



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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NORTH KOREA MOVES FUEL RODS INTO REACTOR

Dec 26, 2002 ABC News reports: "South Korea's president said Thursday that his nation would never tolerate North Korea's efforts to develop nuclear weapons, as the communist nation began moving fresh fuel rods to a mothballed nuclear reactor. President Kim Dae-jung told a special Cabinet meeting, however, that the standoff should be resolved through dialogue, despite deepening concerns that North Korea will restart facilities that experts say could produce nuclear weapons within months..."

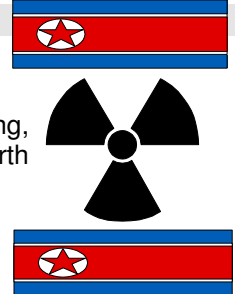
Kim, whose five-year term ends in February, was the architect of a policy of engagement with North Korea that resulted in a historic summit in 2000.

His successor, Roh Moo-hyun, has also advocated dialogue to ease nuclear tensions since he was elected to the nation's top job last week. Roh plans to exchange special envoys with the Bush administration in January to discuss the nuclear standoff.

North Korea announced earlier this month that it planned to restart its nuclear facilities to get badly needed electricity, though U.S. officials have said that the power obtained from the reactor would be negligible. State media in Pyongyang, the North's capital, defended the decision Thursday.

'The United States is going around trying to stir public opinion internationally, as though this is a sign of developing nuclear weapons,' state-run Radio Pyongyang said in a commentary. 'Our measure has got nothing to do with plans to develop nuclear weapons. Our republic constantly maintains an anti-nuclear, peace-loving position,' the commentary said. It was carried by South Korea's *Yonhap* news agency.

In the past week, North Korea removed U.N. monitoring seals and cameras from its nuclear facilities, ignoring warnings by the United States and the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency..."



UN CHIEF ISSUES SECRET ORDERS FOR WAR IN IRAQ

Dec 23, 2002 The Times Online reports: "The United Nations is making secret contingency plans for a war that would halt all Iraqi oil production, 'seriously degrade' the country's electricity system, provoke civil unrest and create 900,000 refugees, *The Times* has learnt.

Internal UN documents predict that the worst fighting will be in the three central governorates around Baghdad, with the Kurdish-controlled north remaining largely free of conflict. But it will take a month after war breaks out before the predominantly Shia south is calm enough for UN humanitarian workers to work there. Although formally expressing the hope that war can be averted, UN relief agencies are already positioning emergency supplies and updating evacuation procedures for the hundreds of international staff now inside Iraq.

'The UN expects that there will be full compliance by Iraq . . . and that, consequently, there will be no new humanitarian crisis,' one document says. 'Nevertheless, UN agencies must ensure that they are adequately prepared for the full range of possible scenarios.'

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, is trying to keep the preparations secret for fear of signaling to Iraq that weapons inspections are futile and a US-led attack is inevitable. But he ordered staff to begin contingency planning last month after the Security Council set tough terms for resumed inspections in Iraq. His Canadian deputy, Louise Fréchette, is chairing regular meetings of officials to prepare for a possible humanitarian crisis..."

NETANYAHU LASHES OUT AT BLAIR

December 23, 2002 The London Daily Telegraph reports: "Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli foreign minister, lashed out at Tony Blair yesterday, virtually accusing the Government of bowing to terrorism by courting President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and trying to rehabilitate Yasser Arafat.

His comments came as Palestinians cancelled elections planned for January 20, on the grounds that it was impossible to

hold a ballot while Israel occupied major Palestinian towns.

The European Union expressed understanding for the decision, with the EU external commissioner warning that there could be no free elections with tanks in the streets and restricted movement.

Mr. Netanyahu, who was snubbed by Downing Street on Friday, has privately told aides that Britain is losing the 'moral clarity' it showed during the war in Afghanistan and the campaign to disarm Iraq.

He was hardly more diplomatic in public, saying last week's visit to London by the Syrian leader was a 'mistake' and predicting that a planned conference on Palestinian reform was doomed to failure.

The acrimony between Israel and Britain reflects Blair's impatience with the lack of progress in reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace talks..."

QUARTER OF CLERGY DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Dec 22, 2002 The London Daily Telegraph reports: "More than a quarter of Church of England clergy do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, according to a survey carried out by *The Telegraph*. A poll of 500 clerics found that 27 per cent privately reject the traditional story of Jesus' birth, which forms a vital part of the Nativity.

The view of a Hampshire vicar was typical. 'There was nothing special about his birth or childhood - it was his adult life that was extraordinary,' he said. He declined to be named, saying: 'I have a very traditional bishop and this is one of those topics I do not go public on. I need to keep the job I have got.'

The survey will dismay traditionalists inside and outside the Church of England.

Many of the skeptics who took part in the survey, one of the biggest ever conducted by a newspaper, said that the story of the virgin birth was a product of poor biblical translations and literary tradition rather than divine intervention.

The Rev Dr Keith Archer, who is based in Salford, said: 'It is not particularly important because it is a debatable translation of a Hebrew prophecy which first appeared in Isaiah.'

Another vicar added: 'Writers at the time used to stress a person's importance by making up stories about their early life. I think that is exactly what has happened here.'

Most of those who cast doubt on the virgin birth admitted that they would be presiding over traditional Christmas services which stressed the miraculous nature of Christ's birth..."

RUSSIA'S ARMS AGENCY STILL OPERATES IN IRAQ



Dec 22, 2002 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Despite increased United Nations monitoring, Russia's state-owned arms export agency continues to operate in Iraq.



Industry sources said Rosoboronexport does not sell directly to the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. But the representatives of the arms export agency provides briefings for the Iraqi military on new Russian weapons and upgrades available for export.

Rosoboronexport's activities in Iraq are part of Moscow's drive to increase weapons exports in the Middle East, particularly among clients of the former Soviet Union. The arms agency also has offices in Iran, Libya and North Korea.

The agency has set a goal to export \$5 billion in weapons per year. Russian defense exports are expected to top \$4 billion this year..."

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