

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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SYRIA ANNOUNCES MEASURES TO SUPPORT HAMAS GOVERNMENT

April 20, 2006 Harretz.com reported: "Syria on Thursday announced a series of measures to support the Hamas government, saying it would raise funds for the Palestinians and establish direct phone links with them. Making light of the West's boycott of the Hamas government, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moallem told reporters: "We are not afraid of anyone in our support for the Palestinian cause."

Moallem addressed a joint press conference with Palestinian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar, the leading Hamas official in Gaza, who has suffered two diplomatic setbacks during the past week.

The Egyptian foreign minister refused to see him when he visited Cairo last weekend. And Jordan cancelled a Zahar visit scheduled for Wednesday after discovering a cache of Hamas weapons - with which Hamas denied involvement.

Arriving in Damascus early Thursday, Zahar held talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad and later with Moallem on what was his first visit to Syria.

Zahar told reporters, and Moallem confirmed, that Syria had set April 30 as a national day for donating money to the Palestinians. Syria will also raise the level of its diplomatic relations with the Palestinian Authority, accept travelers carrying Palestinian Authority passports, and establish direct phone links with the Palestinian territories."..."

BUBONIC PLAGUE STRIKES LOS ANGELES WOMAN

April 20, 2006 NewScientist.com reported: "Health officials have issued alerts in Los Angeles parks after a woman from the city fell ill with bubonic plague. They remain uncertain about whether she contracted the disease in an urban location or in a park.

"We may never know where she got it," says Laurene Mascola, chief of the Acute Communicable Disease Control Unit for the county of Los Angeles, California, US. She told New Scientist that the victim, who is recovering well, visited a large city park called Griffith Park. But the patient's memory is impaired and her recollection of the timing of her visit to the park does not tally with the incubation period of the bubonic plague.

There is also a possibility that she contracted the disease in the area around her urban neighbourhood, Country Club Park, in west-central Los Angeles.

It is the first human case of plague in the county since 1984. But about 10 to 15 people per year contract the disease in the US, usually in rural places, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Los Angeles woman first developed symptoms about a week ago. The illness is characterised by swollen, black-purple spots under the skin, called buboes, along with other symptoms such as fever and muscle aches. It is rarely fatal if treated promptly with antibiotics."..."

REPORT: UK TERRORISTS BEING RECRUITED

April 19, 2006 Jerusalem Post reported: "An Iranian terrorist group stated on Wednesday that it was recruiting Muslim British citizens to come to Israel to execute suicide bombing attacks against Israelis.

A spokesman for the group, Mohammad Samadi, told the London-based Guardian that Israel was the primary target of their attacks. "All the Jews are targets, whether military or civilian. It's our land and they are in the wrong place. It's their duty to pay attention to the safety of their own families and move them away from the battlefield," he stated.

He claimed that there were many disaffected Muslims throughout Europe that could volunteer for such a mission. "We understand the suspicion with which Britain, America and other western countries regard their Muslim populations," he said, adding "We don't condemn them for this because we believe every Muslim has the potential to turn into a bomb against the west."

The terrorist group, called The Committee for the Commemoration of Martyrs of the Global Islamic Campaign, reportedly received strong support from the Iranian regime, though it claimed to be independent. The British embassy in Teheran had called upon Iran to renounce its support for the group."..."

IRAN READY FOR WAR BUT SEEKS PEACE

April 18, 2006 SpaceWar.com reported: "Iran's top envoy to Russia said Monday his country was prepared for war if attacked over its nuclear program but was making a "maximum effort" to end the impasse over that program through peaceful negotiation, news agencies reported.

"One way to avert war is to be prepared for any war," Iranian Ambassador Gholamreza Ansari was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying on the eve of talks in Moscow among six powers on how to address the Iran nuclear problem.

"Iran continues to make a maximum effort so that no war will happen in this region," Ansari said. But he added that "Iran has been, is and will be prepared" for armed conflict if it comes to that.

"We hope that the Iranian issue will be resolved by way of negotiation," Interfax and RIA Novosti quoted him as saying.

His comments came as officials representing the five permanent UN Security Council members -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- and Germany prepared to hold talks in Moscow on how to proceed on the Iran nuclear issue.

The Security Council on March 29 gave Iran 30 days to suspend uranium enrichment activities. The head of the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, visited Iran last week and was due to report back to the Security Council before April 29."..."

EGYPTIAN, FRENCH PRESIDENTS CALL FOR DIPLOMACY ON IRAN

April 20, 2006 Voice of America News reported: "The presidents of Egypt and France are urging other nations to pursue diplomatic rather than military solutions to the nuclear standoff with Iran. After meeting in Cairo, they warned that the use of force could destabilize the region and the world.

French President Jacques Chirac said the door remains open for Iran to resume talks over its nuclear program if it comes in line with requests from the United Nations. "We have to explore all diplomatic possibilities in order to avoid a destabilization of the Middle East," he said.

Mr. Chirac's host in Cairo, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, shared the same concern. "This question must be resolved through diplomatic and political means, averting military operations, which would have dangerous repercussions in the region and the world," he said.

The two leaders spoke to reporters after meeting in Cairo on the first day of the French president's two-day visit to Egypt. Iran's controversial nuclear program topped the agenda at the wide-ranging talks. The other main topic was Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. The European Union has been a major donor to Palestinian government, but the United States and the E.U. have suspended aid because Hamas refuses to renounce violence and recognize Israel.

Mr. Chirac said world leaders should find ways of continuing aid to the Palestinian people, while keeping the pressure on Hamas to change its more radical views. Mr. Chirac says, It is unjust and politically clumsy to make the Palestinian population pay for what we are asking.

The two heads of state also discussed the crisis in the Sudanese region of Darfur, as well as the ongoing tensions between Lebanon and Syria. Mr. Chirac said he backs full sovereignty for Lebanon, and he called for continued investigations into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri."

IRAN ISSUES STARK MILITARY WARNING TO UNTIED STATES

April 15, 2006 Agency France-Presse reported: "Iran said it could defeat any American military action over its controversial nuclear drive, in one of the Islamic regime's boldest challenges yet to the United States.

"You can start a war but it won't be you who finishes it," said General Yahya Rahim Safavi, the head of the Revolutionary Guards and among the regime's most powerful figures.

"The Americans know better than anyone that their troops in the region and in Iraq are vulnerable. I would advise them not to commit such a strategic error," he told reporters on the sidelines of a pro-Palestinian conference in Tehran.

The United States accuses Iran of using an atomic energy drive as a mask for weapons development. Last weekend US news reports said President George W. Bush's administration was refining plans for preventive strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.

"I would advise them to first get out of their quagmire in Iraq before getting into an even bigger one," General Safavi said with a grin.

"We have American forces in the region under total surveillance. For the past two years, we have been ready for any scenario, whether sanctions or an attack."

Iran announced this week it had successfully enriched uranium to make nuclear fuel, despite a UN Security Council demand for the sensitive work to be halted by April 28. The Islamic regime says it only wants to generate atomic energy, but enrichment can be extended to make the fissile core of a nuclear warhead -- something the United States is convinced that "axis of evil" member Iran wants to acquire."..."