



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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SCHOOL TO USE EYE SCANNER FOR LUNCH FEES

Jan 9, 2003 The Seattle Post reports: "A new high school said Wednesday its students will be charged for their lunches with a retina scanning device to prevent poor children who eat for free from being ridiculed in the cafeteria.

Dr. Ed Yates, headmaster of the Venerable Bede school, said the advanced eye-recognition software will be in place when the institution opens its doors to 900 students in September in Sunderland, western England. He said the school is concerned that if students are forced to pay for their lunches in cash the poor ones who receive food for free could be stigmatized. So officials have decided to make the entire school 'cashless.'

The retina scanning device also will be used in the library when students take out and return books, Yates said. He assured parents the low-intensity light of the retina scanning devices will be safe for all students.

'We think we are the first (school) in the country to use this,' he said of the device. 'But this is not a James Bond school for spies. ... This is not science fiction. This is technology that exists.'..."

BRITAIN URGES U.S. TO DELAY WAR UNTIL AUTUMN

Jan 9, 2003 The London Daily Telegraph reports: "Britain is pressing for war against Iraq to be delayed for several months, possibly until the autumn, to give weapons inspectors more time to provide clear evidence of new violations by Saddam Hussein. Ministers and senior officials believe that there is no clear legal case for military action despite the build-up of American and British forces in the Gulf.

Senior diplomats have told the Government that there is a good chance of securing United Nations Security Council approval for military action later in the year if Saddam can be shown unambiguously to be defying the disarmament conditions set out in resolution 1441.

'The Prime Minister has made it clear that, unless there is a smoking gun, the inspectors have to be given time to keep searching,' a senior Whitehall source said. The uncertainty at the heart of the Government has resulted in ministers blowing hot and cold over the prospects for early military action..."

SYRIA REGARDED AS 2nd LARGEST TERRORIST SPONSOR

Jan 9, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Syria has been deemed as the second biggest sponsor of terrorism in the world, a report commissioned by Congress says.

A report by the Gilmore Commission on the weapons of mass destruction capabilities that could be used against the United States classified Syria as the largest sponsor of terrorism after Iran. The commission's fourth annual report addresses the U.S. requirements to thwart any attack deemed as terrorist.

'After Iran, Syria is the most active state sponsor of terrorism and is included in the U.S. State Department list of state sponsors of terrorism,' the report said. 'Libya is another country that has a history of supporting terrorism and is known to possess chemical weapons.'

On Tuesday, Syria and the United States held what was termed an unofficial dialogue meant to improve bilateral relations. The dialogue, sponsored by the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, was held in Damascus with the participation of Sen. Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican and a leading member of Congress. A similar dialogue with leading Syrian diplomats took place last year in the United States..."

SOLANA FEARS WIDENING GULF BETWEEN EUROPE AND U.S.



United States

Jan 8, 2003 The Financial Times reports: "The public face of Javier Solana rarely changes. The European Union's foreign policy chief, or High Representative, is adept at schmoozing, smiling and patting colleagues on the shoulder, reluctant to utter a controversial word. It has been his official image since taking office in October 1999.



Europe

But increasingly a more pensive, private side to this restless former Spanish foreign minister and former secretary general of the NATO military alliance has emerged. As if throwing caution to the wind, he was more than willing recently to speak openly about an issue that increasingly preoccupies him: the complexity of the transatlantic rift, deepened by a possible US-led military strike against Iraq, nuclear sabre rattling by North Korea and a worsening Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

And despite rhetoric about the values that bind both sides of the Atlantic, Mr Solana says Europe and the US are growing further apart. The reason, he says, is a "cultural phenomenon", one that goes beyond the pattern of US foreign policy swinging between unilateralism and multilateralism. This time the unilateralist pendulum is different. It is, says Mr Solana, being swung by religion.

The US was increasingly looking at things as if in a religious context. "It is a kind of binary model," says Mr Solana, reverting to language he used when he was a professor of solid-state physics. "It is all or nothing. For us Europeans, it is difficult to deal with because we are secular. We do not see the world in such black and white terms."

Although well aware of the strength of the religious right in the administration, Mr Solana is surprised at how religion has permeated the White House's thinking. Nowhere is this more obvious, he says, than in the language used by the Bush administration since the Sept 11 attacks: with us or against us, rogue states, axis of evil, right and wrong, good and bad.

"The choice of language on the two sides of the Atlantic is revealing," says Mr Solana - and he is in a strong position to assess it. Born in Madrid in 1942 soon after the start of the Franco era in Spain, he studied at US universities as a Fulbright scholar, becoming a committed Atlanticist.

For the Bush administration, he says, the September 11 attacks were an act of war and an expression of evil. Europeans, who unreservedly condemned them, saw the attacks through a different lens: as the most extreme and reprehensible symptom of political dysfunction, operating from within failed states such as Afghanistan.

"What for the US is a war on terrorism, for Europe is the fight against terrorism," he says. The Europeans, continues Mr Solana, have tried to persuade the US to move beyond this binary view of the world by going through multilateral institutions, in particular the United Nations, to explore and exhaust diplomacy before deciding to launch a military attack against Iraq.

The differences go further. Europeans argue that terrorism is one of many threats that also include poverty, regional conflicts, diseases and climate change. And unlike the US administration, they also talk about conflict prevention, crisis management - such as in the Balkans - and sustainable development as ways to increase security.

But Mr Solana slowly returns to his public persona anchored in optimism. "Let me tell you," he says, "I do not despair. Some of us profoundly disagree with Bush. But it may push the European Union to become much more of an actor in the world. We have an obligation to do so."

THREE MORE SOUGHT IN RICIN HUNT

Jan 8, 2003 BBC News reports: "Britain's anti-terrorism police are looking for three more people in connection with the discovery of the deadly poison ricin in a north London flat. Six men - understood to be Algerians - were arrested on Sunday and security experts are trying to establish if they have links to al-Qaeda. Security sources said police were now looking for three more 'key individuals' in connection with the case.

Tony Blair said the arrests showed the continued threat of international terrorism was 'present and real and with us now and its potential is huge'. However, it is not believed to be an obvious choice for a weapon of mass destruction

Only small traces of ricin were found in the operation - launched after a tip-off - but there are concerns an amount of poison could have been made at the flat and has been moved. Castor oil beans - from which ricin is made - and equipment and containers for crushing the beans were found at the Wood Green flat where one of the men was arrested.

Doctors around the country have been alerted and told to look out for symptoms of ricin poisoning..."

NORTH KOREA SAYS SANCTIONS MEAN WAR, SEEKS DIALOGUE

Jan 7, 2003 Reuters reports: "North Korea, embroiled in a nuclear standoff with the United States, said...that economic sanctions would mean war and that Washington should sit down to talks.



In a report complaining about the United States' seizure of a shipload of North Korean missiles bound for Yemen last month, Pyongyang's KCNA news agency said Washington's assertion of the right to intercept ships was proof of its 'illegal and inhuman hostile policy towards the DPRK (North Korea)' and its unilateralism.

'What matters is that such piracy is being committed as part of the U.S.-tailored containment strategy against the DPRK. The strategy means total economic sanctions aimed at isolating and stifling the DPRK.

'Sanctions mean a war and the war knows no mercy. The U.S. should opt for dialogue with the DPRK, not for war, clearly aware that it will have to pay a very high price for such reckless acts.'

On Monday, the United States said it remained open to dialogue with North Korea in a fresh bid to defuse the crisis over the North's nuclear ambitions. The International Atomic Energy Agency also gave North Korea one last chance to readmit nuclear inspectors expelled a week ago..."