



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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BLAIR WANTS EUROPE TO BE SUPERPOWER



July 25, 2002 ABC News reports: "Europe needs to stop complaining about the United States and instead pool its military resources to become a superpower on par with America, Prime Minister Tony Blair said.

In a wide-ranging interview published in this month's issue of the political magazine *Prospect*, Blair said there was 'a certain scratchiness' in European Union's relations with the United States, an apparent reference to countries including France and Germany that have expressed concern at U.S. talk of overthrowing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

'My challenge to Europe is this: if we want to have greater sway and greater power, then instead of complaining about America, we've got to face up to what we need to do,' Blair said in the interview, excerpts of which appeared in *The Independent* newspaper Wednesday. 'That means developing a coherent defense capability and a set of institutions to allow Europe to speak strongly.'

The United States says Saddam is a sponsor of international terrorism and seeks nuclear weapons. But allies have shown little appetite for a military campaign to oust him without hard evidence that Iraq had a role in the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

The prime minister, a strong U.S. ally, said if the time comes for action against Iraq, 'people will have the evidence presented to them' to show that Saddam 'is trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction, in particular a nuclear capability.'

Blair said some European criticism of America 'comes from an irritation with their huge superpower status. If we pool our sovereignty in a way that gives us a strong voice and, if we improve our defense capability, we will be the strategic partner that America needs and wants.'..."

EGYPT TO UPGRADE AIR DEFENSE NEAR SUEZ

July 25, 2002 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Egypt plans to modernize its air defense network near the Suez Canal in the first such effort in more than 30 years.

Egyptian officials said the modernization is part of an overall upgrade of air defense assets near the borders with Israel and Libya. The officials said the effort would be conducted in cooperation with the United States and Russia and other allies of Cairo.

Egyptian air defense commander Lt. Gen. Sami Annan said the planned upgrade is meant to overcome improvements in countermeasures technology. Annan suggested that Israel's air force has improved the capability of its fighter-jets in avoiding detection by Egypt.

'The development aims to overcome modern electronic countermeasures and electronic warfare in an effort that will include the cooperation of friendly countries,' Annan said..."

NEW SUPERBUG FOUND IN US HOSPITAL

July 24, 2002 The Guardian UK reports: "A new superbug, which is fully resistant to one of the most powerful antibiotics in the medical arsenal, has been identified in a 40-year-old hospital patient, increasing fears that science will have trouble keeping ahead of the spread of potentially harmful bacteria.

Staphylococcus aureus is a common bacterium carried in the nose and on the skin of 10% of the population, but it can cause serious blood poisoning when it enters a wound.

It was once treated easily with penicillin, but it has now mutated to the point where it is totally resistant to it. The next defense on the antibiotic ladder has been methicillin, but strains of the bug that are resistant to methicillin have become increasingly common, especially in hospitals. They are known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) - dubbed the superbug.

MRSA is treated with the antibiotic vancomycin, which has been regarded as the last established line of defense. There have been a few cases of partial resistance to vancomycin (vancomycin-intermediate Staphylococcus aureus or VISA), but now the first case of a staphylococcus bug that is totally resistant to the antibiotic has been detected in the US..."

GIANT HAILSTONES KILL 15 IN CENTRAL CHINA

July 21, 2002 Reuters reports: "A downpour of giant hailstones, some the size of eggs, killed 15 people and left hospitals overflowing with head-wound victims in central China, state media and local officials said.

The hailstorm, with winds of up to Force Eight, struck northern parts of Henan province, uprooting trees, smashing car windscreens, cutting off electricity and destroying buildings, they said. Locals described it as the worst hailstorm in at least half a century, state radio said. Television news showed pictures of a gutted petrol station, uprooted trees and victims being loaded into ambulances.

The violent hailstorm only lasted for half an hour but by the time it had finished, all the ambulances in the cities of Zhengzhou and Luoyang had been called out and emergency rooms were soon crammed full of people with head gashes, the radio said.

An official in the Zhengzhou city government contacted by telephone said the death toll of 15 was only for cities in the affected area along the south bank of the Yellow River. 'About 10 people were killed on the spot,' he said. 'Some more were seriously wounded and may have died in hospital.'..."

OFFICIALS ALARMED BY WEST NILE VIRUS

July 20, 2002 CNN reports: "Health officials are keeping a close eye on the incidence of West Nile virus in Louisiana after yet another 4 new cases were confirmed this week, bringing the total number to 7 this year. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta confirmed this week that a 34-year-old woman and 3 men, ages 17, 62 and 76, had the mosquito-borne virus. Last week, state health officials reported that 3 people, ages 53, 62 and 78, had the disease. Louisiana has not set any West Nile records yet, since the 1999 outbreak killed 7 people and sent 62 others to hospitals in New York -- but Louisiana's epidemiologist, Dr. Raoult Ratard, is concerned now. 'In 2001, no county in the United States had more than 3 cases,' Ratard said. 'We are getting up into fairly concentrated numbers. And of course it's early in the season. So, the news is not that good.'



Mosquitoes spread West Nile from infected birds to humans, who can then develop deadly encephalitis, or swelling of the brain. Humans cannot pass the virus to each other. Symptoms are similar to the flu, including fatigue and fever. There is no cure for the virus. The CDC urges people to report dead birds to local health authorities and to protect themselves against mosquito bites by getting rid of standing water, where mosquitoes breed, and to wear insect repellent or long sleeves outdoors..."