



PROPHETIC TIMES

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NUKE-FREE KOREAN PENINSULA URGED

May 15, 2003 *The Associated Press* reports: "President Bush and South Korea's leader said they were united in seeking a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons, and expressed confidence that the standoff with North Korea could be resolved peacefully.

Meeting for the first time Wednesday, Bush and President Roh Moo-hyun also reaffirmed the strength of a military and economic alliance that dates to the 1950-53 Korean War, and agreed to consult closely on a possible realignment of U.S. forces in South Korea.

'We're making good progress toward achieving that peaceful resolution ... in regard to North Korea,' Bush said in a White House Rose Garden appearance with Roh. However, North Korea and the United States remained far apart in their positions on the nuclear issue.

Despite policy differences, Roh and Bush did not debate tough questions that might arise if diplomacy with the North fails. Ra Jong-il, South Korea's top security adviser, said there was no mention of the possibility of economic sanctions during the summit.

The two presidents, who have spoken several times by telephone since Roh was inaugurated in February, instead focused on getting to know each other. Bush described Roh as 'an easy man to talk to,' and Roh said the U.S. president had dispelled his concerns...

Numerous obstacles lie in the path of a peaceful solution to the crisis over North Korea's suspected development of nuclear weapons. South Korea wants the United States to be more open to dialogue with North Korea, but Washington says it won't negotiate its key demand that the North immediately abandon its nuclear programs..."

IRAN PLEDGES TO MAINTAIN SUPPORT FOR HIZBULLAH



May 15, 2003 *The Middle East Newsline* reports: "Iran has pledged to maintain support for Hizbullah amid U.S. pressure to end all military help to the Shi'ite insurgency group. Iranian President Mohammed Khatami completed a two-day visit to Lebanon on Tuesday with a pledge that Teheran would continue to support Hizbullah. Khatami disputed the U.S. classification of Hizbullah as a terrorist group. 'We should resist attempts to drive a wedge among Muslim

nations, especially in Lebanon,' Khatami said.

At the same time, Khatami appeared to suggest that Hizbullah lower its profile and refrain from major attacks along the Israeli-Lebanese border. The Iranian president warned of the prospect of an Israeli attack on Hizbullah with the help of the United States..."

TERRORIST GROUPS GATHER TO PLAN STRATEGY

May 14, 2003 *The Middle East Newsline* reports: "The leaders of Hamas and Hizbullah are drafting strategy amid U.S. pressure to expel groups on the State Department terrorist list harbored by Syria.

Hizbullah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah met a Hamas delegation over the weekend that included political chief Mussa Abu Marzouq. Mohammed Nazal, a member of the Hamas's politburo, and Hamas representative in Lebanon, Osama Hamdan, were also part of the delegation that met Nasrallah.

A statement by Hizbullah said the two groups discussed 'developments in the region since the invasion of Iraq and its occupation.' The statement did not elaborate, but Western diplomatic sources said the two groups sought to coordinate their positions before they met Iranian President Mohammed Khatami to Lebanon.

Khatami arrived in Beirut on Monday and met Lebanese leaders. He was scheduled to meet Hizbullah leaders as well as address a rally organized by the group..."

U.S. ASSERTS THAT AL QAIDA HAS INFILTRATED SAUDI SECURITY

May 15, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "The U.S. intelligence community assesses that Al Qaida has infiltrated Saudi military and security forces.

U.S. intelligence and diplomatic sources said assessments by both the CIA and the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency have asserted that Al Qaida operatives in Saudi Arabia have contacts throughout the kingdom's armed forces. The sources said Al Qaida has operatives in the elite National Guard, the Navy and the Army.

'The only area where there is no evidence of a significant Al Qaida presence is the Saudi Royal Air Force,' a U.S. official familiar with intelligence assessments said. 'The police, army, navy, National Guard and all the rest have been infiltrated by Al Qaida.'

The sources said the Al Qaida suicide attacks on three Western compounds on early Tuesday pointed to the vast amount of knowledge the organization possessed on the layout of the residences and the security detail. They said nine attackers obtained National Guard uniforms, drove to the gates of the compounds, killed actual National Guard soldiers and immediately entered the Western residency complex..."

CHINA MAY EXECUTE SARS QUARANTINE VIOLATORS

May 15, 2003 The Washington Post reports: "China has said it will execute or award a jail sentence of up to life imprisonment for anyone violating quarantine and intentionally spreading SARS. The supreme court and the country's top prosecutor laid down the punishment in an interpretation of laws on hindering the prevention or treatment of sudden disease outbreaks and other disasters, the Xinhua news agency said late on Wednesday.

'Intentionally spreading sudden contagious disease pathogens, endangering public security or serious personal injury, death or heavy loss of public or private property will be punishable by from 10 years to life in prison or the death penalty,' the state agency said.

The interpretation is part of a tough government push to tackle the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome after a slow start in handling the flu-like disease that first appeared in the southern province of Guangdong last year.

Several reports have surfaced in China, home to the worst outbreak of SARS on earth, of people busting out of quarantine or escaping medical care for fear of the disease.

People with such contagious diseases, or suspected of having them, who refuse medical exams, isolation or treatment and pass on the illness unintentionally can get three to seven years in jail, the interpretation said.

Health officials found guilty of negligence and allowing a disease to spread can be imprisoned for up to three years, the interpretation said..."

NORTH KOREA FIRED LASER AT TROOPS

May 13, 2003 The Washington Times reports: "North Korea's military fired a laser in March at two U.S. Army helicopters patrolling the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas in what U.S. officials call a provocative action, The Washington Times has learned. Two Apache attack helicopters were illuminated by lasers in early March by a weapon that had the characteristics of a Chinese laser gun, an indication that North Korea has deployed a new and potentially lethal weapon.

Lasers focus concentrated beams of light on a target and are used in some guidance systems. The Chinese laser gun, however, is a weapon that can cause eye damage at ranges up to three miles.

The incident was kept secret until defense officials disclosed it to The Times. It could not be learned whether the laser incident was discussed in periodic meetings between U.S., South Korean and North Korean military officials at the Panmunjom truce village.

The March laser illumination of the Apache helicopters occurred around the time that four North Korean jets intercepted a U.S. spy plane..."

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