



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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SYRIA GIVES PASSPORTS TO SUICIDE BOMBERS

April 2, 2003 The Times Online reports: "The SAS has arrested four busloads of suspected suicide bombers and would-be fighters in Iraq's western desert. The men, who are being held as prisoners of war, came from various Arab countries but all carried Syrian passports. They are thought to be among thousands of Arab zealots making their way to the battle front.

Syria has issued about 2,000 passports to people volunteering to fight for President Saddam Hussein in recent weeks, raising serious concerns in Britain and America, which suspects Damascus of smuggling war supplies to Iraq. The coalition is to protest to the Syrians. Syrian officials have made no secret of their sympathy for the resistance of 'the Iraqi people' to coalition attacks, although they have not voiced public support for Saddam.

Damascus has rejected accusations by Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defense Secretary, that Syria has provided Iraq with night-vision goggles.

The big worry is that many of the volunteers receiving passports may be suicide bombers, including Palestinians hoping to avenge themselves for US support of Israel. Muhammad Said al-Sahhaf, the Iraqi Information Minister, said last week that up to 4,000 suicide bombers were ready.

British sources believe that up to 600 volunteers have crossed from Syria into Iraq or are about to do so. Sending fighters to join a combatant army is a clear breach of neutrality. 'The Syrians are playing with fire,' one source said yesterday..."

SMALL EU STATES REITERATE OPPOSITION TO PERMANENT EU PRESIDENCY

April 2, 2003 Agency France-Presse reports: "Leaders from seven of the European Union's smaller member states reiterated their opposition to a permanent and elected EU president, as the bloc grapples with vital reforms and the drafting of its first ever constitution. Leaders from the seven countries -- Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Portugal -- held a working dinner with the aim of checking the power of larger EU member states such as France and Germany, often accused of ignoring the opinion of smaller states.

'There is no reason to endow the European Union with this new institution' in which an elected president of the European Council would take over from the present system of a rotating six-month presidency, Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker told a news conference.

'We think that in principle, the biannual rotation of the EU presidency should remain,' Juncker said at the end of the meeting. He warned that the European Commission would lose a great deal of power under such a scheme...

Britain, France, Germany and Spain want the rotating presidency scrapped in favor of a permanent presidency..."

QUARANTINE CAMPS SET UP IN HONG KONG TO HALT VIRUS



April 2, 2003 The London Daily Telegraph reports: "The Hong Kong government opened quarantine camps in the countryside yesterday in the latest attempt to stop the spread of a fatal form of pneumonia and to salvage its political reputation. Residents of a block of flats cordoned off on Monday by police in protective medical suits were starting to move into holiday camps far from built-up areas last night.

The block in the Amoy Garden complex in Kowloon is the biggest known site of severe acute respiratory syndrome, which has infected thousands and claimed more than 60 lives around the world. More than 100 of its residents have been struck down, with 100 more affected elsewhere in the estate. After initially deciding to quarantine the other 240 people in the block for 10 days, the authorities decided it would be safer to move them away.

The fact that the disease seems to have been transmitted vertically - with sufferers infecting people living above and below them but not on either side - suggested that the virus responsible might have contaminated the drains, the water supply or the ventilation system.

The disease, which has killed people in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand and Canada, with another death suspected of being caused by it in Indonesia yesterday, has caused a political crisis across the region.

The Hong Kong authorities have been accused of reacting too slowly, not issuing any quarantine orders until 10 days after the first deaths there and at first playing down the scale of the health risk..."

POWELL WARNS SYRIA AND IRAN

April 1, 2003 BBC News reports: "US Secretary of State Colin Powell has issued a fresh warning to Iraq's neighbors, Syria and Iran, to stop supporting terrorism. Widening the range of US concerns beyond Iraq, Mr. Powell said Syria must abandon its 'direct support for terrorist groups'. He also said it was time for 'the entire international community to insist that Iran end its support for terrorism'.

Mr. Powell's comments came two days after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned both countries not to get involved in the conflict in Iraq.

The Syrian Information Minister, Adnan Umran, dismissed Washington's accusations as false. In an interview with the BBC Arabic Service, Mr. Umran denied charges that Arab volunteers going to fight in Iraq had passed through Syrian territory..."

PA OFFICIAL CALLS FOR ISRAEL'S 'ELIMINATION'

April 1, 2003 The Jerusalem Post reports: "The Simon Wiesenthal Center demanded Sunday the recall of the Palestinian observer to the UN Human Rights Commission for calling for the 'elimination' of Israel.

Shimon Samuels, the Wiesenthal Center's representative at the 59th Human Rights Commission session currently taking place in Geneva, wrote to UN Human Rights High Commissioner Sergio Vieira de Mello calling on him to 'immediately condemn the Palestinian observer and take the necessary measures for his recall, due to his violation of the UN Charter in calling for the 'elimination' of the state of Israel.'

In addition to calling for Israel's elimination, Samuels said, Nabil Ramlawi repeatedly compared Nazism and 'new Zionist Nazism,' and at one point said Zionist Nazism was worse than German Nazism.

Samuel, in his letter to de Mello, said, 'This call for the elimination of Israel may reveal the true intentions of the PA, but such language should have resulted in the immediate intervention of the session's chairperson, Libyan Ambassador Najat al-Hajjaji.' Samuels also called on the high commissioner to 'censure Ms. al-Hajjaji for her abuse of power in not restraining Ramlawi's excesses.' ..."

PAKISTAN PURCHASES NORTH KOREAN MISSILES

March 31, 2003 The Washington Times reports: "Pakistan has purchased No Dong missiles from North Korea — fully assembled and ready to fly — prompting the Bush administration to impose sanctions on the Pakistani company in charge of the nation's nuclear weapons program.



U.S. officials, who disclosed the transfer to The Washington Times, said American-made C-130 aircraft were used to transport the missiles to Pakistan.

'This is a very serious matter,' a senior administration official said. 'We are not talking about missile technology or components but full-fledged No Dong missiles that can deliver nuclear weapons — and they used aircraft we gave them to bring the missiles home.'

The nuclear-capable missiles have a range of up to 900 miles and can reach virtually every major Indian city.

A private Pakistani company, Kahn Research Laboratories (KRL), also known as Kahuta Research Laboratories, is the direct target of the sanctions. But U.S. officials said the transfer took place with the knowledge of the highest levels of the Pakistani government..."

POPE WARNS THAT WAR COULD BRING 'RELIGIOUS CATASTROPHE'

March 30, 2003 The Washington Post reported: "Pope John Paul II said today he hoped that the human tragedy of the war in Iraq would not set Christians and Muslims against each other and spark "a religious catastrophe."

"War must never be allowed to divide world religions," he told visiting Roman Catholic bishops from Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country. The pope said good inter-religious relations were important "at this moment of heightened tension in the entire world community."

"Let us not permit a human tragedy to become a religious catastrophe," he said.

The pope is opposed to the war in Iraq and led a Vatican diplomatic campaign to avert it. The Iraq conflict has put the Vatican at odds with the Bush administration because the pope has refused to bless the conflict as a "just war."