

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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STUDY SHOWS ANTARCTIC GLACIERS SHRINKING

April 21, 2005 The Associated Press reported: "The first comprehensive survey of glaciers on the Antarctic peninsula has shown that the rivers of ice are shrinking, mostly because of warming of the local climate. It is unclear, however, whether the increased temperature causing the shrinkage is a natural regional effect or a result of human-influenced global warming, said the scientists who conducted the study, published this week in the journal Science.

Researchers from the British Antarctic Survey and the U.S. Geological Survey analyzed more than 2,000 aerial photographs dating from 1940 and over 100 satellite images from the 1960s onwards. They calculated that 87 percent of the 244 glaciers going out to sea from the peninsula have retreated over the last 50 years and that the pace of shrinkage has accelerated over the last decade. Until now, scientists were uncertain whether the glaciers were growing or melting.

"Fifty years ago, most of the glaciers we look at were slowly growing in length but since then this pattern has reversed. In the last five years the majority were actually shrinking rapidly," said the study's leader, Alison Cook of the British Antarctic Survey. "However, 32 glaciers go against the trend and are showing minor advance. Had we not studied such a large number of glaciers we may have missed the overall pattern."

The Antarctic peninsula is a small segment of the Antarctic continent, located at the South Pole, and the behavior of the ice on the peninsula is not necessarily a reflection of what's going on elsewhere in Antarctica, said another of the investigators, David Vaughan of the British Antarctic Survey.

Temperatures seem to be much warmer there than on the rest of the continent. Evidence from the main Antarctic ice sheet is mixed, with some areas of the continent showing shrinkage and others showing thickening. Ice shrinkage has also been documented in Alaska and the North Pole.

Scientists worry about the melting of the ice sheets because the extra water may increase sea levels, which in turn could mean more flooding damage to coastal areas during storms. Sea levels have risen by 10 centimeters to 20 centimeters over the last 100 years and experts predict it could rise by a meter over the next 100 years..."

SENATE OKs \$81B FOR IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN

April 21, 2005 MyWay News reported: "The Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly approved \$81 billion for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in a spending bill that would push the total cost of combat and reconstruction past \$300 billion. Both the Senate and House versions of the measure would give President Bush much of the money he requested. But the bills differ over what portion should go to military operations.

Bush urged a quick resolution of the differences and passage of a bill "that focuses taxpayer dollars on providing the tools our troops and diplomats need now."

The Pentagon says it needs the money by the first week of May, so Senate and House negotiators are expected to act quickly to send the president a final bill...

Overall, the Senate version would cost \$81.3 billion, compared with the \$81.4 billion the House approved and the \$81.9 billion that Bush requested.

Congress has passed four similar emergency spending measures for the wars since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. This one would put the overall cost of combat and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan - as well as Pentagon operations against terrorists worldwide - past \$300 billion."

ISRAEL FEARS REGIONAL WAR IN 2006

April 20, 2005 Middle East Newline reported: "Israel has relayed its concern to the United States of the rising prospect of a Middle East war in 2006.

U.S. officials said Israel has determined that the expected U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2006 would raise tensions in the region that could lead to a Middle East war. The officials said the Israeli assessment asserted that Iran would either lead or play a major role in any future war against the Jewish state.

"It is the biggest nightmare of [Prime Minister] Ariel Sharon," a U.S. official said. "He has relayed repeated messages to the administration that *Iran and its Arab allies* were preparing for war."

Officials said Sharon has raised this issue with President George Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney and leaders of the U.S.

intelligence community. They said Sharon and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz have assessed that an Iran emboldened with nuclear weapons and intermediate-range missiles was seeking to form a coalition against Israel for a war that could take place after a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq..."

IRAN SEEKS DEFENSE TIES WITH SAUDIS

April 19, 2005 Middle East Newline reported: "Iran continues to seek defense cooperation with Saudi Arabia. "Iranian officials said Teheran has been wooing Saudi Arabia to purchase weapons and defense equipment from Iran. They said Iran has also offered Riyadh joint industrial projects and research and development.

Iranian Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani has been meeting Saudi officials and diplomats to discuss defense and military relations. Shamkhani has sought Saudi cooperation as part of an Iranian regional security effort that would exclude the United States. The two countries have signed a security cooperation accord. Shamkhani said he envisioned Saudi Arabia playing a major role in regional security. He said Iran has sought close defense cooperation with Riyadh, but did not elaborate..."

TURKEY WON'T EXPAND MILITARY TIES WITH SYRIA

April 15, 2005 Middle East Newline reported: "Turkey plans to improve its relations with Syria. But officials said this would not include a significant boost in military cooperation. Officials said Turkish President Ahmet Sezer would seek to improve cooperation with Syria during his two-day visit to Damascus. Sezer was scheduled to fly to Syria to meet President Bashar Assad on Wednesday in a visit that has upset the United States..."

WHO: MARBURG OUTBREAK NOT OVER; DEATH TOLL CLIMBS TO 235

April 19, 2005 Voice of America News reported: "The World Health Organization says the outbreak of deadly Marburg fever in northern Angola is not yet over. According to the U.N. health agency, the deadly hemorrhagic fever has so far killed 235 people - all of whom are believed to have contracted the disease in Uige province. WHO spokesman Dave Daigle says health experts are still finding cases, indicating the transmission cycle has not been broken.

He also says mobile U.N. teams working to contain the outbreak are meeting stiff resistance from some Angolans, who fear the health experts are spreading the Ebola-like virus.

Marburg is transmitted through contact with bodily fluids. Experts fear that contact with victims' bodies during burial rites may be one way the virus is spreading..."

STEPS AT REACTOR IN NORTH KOREA WORRY TO U.S.

April 18, 2005 The New York Times reported: "The suspected shutdown of a reactor at North Korea's main nuclear weapons complex has raised concern at the White House that the country could be preparing to make good on its recent threat to harvest a new load of nuclear fuel, potentially increasing the size of its nuclear arsenal.

While there is no way to know with any certainty why the reactor might have been shut down, it has been North Korea's main means of obtaining plutonium for weapons. The Central Intelligence Agency has told Congress it estimates that in the last two years the country turned a stockpile of spent fuel from the same reactor into enough bomb-grade material for more than six nuclear weapons.

The White House's concern over the past week arises from two developments. An American scholar with unusual access to North Korea's leaders, Selig S. Harrison, a longtime specialist on North Korea at the Center for International Policy in Washington, said after visiting the country two weeks ago that he was told by a very senior North Korean that there were plans "to unload the reactor to create a situation" to force President Bush to negotiate on terms more favorable to North Korea.

That focused new attention on spy satellite photographs of the reactor, which has been watched intensively in recent months. While American officials would not discuss what the spy satellites had seen, commercial satellite photographs of the plant, taken by DigitalGlobe and interpreted by the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington, show that the plant was apparently shut down or shifted to a very low power level at least 10 days ago, around the time of Mr. Harrison's visit.

Mr. Harrison's message and the satellite photographs present a mystery that has underscored how difficult it is for intelligence officials to decipher the state of the nuclear program in North Korea. The signs could mean that preparations are beginning to extract fuel rods from the aging five-megawatt reactor, the first step in the elaborate process of reprocessing the rods into weapons-grade plutonium. But there could also be more innocent explanations, among them maintenance - or a diplomatic bluff..."