



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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US CONCERNED ABOUT ALLEGED SYRIAN MISSILE TRANSFER

April 14, 2010 VOAnews.com: "The United States has voiced concern about allegations that Syria has transferred long-range Scud missiles to the Lebanese-based militant group Hezbollah. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs says the U.S. has relayed its concern to the Syrian government.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley says any such missile transfer would put Lebanon at "significant risk." The remarks came a day after Israeli President Shimon Peres accused Syria of supplying Scud missiles to Hezbollah that threaten Israel.

Israel and Hezbollah fought a month-long war in 2006 that killed more than 1,200 Lebanese people and about 160 Israelis. During the war, Hezbollah fired thousands of missiles into Israel, and Israeli forces carried out attacks on Lebanese territory.

The United States has long accused Syria of supporting Hezbollah, which the U.S. considers a terrorist group.

The Obama administration has reached out to Syria in the past year by nominating the first U.S. ambassador to Damascus since 2005 and sending top diplomats to meet with the Syrian president.

The U.S. withdrew its last ambassador to Syria after the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. Many countries have blamed Syria for the assassination, but Damascus has denied any involvement."

QUIET SUN PUTS EUROPE ON ICE

April 14, 2010 NewScientist.com reported: "BRACE yourself for more winters like the last one, northern Europe. Freezing conditions could become more likely: winter temperatures may even plummet to depths last seen at the end of the 17th century, a time known as the Little Ice Age. That's the message from a new study that identifies a compelling link between solar activity and winter temperatures in northern Europe.

The research finds that low solar activity promotes the formation of giant kinks in the jet stream. These kinks can block warm westerly winds from reaching Europe, while allowing in winds from Arctic Siberia. When this happens in winter, northern Europe freezes, even though other, comparable regions of the globe may be experiencing unusually mild conditions.

Mike Lockwood at the University of Reading in the UK began his investigation because these past two relatively cold British winters coincided with a lapse in the sun's activity more profound than anything seen for a century. For most of 2008-9, sunspots virtually disappeared from the sun's surface and the buffeting of Earth by the solar magnetic field dropped to record lows since measurements began, about 150 years ago.



Lockwood and his colleagues took average winter temperatures from the Central England Temperature dataset, which extends back to 1659, and compared it with records of highs and lows in solar activity. They found that during years of low solar activity, winters in the UK were far more likely to be colder than average. "There is less than a 1 per cent probability that the result was obtained by chance," says Lockwood, in a paper to appear in *Environmental Research Letters*.

Judith Lean, a solar-terrestrial physicist at the US Naval Research Laboratory in Washington DC, says the analysis is statistically robust, and reckons it forms a piece in the larger puzzle of how solar activity influences weather. Often cited by climate-change sceptics as a cause of global warming (see "What are you up to, sunshine?"), the effects of solar cycles have largely evaded the grasp of climate modellers.

Lockwood found that when he removed 20th-century warming due to industrial emissions from his models, the statistical link between solar lows and extreme winters was stronger, suggesting the phenomenon is unrelated to global warming. But the sun undeniably has a big influence on weather systems: it is, after all, the energy source that powers them.

"All the little pieces are adding up into something much bigger," says Lean. "People are beginning to realise that European weather is particularly susceptible to solar activity." A study she published in 2008 found that warmer-than-average temperatures were more likely in northern Europe when solar activity is high (*Geophysical Research Letters* DOI: 10.1029/2008GL034864).

Lean says research like hers and Lockwood's is helping to overcome a long-standing reticence among climate scientists to tackle the influence of solar cycles on the climate and weather."..."

ICELANDIC VOLCANO GLACIER MELT FORCES HUNDREDS TO FLEE

April 14, 2010 BBCNews.com reported: "Hundreds of people have left their homes in south-western Iceland because of fears of a volcanic eruption under the Eyjafjallajökull glacier. Several earthquakes have been registered in the area and geologists are warning of destructive floods. The volcano under the glacier last erupted March 20 after almost 200 years of silence."

WESTERN CHINESE PROVINCE STRUCK BY 6.9 EARTHQUAKE

April 13, 2010 The Associated Press reported: "A series of strong earthquakes struck China's western Qinghai province Wednesday, the U.S. Geological Survey said."...The USGS reported on its Web site that a magnitude 6.9 temblor struck an area in southern Qinghai, near Tibet, on Wednesday morning and was followed by two quakes in the same region.

The quake hit the county of Yushu, a Tibetan area in Qinghai, the official Xinhua News Agency cited the China Earthquake Networks Center as saying. The Chinese center measured the quake's magnitude at 7.1. A local government Web site put the county's population in 2005 at 89,300, a community of mostly herders and farmers.

The quake sent residents fleeing as it toppled many houses made of mud and wood, said Gasong Nima, the Yushu county television station's deputy head of news, speaking by phone with state broadcaster CCTV. "In a flash, the houses went down. It was a terrible earthquake," the witness said. "In a small park, there is a Buddhist tower and the top of the tower fell off."...

The epicenter of the first quake was located 235 miles (380 kilometers) south-southeast of Golmud, a large city in Qinghai, at a depth of six miles (10 kilometers), the USGS said.

Ten minutes later, the area was hit by a magnitude 5.3 quake, which was followed after two minutes by a temblor measuring 5.2, according to the U.S. agency. Both the subsequent earthquakes were measured at a depth of 6 miles (10 kilometers)."..."

LOW SUPPLIES SLOW CHINA EARTHQUAKE RESCUE EFFORTS

April 15, 2010 The Associated Press reported: "Earthquake survivors shivered through a second night outdoors in a remote Tibetan corner of western China with rescuers fighting altitude sickness and dealing with a lack of supplies as the death toll rose to 760.

People with broken arms or legs cried in pain as medical teams could offer little more than injections. A doctor at the Qinghai provincial hospital, where the severely injured were being flown, said she had no idea how many were being treated because there was no time to count them all.

Stunned survivors wandered the dusty streets of Jiegu, where relief workers estimated 70 percent to 90 percent of the low-slung town of wood-and-mud housing had collapsed. Hundreds gathered to sleep in a plaza around a 50-foot (15-meter) tall statue of the mythical Tibetan King Gesar, wrapped in blankets taken from homes shattered by Wednesday morning's quakes.

"There's nothing to eat. We've just been drinking water," said Zhaxi Zuoma, a 32-year-old camped with thousands of others on a rocky field. They asked a reporter to bring them food the next day.

The official Xinhua News Agency said 760 people had died, 243 people were missing, and 11,477 were injured, 1,174 severely. The worst of the quakes measured magnitude 6.9 by the U.S. Geological Survey and 7.1 by China's earthquake administration."..."



GUARANTEE THAT SUNDAYS WILL BE WORK-FREE, EU LEADERS URGED

March 24, 2010 Reuters reported: "As a matter of principle, all citizens of the European Union should be entitled to a work-free Sunday, a group of more than 70 organisations including churches, trade unions and civil organisations is urging EU authorities.

The call was made ahead of a meeting at the European Parliament for the first European Conference on a Work-Free Sunday, according to a statement issued by the Conference of European Churches.

Members of the Conference of European Churches include about 120 Orthodox Christian, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 associated organisations.

"The protection of a work-free Sunday is of paramount importance for workers' health, for the reconciliation of work and family life as well as for the life of civil society as a whole," according to a statement addressed to EU heads of state and government, the European Parliament, European Commission and "all European citizens".

"This common weekly day of rest serves to strengthen social cohesion in our societies, a cohesion so severely undermined by the current economic crisis," the statement said.

Rüdiger Noll, Director of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches, told the March 24 2010 conference: "More than any other day of the week, a free Sunday offers the opportunity to be with one's family and friends.

"Common free time is an important precondition for a participatory society, which allows its members to engage in civil activities," Noll said. The statement qualified its call by saying, "of course, this does not exclude exceptions necessary for the provision of essential services, nor does it prejudice the important role of social partners in the negotiation of collective agreements".

EU heads of state and government, who are to meet for their spring summit, were urged to "firmly resist the growing economic pressure to liberalise the laws providing for a work-free Sunday and to commit themselves to safeguard and promote a work-free Sunday as a pillar of the European Social Model within the laws of their respective nations".

The statement concluded "we call upon all European citizens to sign a future Citizens' Initiative to be expressed in favour of the protection of a work-free Sunday"..."

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