

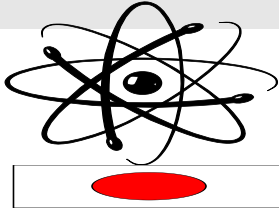


PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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JAPAN 'LOSES' 206KG OF PLUTONIUM

Jan 30, 2003 The Financial Times reports: "Japan on Tuesday admitted that 206kg of its plutonium - enough to make about 25 nuclear bombs - is unaccounted for. Government scientists said that 6,890kg of plutonium had been extracted since 1977 from spent nuclear fuel at a processing plant about 120km north east of Tokyo. But that is 3 per cent short of the amount the plant was estimated to have produced.

About 5kg to 8kg of plutonium are needed to make a 20-kiloton atomic bomb similar to the one that destroyed Nagasaki in 1945. Experts said the missing amount was surprisingly large.

There is normally a margin of error of 1 per cent or less when measuring liquid plutonium, which can dissolve into other elements.

Japan's admission comes at a time of acute sensitivity because of the threat of nuclear proliferation in north-east Asia following North Korea's revival of its mothballed nuclear program.

However, there is no evidence that North Korea was linked to the missing plutonium even though it is known to smuggle goods in and out of Japan.

'This is an unusually large amount of plutonium to be unaccounted for, which makes me uncomfortable, although I think it's highly unlikely that it was stolen,' said Tatsujiro Suzuki, senior research scientist at the Central Research Institute of Electric Power Industry.

The science ministry, which reported the discrepancy to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), dismissed the idea that the plutonium had been stolen..."

EU STARTS 'NAVY' TO STOP INFLUX FROM AFRICA

Jan 29, 2003 The Washington Times reports: "The European Union yesterday launched its own 'navy' to patrol the southern shores of Europe and head off the flotillas that ship illegal immigrants from North Africa.

The scheme, called Operation Ulysses, involves five European nations, including Britain, which will contribute a customs cutter, *Seeke*. The flotilla is viewed as the first step toward a common EU border guard.

The quasi-military fleet is one of a host of measures being sought by countries such as Spain and Italy, which have complained of bearing the bulk of the costs of policing EU borders.

It is made up of naval vessels such as those belonging to Spain's militarized Guardia Civil. Italy, France and Portugal have each sent a vessel to join the fleet, each carrying about 30 sailors.

Altogether seven vessels will now be on patrol in the Mediterranean with the aim of stopping the wave of mafia-operated boats that ply the coasts. The European Union says it is also seeking to reduce the death toll of immigrants, up to 10,000 of whom have died making the crossing in the past decade.

'We are surely seeing the birth of a common police force for the European Union to protect our borders. If we have enough success and co-ordination, this can be the base, the pillar of a future border police,' said Spanish Interior Minister Angel Acebes..."

BRITAIN BACKS U.S.

Jan 29, 2003 The Washington Times reports: "Britain yesterday joined the United States in declaring Iraq in 'material breach' of U.N. Security Council resolutions, and Russia, an opponent of military action, hinted it may change its mind if Iraq does not cooperate with inspectors.



'The conclusion that Iraq is in material breach is an incontrovertible one,' British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told reporters in London. 'The chances of this being resolved by peaceful means are less than they were.' With Mr. Straw's statement, Britain joins the United States, which last month declared Iraq in 'material breach' of U.N. resolutions — diplomatic terminology used to threaten military action. His comments came as British Prime Minister Tony Blair prepared

to fly to the United States, where he is to meet President Bush at Camp David on Friday.

Russia, traditionally Iraq's strongest advocate in the Security Council, appeared to hedge its opposition to the use of force yesterday — one day after chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix charged that Iraq had not accepted its obligation to disarm..."

ISRAEL'S RIGHT-WING WINS BIG IN ELECTIONS

Jan 29, 2003 The Middle East Newsliner reports: "Israel's Likud and right-wing parties won a major victory in national elections and appears to have captured a majority of parliament. The Likud Party won up to 36 out of the 120 seats in the Knesset, according to exit polls taken by Israel's two major television stations. The rival Labor Party won 18 seats, tied with the secular-oriented Shinui Party.

Channel 1 television reported that Likud won 36 seats, Labor, 18, with Shinui at 14 seats. The left-wing Meretz Party was reported at winning five seats. 'The balance appears to be 70-50 for the right-wing,' Israeli political analyst Hanan Kristal said. 'This does not include Shinui.'

The right-wing parties expected to join the Likud Party maintained or increased their electoral strength, according to the exit polls. The exception was the Shas Party, which won 13 seats, down from 17 in the last elections. The National Union won eight seats and the National Religious Party and the United Torah Front won five seats each..."

EURO RULES FORCE CHURCH BODIES TO EMPLOY ATHEISTS

Jan 27, 2003 The London Daily Telegraph reports: "Thousands of religious schools, charities and organizations could face legal action if they refuse to employ atheists or sack staff who become Satanists under proposed Government regulations. The laws, which are based on a European Union directive and which have to be implemented by December, ban discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of religion, belief or sexual orientation.

But a report from the Christian Institute says the laws will restrict the freedom of religious organizations to employ solely staff who are practicing believers.

Christian groups are particularly angry that the Government has chosen to exempt political parties from the laws, so that the Labour Party will be able to continue its policy of employing only party members.

'While the Vegetarian Society can refuse to employ meat-eaters and the RSPCA can sack an executive who is found to have invested in the fur trade, churches which employ Christians could now face legal action for doing so,' the institute said.' They could face the possibility of crippling legal actions just for following their beliefs.'

Under the new regulations, all religious organizations, including schools, charities, parishes and mosques, will need to have a very strong case to require recruits to share their beliefs.

The laws could, for example, prevent Christian bodies refusing to employ practicing homosexuals or bisexuals on the grounds that sex outside marriage is against Christian teaching. Moreover, the regulations protect existing staff, so that if a youth worker employed by a Christian Church converts to Islam, but argues that he can still do the job, the Church cannot dismiss him..."

CLONED COWS 'CAN MAKE OWN CHEESE'

Jan 27, 2003 The Times Online reports: "It will horrify the French, put Daisy the cow out of a job, and bring the price of cheese crashing down. Scientists in New Zealand have cloned a herd of cows designed to produce genetically enhanced milk that almost turns itself into cheese.

Cows have previously been genetically modified to produce medicinal proteins in their milk, but researchers have now created nine cows engineered to produce milk that can be turned into cheese far faster and more easily.

The team led by Gotz Laible at AgResearch in Hamilton, New Zealand, engineered cow cells to overproduce milk proteins called caseins. This family of proteins provides the primary components of cheese. Kappa-casein increases heat stability of cheese. Beta-casein improves processing by reducing clotting time and expelling more whey, the watery residue that has to be removed when making cheese. It also helps to determine calcium levels.

Increasing the levels of these two proteins could produce big savings for cheese makers, scientists say..."

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