



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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EU ALLIES UNITE AGAINST IRAQ WAR

Jan 23, 2003 BBC News reports: "The leaders of France and Germany have pledged to intensify their co-operation against a US-led war against Iraq."



The decision was announced in Paris, at a joint news conference by President Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on the 40th anniversary of the two countries' post-war friendship treaty.

In an example of the Franco-German opposition, the NATO alliance was unable to approve a US request to advance military planning in the event of war.

Both the US and Britain are sending troops to the Gulf region in preparation for a possible attack on Iraq, which has been ordered to show it has no banned weapons of mass destruction.

And in a further sign that that a military intervention may be unavoidable, President George W Bush threatened with war crimes charges any Iraqis who used banned weapons in a possible conflict..."

IRAQ COMPLETES DEAL FOR SLOVAKIAN ARMS

Jan 22, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Iraq has completed a deal for a range of components for land-based military systems from Slovakia."

Western intelligence sources said Iraq has signed agreements with several Slovakian companies for spare parts for the T-72 main battle tank and unidentified self-propelled artillery systems. The companies were not identified but were said to have access to a range of surplus Soviet-origin systems and spare parts in the Slovakian military.

'At this point, no deliveries have been made,' an intelligence source said. 'But the deals have been completed and Iraq wants deliveries to begin over the next few weeks.'

Iraq has a fleet of 700 T-72 and T-72M tanks purchased in the 1980s. Baghdad also has a range of self-propelled guns and howitzers, including the Soviet-origin 152 mm M-1973 and the 122 mm M-1974. Both models were obtained in the mid-1970s..."

FRANCE AND GERMANY DREAM OF EU EMBASSIES AROUND THE WORLD

Jan 21, 2003 The Times Online reports: "The European Union would have its own diplomatic corps with embassies throughout the world under new plans to strengthen its international image."

The idea is part of the political package France and Germany presented yesterday to the convention, under the chairmanship of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former French President, that is drawing up a constitutional blueprint for the EU.

The bedrock of the service would be European Commission representations already established in about 130 countries. Under the Franco-German plan, their remit would be broadened to represent the whole EU. They would work closely with national diplomats and be answerable to a European Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The new post would replace the EU's existing schizophrenic approach to foreign policy, whereby external relations are handled jointly by Chris Patten, who is responsible to the Commission, and Javier Solana, who answers to EU governments. The position is intended to combine the political authority that SeZor Solana enjoys with the financial and personnel resources under Mr. Patten's control.

Peter Hain, the Government's representative at the convention, said yesterday that the idea had merits, provided that the holder took instructions from member states. 'It is important to ensure Europe speaks with a clear voice on the international stage,' he said. 'If George W. Bush wants to phone Europe, he speaks to the President of the Council (of Europe). If Colin Powell wants to, then he dials the new foreign representative.' ..."

U.S. ALLOWS SADDAM ENVOY TO CONDUCT EXILE MISSION

Jan 21, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "The United States has approved an Arab effort to convince President Saddam Hussein to enter exile.

The Bush administration has agreed to consider an Arab proposal for immunity from war crimes prosecution for Saddam, his aides and their families in return for their exile. The agreement was said to have represented a reversal of the administration's position last week.

Arab diplomatic sources said the Bush administration's new position has opened the way for a visit by an envoy of Saddam to Cairo to discuss the exile proposal. The sources said former Iraqi minister Ali Majid Hassan, who is also Saddam's cousin, is expected to arrive in Egypt over the next 48 hours.

Majid was to have arrived in Cairo on Saturday to deliver a message from Saddam on an Arab proposal that he enter exile as a means to avoid a U.S.-led war against Iraq. But the United States had warned that Majid was a war criminal and could be subject to arrest and prosecution..."

"NO QUESTION" IRAQ HAS TRANSFERRED WEAPONS TO SYRIA

Jan 21, 2003 Agency France-Presse reports: "Israeli Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday there was 'no question' Iraq had transferred banned weapons to neighboring Syria.

'There is no question Iraq has transferred materials to Syria,' Netanyahu said in an interview with CNN's 'Late Edition,' when asked what information Israel possessed on the alleged transfers.

Asked what weapons Iraq had sent, Netanyahu said: 'obviously material that is sufficiently important for Iraq to move into Syria, either because it does want this to be found, or because it wants to have (them) in reserve.'

He said this was 'one of several possibilities: but none are good.'

'There is obviously some very close cooperation going on between Saddam Hussein and the regime in Damascus,' he added.

Netanyahu was repeating allegations made by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in December that Israel had information Iraq had recently transferred chemical or biological weapons into Syria to hide them.

Syria dismissed the allegations as 'laughable.'

UN arms experts have been hunting for banned weapons of mass destruction in Iraq since late November, and are due to present a key status report on Iraq's cooperation to the UN Security Council on January 27.

Netanyahu also said it was a question of time before Iraqi President Saddam Hussein developed nuclear weapons.

'We know it is just a question of time before he acquires nuclear weapons, we know he might use those weapons, or use them as an umbrella for al-Qaeda type operations,' he said, referring to the Islamist terror group headed by Osama bin Laden..."

TOP MILITARY OFFICIAL PREDICTS EU MERGE WITH NATO

Jan 19, 2003 The EU Observer reports: "The European pillar in NATO and European security and defense policy (ESDP) will be merged, according to Gustav Hägglund, chairman of the Military Committee of the European Union.

Speaking at the University of Helsinki, the European Union's highest military official added that if Finland does not decide in favor of NATO membership by the end of this decade it really makes no difference. By that time EU security and defense policy and the European pillar in NATO will all be the same.

Mr. Hägglund expressed deep concern about America neglecting the importance of NATO and Europe. He referred to the new security strategy presented by US President, George Bush, in September which barely mentioned NATO and Europe. 'The new goal for Europe is to maintain the relevance of NATO in American security thinking', Mr. Hägglund said.

The Finns are in the middle of a heated debate over whether to join NATO and give up their traditional neutrality. This could end up being decided by referendum..."