

# PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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## CLIMBDOWN AS HAMAS AGREES TO ISRAELI STATE

*June 22, 2006* Guardian.co.uk reported: " Hamas has made a major political climbdown by agreeing to sections of a document that recognise Israel's right to exist and a negotiated two-state solution, according to Palestinian leaders.

In a bitter struggle for power, Hamas is bowing to an ultimatum from the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, to endorse the document drawn up by Palestinian security prisoners in Israeli jails, or face a national referendum on the issue that could see the Islamist group stripped of power if it loses.

But final agreement on the paper, designed to end international sanctions against the Hamas government that have crippled the Palestinian economy, has been slowed by wrangling over a national unity administration and the question of who speaks for the Palestinians.

Yasser Abed Rabbo, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's executive committee and a lead negotiator on the prisoners' document, said Hamas had agreed to sections which call for a negotiated and final agreement with Israel to establish a Palestinian state on the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem.

" Hamas is prepared to accept those parts of the document because they think it is a way to get rid of a lot of its problems with the international community. That's why it will accept all the document eventually," he said.

Hamas, facing a deep internal split over recognition of the Jewish state, declined to discuss the negotiations in detail.

If it formally approves the entire document, it will represent a significant shift from its founding goal of replacing Israel with an Islamic state and its more recent position of agreeing a long-term ceasefire, over a generation or more, if a Palestinian state is formed on the occupied territories but without formally recognising the Jewish state."..."

## CHINA, EGYPT SIGN ENERGY ACCORD

*June 21, 2006* The Middle East Newsline reported: " China and Egypt have signed a series of energy accords. Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and his Egyptian counterpart Ahmed Nazif signed oil and gas agreements during Wen's visit to Cairo on June 17. The accords call for Chinese investment in Egypt's energy sector.

" Energy is an important backbone of Egypt's economy and we are willing to collaborate with Egypt in the energy sector under an equal and reciprocal basis," Wen said.

The agreements mark another step in strategic cooperation between Beijing and Cairo. Officials said the two countries have increased diplomatic, military and trade relations over the last two years. In 2005, Chinese-Egyptian trade exceeded \$2 billion, an increase of 36 percent from the previous year."..."

## US: IF N. KOREA LAUNCHES MISSILE WITHOUT NOTICE, CAN'T ASSUME IT IS TEST

*June 20, 2006* The Voice of America News reported: " The Defense Department says in the absence of any statement by the North Korean government it will not be possible to know whether a widely expected missile launch is a test or an attack.

Spokesman Bryan Whitman would not confirm reports that North Korea is preparing to launch a long-range missile, saying he could not discuss intelligence matters. But he says if there is a launch without any advance notice from the government in Pyongyang, there will be no basis on which to assume it is only a test.

" 'Test' would, to me, indicate that you are doing something like an exercise," he said. " You are testing a missile. 'Test' has intent behind it, as opposed to launching a missile. When you are launching a missile, to me, you [others] do not know what the intent of the launch is, you [others] do not know if the launch is intended to be a test or something else."

The Pentagon spokesman hinted to reporters that if North Korea launches a missile the United States might use its new missile defense system. " The United States does have a limited missile defense system. I will not get into or discuss any specific alert status or capabilities," added Whitman.

The U.S. Missile Defense system relies on radars and other systems on the ground and on satellites to detect missile launches and deploy interceptors to shoot them down. The system has had some successful tests, and some failures, and is not yet fully operational.

The Pentagon spokesman and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice again referred to any North Korean launch as 'a provocative act.' And Secretary Rice says she has been coordinating possible responses with allies. " It would once again show North Korea determined to deepen its isolation, determined not to take a path that is a path of compromise and a path of peace," said Rice.

Secretary Rice says a launch would violate North Korea's own moratorium, and she says maintaining the moratorium is part of the agreement North Korea signed last September to pursue a diplomatic solution to the dispute over its nuclear program."

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## **NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO WIPE OUT US FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA**

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*June 19, 2006* SpaceWar.com reported: "North Korea on Sunday threatened to "mercilessly wipe out" US forces in case of war during a national meeting to mark leader Kim Jong-Il's 42 years' work at the ruling party. The threat, in a ruling party report carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), came as North Korea was reportedly preparing to test-fire a long-range missile despite strong protests from the United States and its allies.

Choe Thae Bok, a ranking Workers Party official, said Washington was "hell-bent on provocations of war of aggression" in the report to mark the 42nd anniversary of Kim's start at the party, KCNA said. "If the enemies ignite a war eventually, the Korean army and people will mercilessly wipe out the aggressors and give vent to the deep-rooted grudge of the nation," Choe was quoted as telling the meeting.

North Koreans are customarily advised to watch the televised event, according to Seoul officials who cautiously questioned a news report that had linked the notice to a possible missile launch.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted an unnamed source as saying the missile launch could take place either Sunday or Monday. But as of Sunday, North Korea was not confirmed yet to have fueled the missile at a launch pad in the remote northeast of the country, the final step before a test-firing. North Korean technicians have already reportedly assembled a multi-stage Taepodong-2, with a range of 3,500 to 6,000 kilometers (2,200 to 3,750 miles).

But South Korea maintained its usual level of military alert on Sunday despite the news reports about an imminent missile test launch. "The military is on the same level of alert as usual. There has been no upgrade in the military alert yet," a defense ministry spokesman said.

South Korea, which seeks to reconcile with North Korea after decades of hostility since the 1950-1953 Korean War, has urged Pyongyang to abandon any plans to test-fire the missile.

Both Washington and Tokyo have warned Pyongyang that a test would constitute a "grave and provocative" act.

North Korea shocked the world in 1998 by firing a missile without any warning over Japan into the Pacific Ocean. North Korea last year declared it had nuclear weapons."..."

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## **SYRIA TO PROCURE IRANIAN MISSILES**

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*June 19, 2006* Middle East Newline reported: "Iran and Syria have signed a defense cooperation agreement that would include the Syrian procurement of Iranian missiles, air defense systems and main battle tanks.

Officials said the agreement, signed on Thursday, stipulated the formation of a Supreme Defense Commission and the expansion of defense industrial cooperation between Damascus and Teheran. They said Iran has offered numerous weapons as well as the establishment of defense production facilities in Syria.

"They [Iran and Syria] stressed the strengthening of mutual ties and the necessity to preserve peace and stability as well as the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the region," an Iranian Defense Ministry statement.

The agreement was signed by visiting Syrian Defense Minister Hassan Turkmani and his Iranian counterpart, Mostafa Najar. Turkmani, who completed a four-day visit, said the pact was aimed against Israel and the United States."..."

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## **WARM WORDS BUT WISHY-WASHY RESULTS AT EU-US SUMMIT**

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*June 22, 2006* Euobserver reported: "Standing side by side with US president George W. Bush after a bilateral summit, EU leaders toned down their rhetoric on controversial issues highlighted before the meeting, despite not having any concrete commitments from Washington on visas, trade talks or climate change.

The EU sent a number of strong messages before the one-day gathering on Wednesday (21 June), pledging to be tough and call for real moves in several areas on the US side. Apart from Guantanamo - which Mr Bush said he would like to end but has to wait for a Supreme Court decision - the loudest pre-summit noise was made on the issue of a two-tier visa system for EU member states.

On the eve of the meeting, European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso accused the US of "discrimination" and of creating "second class citizens" by demanding visas only from new EU member states' citizens (excluding Slovenia). EU officials warned they may introduce retaliatory measures if the US does not outline further steps to resolve the problem.

However, while Mr Barroso mentioned the subject had been raised in Vienna - as "an important issue for the EU" - the statement in the joint declaration does not look to any real move in the foreseeable future."..."