

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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ISRAEL CONCERNED OVER NEW HAMAS IRAN ALLIANCE

February 23, 2006 Voice of America News reported: "Israel is tightening the financial squeeze on the Islamic militant group Hamas, which won Palestinian parliamentary elections last month. Hamas has struck a deal to receive financing from Iran. Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert says Hamas is not a strategic threat to Israel. The statement was a signal that Israel will continue to put economic, but not military pressure on Hamas.

Mr. Olmert told the parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that with Hamas at the helm, the Palestinian Authority is "contaminated with terror."

Officials at the closed-door meeting quoted Mr. Olmert as saying that Israel will not transfer any more money to the Palestinian Authority. That amounts to about \$50 million a month in tax revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinians.

The United States and Europe are also threatening to cut nearly a billion dollars a year in aid to the Palestinian Authority, on grounds that Hamas is a terrorist organization seeking the destruction of Israel.

But Hamas has found a new donor. Iran pledged to support the Palestinian Authority, following meetings in Tehran with Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal.

Israelis spokesman Avi Pazner says Iran is seeking nuclear weapons, and therefore he says, its alliance with Hamas is an "axis of evil."

"With Iran now you have both the danger of classical terrorism, of nuclear terrorism, and a state who by itself has a terroristic policy. And this is a new threat, and this is a threat that is dangerous to everybody," he said.

Despite its strengthening ties with Iran, Hamas is also reaching out to Palestinian moderates. It held a first round of talks with the defeated Fatah party to discuss a possible partnership in the new Palestinian government..."

SYRIA EXPECTED TO ACQUIRE NO-DONG

February 23, 2006 The Middle East Newline reported: "The United States expects that Syria will procure the No-Dong intermediate-range ballistic missile from North Korea. A report by the Congressional Research Service said Syria would seek to extend the range of its ballistic missile arsenal amid the success of its ally, Iran. The report, entitled "Missile Defense: The Current Debate," said Syria would require the No-Dong to prepare for any Middle East war.

"Although Syria has not shown any overt interest in acquiring longer-range missiles," the report said, "it is possible that as regional security prospects continue to deteriorate, Syria may attempt to acquire longer-range systems such as the No-Dong MRBM [medium-range ballistic missile]."

The No-Dong, based on the Scud missile, was said to have a range of about 1,200 kilometers. North Korea was said to have sold the No-Dong or components to Egypt, Iran and Libya..."

'MULTIPLE' BIRD FLU PANDEMIC ALERT

February 22, 2006 The Scotsman reported: "SCIENTISTS have warned of multiple bird-flu pandemics, amid concerns that if the virus mutates to pass between humans and potentially spark a pandemic once, it is likely to do so repeatedly. Researchers in the United States compared the way such pandemics could start to "a fire throwing out sparks".

That means containing an emerging bird flu pandemic at its source would probably only delay, not stop, the spread of the illness, the team from the Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Washington said.

"If a single introduction of a pandemic-capable strain is likely to happen, then multiple introductions are also likely," said Marc Lipsitch, a professor of epidemiology.

The warning came as Hungary yesterday became the seventh European Union nation to confirm an outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu, found in swans 100 miles north of Budapest..."

IRAN, CHINA PREPARE MAJOR DEAL

February 21, 2006 The Middle East Newline reported: "Iran and China have been discussing a major energy deal.

Western diplomatic sources said the two countries have been examining an agreement that would make Iran the leading oil supplier to China. The sources said the long-term deal was valued at \$100 billion.

Over the weekend, Iran and China discussed cooperation in oil, natural gas and petrochemicals. The official Iranian news agency Irna said the conference, held in Kish Island, was attended by officials and experts from both countries.

Gholam-Reza Manouchehri, managing director of Iran's Petropars, said China has been a major developer of Iran's energy reserves and called for the transfer of Chinese technology. Manouchehri also cited China's growing demand for oil..."

IRAN PRESSES GCC TO SUPPORT NUKE PROGRAM

February 20, 2006 The Middle East Newslite reported: "Iran has been pressing Gulf Arab states to support Teheran's nuclear program. Arab diplomatic sources said Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has sent messages to all six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The sources said the messages, relayed over the last month, urged Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to support Iran's nuclear program.

"I am calling upon GCC states to support Iran's uranium enrichment plan," Iranian parliamentarian Hussein Sheik Al Islam said.

Al Islam has been one of several Iranian representatives who have visited GCC states over the last few weeks. Al Islam, a member of parliament's Economic Committee, met officials in Qatar..."

CUBA, IRAN VOW ALLEGIANCE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

February 18, 2006 The Voice of America News reported: "The head of Cuba's parliament has offered to support Iran in its fight to develop nuclear energy within Iranian borders.

Ricardo Alarcon voiced solidarity Thursday in a meeting with the visiting speaker of Iran's parliament, Gholam Ali Haddad Adel. Iran resumed enrichment of uranium for nuclear fuel earlier this week, despite international pressure against the move.

Haddad Adel is on a two-day visit to Cuba after spending Wednesday in Venezuela, where he thanked the government for its support on nuclear issues.

Meanwhile, Indiana Representative Dan Burton, in an interview with Voice of America Thursday, expressed concern over the close ties between Iran and the two countries. He said if it appears that there is coordination between terrorist states and leftist organizations in Central America, the United States will intervene.

Representative Burton said such a relationship would endanger the United States and other countries in the hemisphere."

U.S. NEEDS 100 BOMBERS TO DESTROY IRAN NUKES

February 17, 2006 The Middle East Newslite reported: "The United States requires 100 bombers to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons facilities. A report by the London-based Oxford Research Group said a U.S. attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would require more than 100 B-2 and B-1B strategic bombers. The report said the U.S. strike, which would require up to five days, must destroy about 20 key nuclear and military targets.

"An attack on Iranian nuclear infrastructure would signal the start of a protracted military confrontation that would probably grow to involve Iraq, Israel and Lebanon, as well as the USA and Iran," the report, released in February 2006, said.

The report said the U.S. attack must take place before 2007 and include the Bushehr nuclear reactor. Bushehr was scheduled to begin full-scale operations over the next few months..."

GERMAN COURT CONVICTS MAN FOR INSULTING ISLAM

February 23, 2006 Reuters reported: "A German court on Thursday convicted a businessman of insulting Islam by printing the word "Koran" on toilet paper and offering it to mosques. The 61-year-old man, identified only as Manfred van H., was given a one-year jail sentence, suspended for five years, and ordered to complete 300 hours of community service, a district court in the western German town of Luedinghausen ruled.

The conviction comes after a Danish newspaper printed cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad -- sparking violent protests around the world from Muslims who saw the images as sacrilegious and an attack on their beliefs.

Manfred van H. printed out sheets of toilet paper bearing the word "Koran" shortly after a group of Muslims carried out a series of bomb attacks in London in July 2005. He sent the paper to German television stations, magazines and some 15 mosques.

Prosecutors said that in an accompanying letter Manfred van H. called Islam's holy book a "cookbook for terrorists."...

The maximum sentence for insulting religious beliefs under the German criminal code is three years in prison."

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