

PROPHETIC TIMES

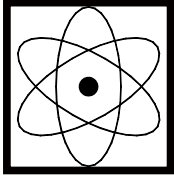
WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 16 2008

IRAN TESTING ADVANCED URANIUM CENTRIFUGES: DIPLOMAT

February 14, 2008 SpaceWar.com reported: "Iran has begun testing advanced second-generation centrifuges, defying UN Security Council demands to end its uranium enrichment activities, Western diplomats said Wednesday. According to the diplomats, who are posted to the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Iran has begun real tests of P2 centrifuges with uranium gas with the aim of producing enriched uranium.



"The Iranians are showing their face and it is clear that they want to develop their new centrifuges," said one Western diplomat.

The tests are the exact "opposite" of what the United Nations expects from Iran, said a European diplomat...

Western nations, led by the United States, suspect that Iran aims to develop a nuclear weapon, but Tehran says it has a peaceful programme aimed at producing electricity. Enriched uranium is used to make nuclear fuel, but can also be used to make fissile material for atomic bombs.

UN resolutions have called on Tehran suspend all enrichment activity until the IAEA can verify that such activities are entirely peaceful.

"Any Iranian attempt at a more advanced centrifuge would be an escalation of Iran's ongoing non-compliance with its obligation to suspend all enrichment-related activities," the US ambassador to the IAEA, Gregory Schulte, told AFP last week.

It would constitute a "further violation of Iran's international commitments, further reason why we are concerned about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme and the intentions of its leaders, and further reason for the Security Council to act," he said.

Last year, IAEA inspectors confirmed Iran's claim that it had 3,000 P1 centrifuges up and running at its Natanz nuclear facility, the amount needed, in ideal conditions, to produce enough material in one year to make a single atom bomb.

RUSSIA THREATENS NUCLEAR ATTACK ON UKRAINE

February 13, 2008 The London Daily Telegraph reported: "Russia has threatened to target the Ukraine with nuclear warheads if the former Soviet republic joins Nato and accepts the deployment of United States anti-missile defences on its territory.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia warned Ukraine's leader Viktor Yushchenko of "retaliatory actions" should his country join the Western alliance during a joint press conference in Moscow.

"It's frightening not just to talk about this, but even to think about, that in response to such deployment, the possibility of such deployments - and one can't theoretically exclude these deployments - that Russia will have to point its warheads at Ukrainian territory," he said...

Mr Yushchenko responded to the Russian pressure by insisting on Ukraine's right to decide its own foreign policy while stressing that his country's constitution would not allow US military bases on its territory.

"You understand well that everything that Ukraine does in this direction is not in any way directed at any third country, including Russia," he replied.

"We follow the principle that any nation has the right to define its own security. Our constitution does not allow deployment by a third country or bloc on Ukrainian territory."

Mr Putin has condemned Washington's plans to include Poland and the Czech Republic in a missile defence shield as a "new phase in the arms race"..."

RUSSIA WARNS OF NEW ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

February 12, 2008 VOA News reported: "Russia is warning of a new arms race if a treaty banning the deployment of weapons in outer space is not achieved. Russia and China have jointly presented a draft treaty to the U.N. Conference on Disarmament that would prohibit the deployment of weapons in space and the threat or use of force against satellites or other spacecraft. Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from Geneva.

In presenting the draft treaty text to the 65-member U.N. Conference on Disarmament, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned there could be no international security without preventing an arms race in space.

Speaking through an interpreter, he said the world's military and political equilibrium would be endangered unless strategic stability is maintained.

"Apart from this, weapons deployment in space by one state will inevitably result in a chain reaction," Lavrov said. "And, this, in turn, means a new spiral in the arms race both in space and on the Earth... The task of preventing an arms race in space is on the Conference's agenda. And, we are convinced that it is time, by way of preemption to start serious practical work in this field. Otherwise, we may miss the

opportunity. As you know, to prevent a threat is always easier than to remove it."

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 bans nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction from space. The United States opposes a new agreement that would place limits on its use of outer space.

Lavrov expressed his country's concern about Washington's increasing efforts to deploy an anti-missile defense shield in Europe."..."

BERNANKE WARNS OF WORSENING ECONOMY

February 14, 2008 The Associated Press reported: "Using words like "sluggish" and "deteriorated," Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke gave a starkly pessimistic assessment of the nation's economy on Thursday and signaled that the Fed will cut interest rate cuts further if needed to combat the adverse effects of a prolonged housing slump and a severe credit crisis.

Both Bernanke and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson told a congressional hearing that the economy could still avert a full-blown recession, but Democrats said they believed the government should be doing much more to help millions of Americans cope with a threatened tidal wave of mortgage foreclosures.

Bernanke told the Senate Banking Committee the serious housing slump and a credit crisis triggered by rising defaults in subprime mortgages had greatly strained the economy.

"The outlook for the economy has worsened in recent months and the downside risks to growth have increased," Bernanke told the committee. "To date, the largest economic effects of the financial turmoil appear to have been on the housing market, which, as you know, has deteriorated significantly over the past two years or so.

Bernanke noted that hiring has slowed with job creation falling by 17,000 in January, the first such setback in more than four years. He said the weaker labor market along with recent declines in stock prices and declining home prices were likely to be a drag on consumer confidence going forward."..."

EU PLANS BIOMETRIC BORDER CHECKS

February 13, 2008 The BBC news reported: "Visitors to the EU could face digital fingerprinting at airports under plans to beef up border security, EU Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini has said. He said travellers from outside the EU could face a biometric test as part of their visa while those not needing a permit would be checked on arrival.

There are also plans to improve border surveillance and land and sea patrols.

Rights group Privacy International said the move could create a "fortress Europe" for foreigners. And the European Council on Refugees in Exile complained that the tighter the restrictions, the harder it would become for people to seek safety from persecution.

The proposals for a radical shake-up of the EU's border security were unveiled by Mr Frattini in Brussels. He said the measures would apply to all 24 members of the Schengen accord, and it was up to countries such as the UK and Ireland whether to join in.

The commissioner said the EU had to use "the most advanced technology to reach the highest level of security" to stop visitors overstaying their welcome in Europe and to prevent terrorists from coming in."..."

Mr Frattini said he hoped the reforms - if approved by all the EU member states - would be introduced between 2010-2015."..."

ARCHBISHOP BACKS SHARIA LAW FOR BRITISH MUSLIMS

February 7, 2008 The Guardian reported: "The Archbishop of Canterbury tonight prompted criticism from across the political spectrum after he backed the introduction of sharia law in Britain and argued that adopting some of its aspects seemed "unavoidable". Rowan Williams, the most senior figure in the Church of England, said that giving Islamic law official status in the UK would help achieve social cohesion because some Muslims did not relate to the British legal system.

However, the prime minister's spokesman swiftly rejected the archbishop's comments, which were delivered in a lecture on civil and religious law at the Royal Courts of Justice. Gordon Brown's spokesman insisted British law would be based on British values and that sharia law would present no justification for acting against national law.

"Our general position is that sharia law cannot be used as a justification for committing breaches of English law, nor should the principles of sharia law be included in a civil court for resolving contractual disputes.

"If there are specific instances like stamp duty, where changes can be made in a way that's consistent with British law and British values, in a way to accommodate the values of fundamental Muslims, that is something the government would look at."

The Conservative peer and shadow minister for community cohesion and social action, Sayeeda Warsi, also criticised the Anglican primate.

"The archbishop's comments are unhelpful and may add to the confusion that already exists in our communities ... We must ensure that people of all backgrounds and religions are treated equally before the law."..."

