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EU SPLIT INTO SEVERAL CAMPS ON RUSSIA STRATEGY, SAYS REPORT

November 8, 2007 EUobserver.com reported: "Within the European Union there are a least five camps when it comes to dealing with Russia, ranging from the 'Trojan horse' countries to the 'new Cold warriors', says a new study analysing the bloc's divided approach to its giant neighbour to the east.

According to a fresh analysis by new thinktank European Council on Foreign Relations, the EU "has begun to behave as if it were subordinate to an increasingly assertive Russia" largely due to its own disunity. The report points out that Russia is "picking off" single member states to make long term energy deals, that Moscow has "shut the Union out" of Caucasus and Central Asia, and is blocking an agreement on the status of Kosovo in the UN.



Vladimir Putin

"Russia is emerging as an ideological alternative to the EU (...) Whereas the EU stands for an idea of order based on consensus, interdependence and the rule of law, Russian foreign policy is motivated by a quest for power, independence and control."

The report notes that Russia is able to do this even though the EU's combined economy is 15 times the size of Russia's, its military budget is seven times higher, and its population three times the size of Russia.

The analysis also dismisses the idea that the disunity on Russia - an issue it says is the most "contentious" for the EU since the Iraq war - has become worse since eastern European states joined in 2004.

"EU divisions on Russia are more complex and surprising than a simple cleavage between old and new member states."

RAYTHEON STANDARD MISSILE-3 ACHIEVES DUAL INTERCEPTS IN SPACE

November 8, 2007 SpaceWar.com reported: "In a first-of-its-kind dual missile defense test, two Raytheon-built Standard Missile-3s, fired from a U.S. Navy ship, simultaneously intercepted and destroyed two short-range ballistic missile targets in space, Nov. 6. This was the first time a Navy ship demonstrated simultaneous engagements against ballistic missile targets outside the earth's atmosphere. These were the 10th and 11th successful intercepts for the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense weapon system's SM-3.

The crew of the guided missile cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG-70) fired both SM-3 Block IA intercepting missiles, while personnel at the Navy's Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai launched the ballistic missile targets.

"These successful intercepts add to SM-3's impressive flight test record and are a clear demonstration of Raytheon's commitment to Mission Assurance," said Frank Wyatt, Raytheon's vice president of Naval Weapon Systems. "SM-3 plays a vital role in protecting our nation against the threat of ballistic missiles."

SM-3 is being developed as part of the Missile Defense Agency's sea-based Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System. The missiles will be deployed on Aegis cruisers and destroyers to defend against short-to-intermediate range ballistic missile threats in the midcourse phase of flight. Raytheon also is developing the kinetic warhead for SM-3."



SM-3 Rocket

US FEARS ISRAELI STRIKE AGAINST IRAN OVER LATEST NUCLEAR CLAIM

November 8, 2007 The Times Online reported: "A claim by President Ahmadinejad that Iran has 3,000 working uranium-enriching centrifuges sent a tremor across the world yesterday amid fears that Israel would respond by bombing the country's nuclear facilities.

Military sources in Washington said that the existence of such a large number could be a "tipping point", triggering an Israeli air strike. The Pentagon is reluctant to take military action against Iran, but officials say that Israel is a "different matter". Amid the international uproar, British MPs who were to have toured the nuclear facility were backing out of their Iran trip.

Even before President Ahmadinejad's announcement, a US defence official told The Times yesterday: "Israel could do something when they get to around 3,000 working centrifuges. The Pentagon is minded to wait a little longer." US experts say 3,000 machines running for long periods could make enough enriched uranium for an atomic bomb within a year.

Israel responded by serving notice that it would not tolerate a nuclear Iran. "Talks never did, and never will, stop rockets," said Ehud Barak, the Defence Minister, after talks with the security cabinet.

The US and Western allies believe that Iran is using its civilian nuclear programme as a cover for weapon development. Tehran says that it merely wants to generate electricity. Concern about Israel's intentions has been heightened by its recent air strike on a suspected nuclear plant in Syria. In 1981 Israel destroyed Saddam Hussein's Iraqi nuclear reactor, and as the sole — if undeclared — nuclear power in the region, it now considers Iran the most serious threat to its security. Mr Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map".

Efraim Inbar, of the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv, said that the figure of 3,000 centrifuges would signal the ability of Israel's arch-foe to produce the nuclear material needed for a warhead. "I wouldn't be surprised if we do something if the international community leaves us alone," he said. "I think we [Israel] are preparing for it. For Israel this is a critical technological moment."...

S. KOREAN, US DEFENSE CHIEFS SAY N. KOREAN 'THREAT' REMAINS

November 7, 2007 VOA News reported: "U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and South Korean Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo said Wednesday they welcome recent steps by North Korea to disable its nuclear facilities. However, Kim says the two countries have not changed their basic perception of North Korea as a military threat.

He says even though North Korea has begun disabling its nuclear programs, it is impossible to say the threat from the North has been tangibly reduced. He says concrete intelligence showing a reduction of the North's forces would be needed to draw that conclusion.



Kim Jong-Il

Pyongyang has recently taken the first steps toward fulfilling promises to dismantle its nuclear capabilities. The head of a U.S. nuclear team, who was in the North Korean capital earlier this week, says the North has made "a good start" in dismantling its main nuclear facility.

However, North Korea still deploys nearly a million military personnel and thousands of artillery positions close to its border to the South. For decades, Pyongyang has invested a disproportionate percentage of its tiny economic output in missile, nuclear, and chemical and biological weapons technology. The North tested its first nuclear explosive in October of last year, in defiance of international agreements.

U.S. Defense Secretary Gates says there is a long way to go before either of North Korea's arsenals, nuclear or conventional, is eliminated."..."

US DEFENSE SECRETARY WARNS CHINA OF THREAT FROM IRAN

November 6, 2007 VOA News reported: "U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters Tuesday an Iran that acts as a destabilizing force is not in anyone's interest, including China's. Gates said he raised the issue in talks here Monday with officials of China, which buys much of its oil with Iran.

Iran has repeatedly ignored demands it stop its program to make nuclear fuel, which western nations fear will be used to produce nuclear weapons. The U.S. has been pushing for a third round of economic sanctions against Tehran.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said Tuesday that Beijing also opposes a nuclear-armed Iran, but he repeated China's standard position, that dialogue is the best way to resolve the conflict.

Liu says China and the U.S. have an identical objective concerning the Iranian nuclear issue. He says both nations believe Iran should not own nuclear weapons, and both believe in safeguarding the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."

NATIONAL DEBT HITS \$9 TRILLION FOR THE FIRST TIME

November 7, 2007 The Associated Press reported: "The national debt has hit \$9 trillion for the first time. The Treasury Department, which issues a daily accounting of the debt, said (Wed)... the debt subject to limit was at \$9 trillion on Tuesday. It was \$8.996 trillion on Monday.

Last month, Congress passed and President Bush signed into law an increase in the government's borrowing ceiling to \$9.815 trillion. It was the fifth debt limit increase since Bush took office in January 2001. Those increases have totaled \$3.865 trillion. The administration contends the rising debt reflects such factors as slow economic growth during the 2001 recession, the Sept. 11 attacks and the cost of fighting terrorism.

Democrats place much of the blame for the exploding debt on Bush's first-term tax cuts, which they say are tilted to the wealthy. The administration says those tax cuts helped to jump-start the economy and resulted in falling budget deficits in recent years. The tax cuts are set to expire at the end of 2010. The administration and Republicans in Congress want to see them made permanent; many Democrats would like to see them revamped to provide more benefits to lower and middle-income taxpayers.

The budget deficit for the 2007 budget year, which ended Sept. 30, was \$162.8 billion, the lowest in five years."..."

EXCLUSIVE: FBI: AL QAEDA MAY STRIKE U.S. SHOPPING MALLS IN LA, CHICAGO

November 8, 2007 ABCNews.com reported: "The FBI is warning that al Qaeda may be preparing a series of holiday attacks on U.S. shopping malls in Los Angeles and Chicago, according to an intelligence report distributed to law enforcement authorities across the country this morning. The alert said al Qaeda "hoped to disrupt the U.S. economy and has been planning the attack for the past two years."

Law enforcement officials tell ABCNews.com that the FBI received the information in late September and declassified it yesterday for wide distribution.

The alert, like similar FBI and Department of Homeland Security terror alerts issued over the past five years at holiday times, raised questions about the credibility of the information."..."