

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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EU REBUFFS US CALL TO PUT HEZBOLLAH ON TERROR LIST

August 2, 2006 EU Observer reported: "The EU will not for the time being put the Islamist Hezbollah movement on its blacklist of terrorist organisations but the discussion could re-emerge in the future, the Finnish EU presidency has said. Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja declared after crisis talks with EU counterparts on Tuesday (1 August) "Given the sensitive situation where we are, I don't think this is something we will be acting on now."

Mr Tuomioja's remarks came as a response to a letter signed by 213 members of the US Congress, sent to EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, demanding that the EU follows the US in branding Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation.

"On July 19th, we were dismayed to hear your assertion that the EU lacked 'sufficient data' to add Hezbollah to its terrorist list," the congressmen wrote. "In past years, Hezbollah has increasingly supported groups already designated by the EU as terrorist organizations, including the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)."

But despite the bloc's negative response to Washington, the Finnish minister indicated that the EU could take up the discussion in the near future, when the international community manages to reach a peace deal between Israel and Hezbollah."..."

BIRD FLU MIXED WITH HUMAN FLU LACKS PUNCH

August 2, 2006 NewScientist.com reported: "Combining genes from the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus with those from a common human flu virus does not seem to create strains with instant pandemic potential, researchers have found.

H5N1 meets two of three requirements for a pandemic strain: it is highly pathogenic and unfamiliar to most people's immune systems. If it also acquired the ability to transmit easily from person to person, H5N1 would threaten millions of lives. One way this could happen is if the virus swapped genes with human flu.

A team at the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, engineered flu viruses that contained genes for the external "coat" proteins of H5N1 and the internal proteins of H3N2, the most common variety of human flu in circulation.

They then inoculated ferrets with these "reassortant" viruses. When ferrets are in adjacent cages, H3N2 passes readily from one cage to the next. But neither H5N1, nor the new viruses, could be transmitted in this way, and the engineered strains were much less pathogenic than H5N1.

This suggests it may take more than a simple exchange of genes to turn H5N1 into a global killer, although the team has yet to explore other possible reassortants."..."

CONGRESS URGED TO CLAMP SANCTIONS ON IRAN

July 31, 2006 The Middle East Newline reported: "Congress has been urged to help launch international sanctions on Iran's energy sector. A leading expert told a hearing of a joint House-Senate committee that blocking Iran's oil exports could significantly hurt the regime of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The expert said economic sanctions could substitute for harsher actions, including a military strike, in an effort to hamper Teheran's nuclear weapons program.

"What is clear is that a failure by the international community to promptly utilize its existing economic leverage vis-a-vis Iran will make other, less attractive solutions -- chief among them the use of force -- much more likely," Ilan Berman, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council, told the Joint Economic Committee of Congress on July 25.

Berman said Iran's huge energy revenues -- estimated at more than \$50 billion -- have facilitated the confrontation with the West. He said up to 90 percent of Iran's export earnings stemmed from oil."..."

TURKEY SENDS TROOPS INTO IRAQ

July 31, 2006 The Middle East Newline reported: "Turkey was said to have sent troops into northern Iraq. Iraqi officials said the Turkish Army sent reconnaissance units to the Kandil mountains over the last week. The Kandil mountains were believed to contain about 5,000 fighters of the Kurdish Workers Party. No clashes were reported.

"We got some information that there is some movement on the border between Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey, and it seems some Turkish soldiers entered Iraqi Kurdish villages near Zakho," Fuad Hussein, an adviser to Kurdish President Masoud Barzani, said. Turkey has

embarked on a military buildup along the border with Iraq. But despite repeated threats Turkey has not ordered an invasion.”...”

TIDE OF ARAB OPINION TURNS TO SUPPORT FOR HEZBOLLAH

July 28, 2006 The New York Times reported: “At the onset of the Lebanese crisis, Arab governments, starting with Saudi Arabia, slammed Hezbollah for recklessly provoking a war, providing what the United States and Israel took as a wink and a nod to continue the fight.

Now, with hundreds of Lebanese dead and Hezbollah holding out against the vaunted Israeli military for more than two weeks, the tide of public opinion across the Arab world is surging behind the organization, transforming the Shiite group’s leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, into a folk hero and forcing a change in official statements.

The Saudi royal family and King Abdullah II of Jordan who were initially more worried about the rising power of Shiite Iran, Hezbollah’s main sponsor, are scrambling to distance themselves from Washington.

An outpouring of newspaper columns, cartoons, blogs and public poetry readings have showered praise on Hezbollah while attacking the United States and Secretary of State Condeleezza Rice for trumpeting American plans for a “new Middle East” that they say has led only to violence and repression.

Even Al Qaeda, run by violent Sunni Muslim extremists normally hostile to all Shiites, has gotten into the act, with its deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, releasing a taped message saying that through its fighting in Iraq, his organization was also trying to liberate Palestine.

Mouin Rabbani, a senior Middle East analyst in Amman, Jordan, with the International Crisis Group, said, “The Arab-Israeli conflict remains the most potent issue in this part of the world.”

Distinctive changes in tone are audible throughout the Sunni world. This week, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt emphasized his attempts to arrange a cease-fire to protect all sects in Lebanon, while the Jordanian king announced that his country was dispatching medical teams “for the victims of Israeli aggression.” Both countries have peace treaties with Israel.

The Saudi royal court has issued a dire warning that its 2002 peace plan — offering Israel full recognition by all Arab states in exchange for returning to the borders that predated the 1967 Arab-Israeli war — could well perish.

“If the peace option is rejected due to the Israeli arrogance,” it said, “then only the war option remains, and no one knows the repercussions befalling the region, including wars and conflict that will spare no one, including those whose military power is now tempting them to play with fire.”

The Saudis were putting the West on notice that they would not exert pressure on anyone in the Arab world until Washington did something to halt the destruction of Lebanon, Saudi commentators said.

American officials say that while the Arab leaders need to take a harder line publicly for domestic political reasons, what matters more is what they tell the United States in private, which the Americans still see as a wink and a nod.

There are evident concerns among Arab governments that a victory for Hezbollah — and it has already achieved something of a victory by holding out this long — would further nourish the Islamist tide engulfing the region and challenge their authority. Hence their first priority is to cool simmering public opinion.”...”

US, 9 COUNTRIES MEET ON NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

July 28, 2006 The Voice of America reported: “The United States and nine other countries will discuss how to move the stalled North Korea nuclear disarmament negotiations forward. Pyongyang earlier rejected requests to hold informal multilateral talks on the sidelines of a regional security forum in Kuala Lumpur.

The United States is meeting Friday with China, Japan, South Korea and Russia to discuss the stalled North Korea nuclear disarmament talks. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Malaysia and Indonesia also are joining the meeting.

North Korea's foreign minister has refused to hold multi-party nuclear talks at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

U.S. envoy Christopher Hill says the North Koreans are isolating themselves. “We do not intend to make the entire multilateral process hostage to the fact that they will not attend, so we are going ahead with some talks this afternoon,” he said.

Pyongyang refuses to resume the three-year-old negotiations on ending its nuclear weapons programs unless Washington lifts economic sanctions for alleged North Korean money laundering and counterfeiting.”

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