



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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IRAQ PLANS TO PURCHASE UP TO 2,000 T-72 MBTS

January 22, 2009 Middle East Newslite reported: "Iraq plans to procure up to 2,000 Soviet-origin main battle tanks. Industry sources said Iraq has been discussing with the United States the purchase of the T-72 MBT. The sources said the Iraq Army wants U.S. firms to modernize surplus T-72s from several former East Bloc countries.

"The Iraqis believe they could get these tanks cheap and upgrade them at a cost that would be much lower than the [U.S.-origin M1A1] Abrams," an industry source said.

The Defense Department has been discussing the Iraqi project with U.S. firms. One of them was Defense Solutions Holding, based in Exton, Pa., which had rebuilt and delivered 77 T-72 MBTs for the Iraq Army in 2005."



IRAQ AIR FORCE PLANS FOR ENHANCEMENT

January 22, 2009 Middle East Newslite reported: "The Iraq Air Force has been preparing for the arrival of aircraft and facilities. Officials said the U.S.-led coalition has been helping the air force acquire helicopters and ground stations in 2009. They said the air force expected a shipment of Russian-origin Mi-17 utility helicopters in early 2009.

"Things are moving along at a steady pace," U.S. Capt. Ciro de la Vega, an adviser to the air force, said."

ARAB WORLD ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE

January 19, 2009 Arutz Sheva reported: "Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Saud al-Feisal and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Musa warn that the Arab world is on the verge of collapse.

Speaking at a joint press conference they held in Kuwait, the two said that the Arab world faces anarchy and an inner split, which they attribute to two factors: The inter-Palestinian struggle, and the "Israeli aggression and occupation."

Several recent incidents portray the weakness of Arab unity, correspondent Haggai Huberman reports. Last Friday, a gathering of representatives of more than a dozen Arab and Muslim nations was held in Doha. Among the participants were Damascus-based Khaled Meshaal of Hamas and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinajad – but the others were not informed of the participation of these two until after they had already arrived in Doha. Apparently, it was feared that the participation of Meshaal and Ahmedinajad might keep others away.

In addition, a high-ranking French diplomat has been quoted as saying that Syria was more interested in weakening Egypt over the past three weeks than in helping solve the crisis in Gaza. Syria and others accused Egypt of conspiring with Israel in order to attack Gazan Arabs. The diplomat further said that the Syrian branch of Hamas is more extremist than the Gazan, and that this is related to Syria's influence over Meshaal.

At the same time, the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs reports that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will take part in an economic summit in Kuwait Monday, but refuses to reconcile with those who attacked Egypt for its stance during the Gaza war. Mubarak refused to take part in the Doha conference. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, for his part, has postponed his arrival in Kuwait, and it is possible that he will not take part at all.

And more from Kuwait: 21 Kuwaiti parliamentarians called Sunday night for Palestinian Authority Fatah Chairman Mahmoud Abbas not to be invited to the summit. They said that Abbas's term as president ended on Jan. 9, in accordance with the elections of four years ago, and that a Hamas figure must be invited in his stead.

In response, Fatah legislator Azzam Al-Ahmad said that the Kuwaitis were intervening in an "internal Palestinian issue" and were "recruited by regional powers who wish to weaken the Palestinian people and the Arab nation." ..."

TIJUANA OFF-LIMITS TO U.S. MARINES

January 21, 2009 USA Today reported: "For tens of thousands of U.S. Marines in Southern California, new orders from the brass amount to: Baghdad si, Tijuana no. Citing a wave of violence and murder in Mexico, the commanding officer of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force based at Camp Pendleton has made the popular military "R&R" destinations of Tijuana and nearby beaches effectively off-limits for his Marines.

The order by Lt. Gen. Samuel Helland restricts travel into Mexico by the 44,000 members of the unit, many of whom have had multiple tours of duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other combat zones under their belts — or are there now.

The limits were first put in place for the Christmas holiday. Last week the commander extended the order indefinitely, said Mike Alvarez, civilian public information officer for the unit at Camp Pendleton." ..."

HAMAS USE OF CHILDREN WAS 'MONSTROUS'

January 22, 2008 The Jerusalem Post reported: " Hamas made "monstrous" and "inhumane" use of innocent children when it booby-trapped homes and schools inside the Gaza Strip, OC Gaza Division Brig.-Gen. Eyal Eisenberg said Thursday.

Palestinian families in Gaza, Eisenberg said, were often surprised to discover after Operation Cast Lead ended that without their knowledge, Hamas had booby-trapped their homes and placed explosives beneath them.

"Troops encountered a difficult reality, entering homes and finding suicide bombers hiding in them and walking down streets and finding roadside bombs hidden inside television satellite dishes," he said.

Eisenberg, who is commander of the ground offensive in Gaza, told reporters he was convinced that Hamas was dealt a heavy blow and that Israel had restored its deterrence."..."

US DIPLOMAT WALKS OUT ON BOLIVIA'S MORALES

January 22, 2009 The Associated Press reported: "The top U.S. diplomat in Bolivia has left a speech by President Evo Morales after the leftist leader said Washington is plotting against his government. Kris Urs says the accusations are "unfounded," "false," "intolerable."

Urs, the highest-ranking U.S. diplomat since Morales booted the ambassador last year, walked out Thursday near the beginning of Morales' four-hour address on the third anniversary of his taking office. Morales during the speech repeated accusations that the U.S. embassy conspired with his opposition to "foment the disintegration of the country."

Morales, a former coca grower who also kicked out DEA agents last year, has expressed hope for improved relations with new U.S. President Barack Obama."

BLACK DEATH PLAGUE KILLS-40 AL QAEDA TERRORISTS

January 22, 2009 Arutz Sheva News Service reported: "At least 40 Al Qaeda terrorists were killed earlier this week by a plague called the Black Death.

The same disease that devastated Europe in the Middle Ages claimed terrorists training this week in a camp in Algeria. The dead were members of a group called AQLIM (Al Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb), the largest and most powerful Al-Qaeda group outside the Middle East. The disease is accompanied by horrific symptoms, causing terrible suffering to its victims

One security source told the British paper *The Sun*, which broke the story, "This is the deadliest weapon yet in the war against terror. Most of the terrorists do not have the basic medical supplies needed to treat the disease. It spreads quickly and kills within hours. This will be really worrying Al-Qaeda."

Al Qaeda also fears that surviving terrorists will give themselves up in order to seek treatment."..."

EU CONTINUES TO LAG BEHIND US ON INNOVATION

January 22, 2009 The EU Observer reported: "The EU has made some headway in its bid to make itself more innovative and boost its economy but is still lagging far behind the US and Japan, a new report by the European Commission has shown.

The study, released on Thursday (22 January), indicates that the 27-nation bloc has seen a strong rise in the number of graduates in areas such as science and engineering as well as a boost in the availability of internet broadband and the amount of private capital to spend on innovation.



But investment by businesses in research and development in the union has stagnated while EU companies' expenditure on training and new equipment - seen as an important contributor to growth - is declining. In addition, the pace at which the EU is closing the innovation gap with the US has slowed down.

Figures for 2005 showed that the US was performing 40 percent better than the EU on innovation. This percentage dropped to 33 percent in 2006, and 29 percent in 2007. Last year, the EU only managed to close the gap by one percent, with the US still performing 28 percent better on innovation.

The EU has struggled for years with the goal it set itself to become the world's leading knowledge-based economy. Its key target, set in 2000, is to invest 3 percent of GDP in research and development by 2010.

Each year, the European Commission publishes figures that fall below this target and exhorts member states to do better - R&D investment is currently languishing at 1.84 percent. However, within the EU itself there are star performers and laggards. Sweden, Finland, Germany, Denmark and the UK are considered to be "innovation leaders" with a performance well above the EU average.

At the other end of the scale are the "catching up countries," coming in well below the EU average. This group is made up of countries who joined the EU in 2004 or later - Malta, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia and Bulgaria.

Commenting on the results of the study, research commissioner Janez Potocnik and his industry colleague Guenter Verheugen said: "In a time of crisis, it is not the moment to take a break in research investments and in innovation. They are vital if Europe wants to emerge stronger from the economic crisis and if it wants to address the challenges of climate change and globalisation."..."

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