



PROPHETIC TIMES

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SYRIA SIGNALS NEW DEPLOYMENT IN LEBANON

Feb 20, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Syria plans to again redeploy its military in neighboring Lebanon and could withdraw up to 4,000 soldiers from the country.

Officials said the details of the redeployment were discussed on Tuesday during military cooperation talks between Lebanese and Syrian commanders in Beirut. A joint delegation of Lebanese and Syrian commanders also briefed Lebanese President Emile Lahoud of the Syrian deployment plans.

'Talks during both meetings dealt with cooperation and coordination between the two armies including redeployment of some Syrian army units serving in Lebanon according to the defensive and security requirements,' the official Syrian news agency SANA said.

The agency did not provide details of the deployment, but officials said up to 4,000 troops would be withdrawn from the northern area of Batroun. This is the second time in less than three years that Syria has announced a redeployment of forces in Lebanon..."

U.S. TAKES OFF THE GLOVES WITH TURKEY

Feb 20, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "The United States appears to have ended its patience with Turkey and threatens to review their strategic relationship unless Ankara immediately approves the deployment of tens of thousands of American troops in Turkey.



Turkey

The new U.S. approach is being utilized amid another Turkish delay of a request by Washington for the deployment of up to 40,000 American troops in Turkey. After reassurances to Washington, Ankara has not linked such approval to a huge U.S. compensation package and a new United Nations Security Council resolution that would authorize war against Iraq.

'The United States has thousands of troops on ships waiting outside of Turkish ports and Ankara won't come to a decision,' a Western diplomatic source said. 'This situation is quickly coming to a head. It's a matter of hours and days.'

Turkey's parliament did not receive a government request for U.S. troop deployment. Officials said the government of Prime Minister Abdullah Gul will not ask for a parliamentary vote until negotiations over a U.S. compensation package with Turkey are completed..."

'NEW EUROPE' BACKS EU ON IRAQ

Feb 19, 2003 BBC News reports: "Thirteen EU candidate countries endorsed on Tuesday a declaration by existing members warning Iraq that it had one last chance to disarm. But a number of Eastern and Central European states hit back furiously at French President Jacques Chirac who condemned them on Monday for their pro-US stance.

A Czech minister said France appeared to be bullying the candidate countries, while Romanian President Ion Iliescu said the French president's remarks were 'inappropriate'.

Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Adam Rotfeld said: 'Poland... also has a right to decide what is in its own good, and France should in its turn consider it with respect.'

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair backed the small nations, declaring that all countries should be free to speak their minds..."

THIS TIME, ISRAEL COULD ATTACK IRAQ

Feb 17, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Israel, armed with greater military capabilities than a decade ago, could decide to retaliate against any Iraqi missile strike amid a U.S.-led war against Baghdad.

A report by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy said Israel's considerations for responding to any Iraqi missile strike include longer strike capabilities and the assessment that Israel's restraint during the 1991 war harmed its deterrence against Middle East adversaries.

The institute, in a report by researcher Max Abrahms, recommended that the United States cooperate with Israel in case the Jewish state launches a counter-attack on Iraq. The report, entitled 'Easy on the Stick: Why the United States Should Deconflict,' said the cooperation should seek to temporarily reduce zones of U.S. engagement in Iraq that would allow for any Israeli strike in the western part of the country.

'This time, a U.S. refusal to deconflict may not be sufficient to prevent Israeli retaliation,' the report said. 'Improvements in Israeli air- and space-based intelligence-gathering and long-range strike capabilities have increased Israel's ability to act against Iraq, independent of U.S. assistance. For example, the Ofek-5 reconnaissance satellite's high-resolution photos may allow Israel to locate and strike high-value targets in Iraq without significant U.S. intelligence sharing.'... "

US, UK AND SPAIN STAND ALONE AFTER BLIX REPORT

Feb 16, 2003 *The EU Observer* reports: "The UK, US and Spain are out on a limb following the report by UN Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix, to the United Nations in New York on Friday. Mr. Blix concluded that there was no proof that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction but that the possibility could not be ruled out either. 'So far Unmovic has not found any such weapons,' he said.

The issues of anthrax, nerve agent VX and long range missiles are the 'most important problems we are facing,' he added. But he also rejected the claims of US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, that the Iraqi's had managed to hide weapons from the inspectors.

His conclusions forged an overwhelming response from the majority of members of the UN Security Council that more time should be given for the inspectors to carry out their work. The blocking of immediate military action was much to the chagrin of Mr. Powell who maintained that Iraq was deceptive and that the whole process was being endlessly strung out.

'What we need is not more inspections...what we need is immediate, active, full cooperation on the part of Iraq. What we need is for Iraq to disarm.' UK Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, said that a peaceful resolution to the conflict was only possible if Saddam made immediate and dramatic changes. 'This will only be achieved if we in the Security Council hold our nerve in the face of this tyrant,' he said... "

SAUDIS CONFIRM PLANS TO END U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE

Feb 15, 2003 *The Middle East Newsline* reports: " Saudi Arabia has confirmed that Western military troops will leave the kingdom later this year. Saudi officials said U.S., British and French forces would leave the kingdom after the conclusion of a war against Iraq. They said Saudi Arabia would relay a formal request to NATO countries to end their military presence once the regime of President Saddam Hussein is toppled and order is restored in Iraq.

More than 5,000 Western troops, most of them U.S. Air Force personnel, are deployed in the Prince Sultan Air Base. Saudi Arabia has permitted the NATO members use of the air base to monitor the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq.

But Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Prince Khaled Bin Sultan said he expects the United States and its allies to end the no-fly zones over the next year. He said this will prompt the departure of the Western military forces from the kingdom... "

IRAQ DUE TO CHAIR BODY THAT HELPS UN DISARM

Feb 14, 2003 *The London Daily Telegraph* reports: "America is poised to pull out of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in protest at plans for Iraq to chair the 66-nation body from next month. US officials said the Bush administration would boycott the conference, established in 1979 as the 'single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community' if other countries did not block Iraq.

The chairmanship of the body rotates alphabetically, and Iraq's elevation - which some initially suspected was a joke - has been condemned in Washington as a sign of deep malaise within the UN.

Charles Krauthammer, a conservative columnist, wrote that when his son gave him an internet printout saying Iraq was to take the chair 'I was sure he'd been dipping again into [the satirical newspaper] *The Onion*'.

The issue came to a head at the conference's Geneva headquarters yesterday when Stephen Rademacher, US assistant secretary of state for arms control, condemned the move as both a 'supreme irony' and a disgrace. 'To permit a country that has been under sanction for 12 years due to its failure to disarm to assume the presidency of an institution called the Conference on Disarmament would make a mockery of this institution,' he said... "

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