". It must also be "accurate, not kept longer than necessary, and processed in accordance with the data subject's rights". Finally, data exchange must be "secure and not transferred to countries without adequate protection"..."

### **IRAQI MUSLIMS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT PEACE DURING RAMADAN**

*October 3, 2005* The Voice of America reported: "Muslims in Iraq are preparing to observe the holy month of Ramadan for the third time since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. But few people believe the period of fasting and prayer will take place in an atmosphere of peace. Grocery stores in Baghdad bustled with shoppers on Monday, eager to purchase as much food as they can before the start of Ramadan.

Set to begin early this week, Ramadan is the Islamic period of spiritual cleansing and Muslims observe it by praying and fasting during the day. But at sundown, they break their fast with an elaborate meal called iftar, which is traditionally shared with family and friends throughout the evening.

At one grocery store, VOA found Seena Mohammed Ali busily filling a large plastic bag with lentil beans, which she says she will use to prepare soup and other dishes for iftar. But the deeply religious 30 year-old Shi'ite school teacher says Ramadan is no longer a month she looks forward to.

Ms. Ali notes that for the past two years, insurgent attacks spiked just before and during Ramadan. Last year, a suicide bombing in Baghdad killed dozens of people on the eve of Ramadan. During Ramadan the year before, suicide car bombers struck the headquarters of the International Red Cross and several police stations in the capital, leaving more than 50 people dead.

The schoolteacher says she fears that two major events scheduled to take place during this year's Ramadan will do nothing but increase the risk of more terrible bloodshed.

Ms. Ali says the national referendum on the draft constitution on the 15th and the start of the trial of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein on the 19th are certain to cause insurgents to escalate their activities.

The draft constitution and Saddam's trial are both opposed by the country's Sunni Arab minority, who form the bulk of Iraq's insurgency.

Many Sunni Arabs are upset that the draft constitution grants the country's Shi'ite Muslims and Kurds significant authority to set up semi-autonomous zones in oil rich areas in the north and south, leaving little for Sunni Arabs in the middle of the country.

Sunni Arabs are also largely against trying former Sunni dictator Saddam, whom they say will be denied a fair trial in Iraq because Shi'ites and Kurds, who were long oppressed by Saddam, want revenge, not justice.

Moreover, Ramadan is to begin just a few weeks after the Sunni Arab, al-Qaida-linked extremist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi called for an all-out war against Iraqi Shi'ites. The wave of violence that followed Zarqawi's declaration has killed more than 200 people in the past nine days.

Forty-nine year-old Baghdad businessman Arshad Salim says he, too, is deeply concerned about the prospects of more violence to come. He says he is taking his family to spend Ramadan in neighboring Jordan..."

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