



PROPHETIC TIMES

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AL-QAIDA THREAT TO U.S. WATER SUPPLY

May 29, 2003 UPI reports: "A spokesman for al-Qaida has told an Arabic-language news magazine that the terror group is planning to try and use poisons to attack the United States, specifically threatening to contaminate the nation's water supply. Abu Mohammed al-Ablaj told the London-based al-Majallah magazine that 'al Qaida (does not rule out) using Sarin gas and poisoning drinking water in U.S. and Western cities.'

'We will talk about (these weapons) then and the infidels will know what harms them. They spared no effort in their war on us in Afghanistan. They should not therefore rule out the possibility that we will present them with our capabilities,' the magazine quotes al-Ablaj as saying in an e-mail interview last week. The interview was published in the latest edition of *al-Majallah*, dated May 25.

Some U.S. officials play down the threat, but others point out that al-Ablaj had communicated with the magazine prior to the suicide attacks earlier this month in Saudi Arabia'.

'The consensus (in the intelligence community) seems to be -- and I concur -- that (al-Ablaj) is credible and does have a connection with al-Qaida,' Ben Venzke, a counter-terrorism analyst who consults with U.S. government agencies, told United Press International.

A U.S. intelligence official, who would not comment on al-Ablaj's credibility, played down the threat to U.S. water supplies in a brief interview with UPI. 'It is very difficult to covertly poison a reservoir,' the official said. 'It would take many truckloads of poison, which would make it difficult to do secretly. That is not really a viable threat.'..."



EGYPT WANTS TO REVIVE JOINT ARAB PROJECTS

May 28, 2003 *The Middle East Newsline* reports: "Egypt is trying to woo the Gulf Cooperation Council to invest in joint Arab weapons projects.

Egypt

Arab industry sources said Egypt has renewed efforts with such GCC states as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for the revival of the Arab Organization for Industrialization, established in 1975 and authorized to develop and produce weapons for Arab League members. In 1993, Saudi Arabia and the UAE returned their shares in the Cairo-based organization, valued at \$1.8 billion.

Egyptian officials and organization executives have urged GCC states to return to the arms maker under improved terms. They said Egypt continues to invest both funds and advanced technology in the AOI to ensure that it produces latest generation weapons.

'The withdrawal of our Gulf partners has had no impact on our operations and programs,' AOI military marketing manager Alaa Eldin Abdul Azim said. 'On the contrary, production has sharply increased.'..."

CONSTITUTION FORESEES FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT EU

May 28, 2003 *The EU Observer* reports: "The Union and the way it functions is set to be radically altered under further proposals, unveiled on Tuesday, for a European Constitution. This second part of the Constitution, which in some 180 pages details the policies of the EU, represents a substantial shift towards the community method and away from the individual member state.

Majority voting will become the rule while the number of areas where the European Parliament can co-legislate with member states has almost doubled to 70.

Justice and Home affairs, one of the few remaining bastion's of member states' veto, is where the most substantial changes have been proposed. Qualified majority voting and co-decision with the European Parliament have been introduced to areas such as control of borders, and asylum and immigration, judicial co-operation, and crime prevention.

Issues concerning intellectual property, energy and social security will also be subject to co-decision with the European Parliament, according to the draft Constitution. These aims, which will go some way to fulfilling the dreams of some for further integration, have also been driven by a pragmatic need to make the Union function when its membership expands to 25 next year.

However these proposals, which include making the Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding and initial plans for a European public prosecutor are set to be strongly opposed in some member states..."

EU CONSTITUTION UNVEILED

May 27, 2003 UPI reports: "The proposed EU constitution, unveiled Monday and to be considered by EU leaders next month, calls for an elected president and the post of foreign minister to represent the union internationally, and a binding bill of rights. The document, drawn up by a 105-member committee led by former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, calls for the European Union's six-month rotating presidency to be replaced by an EU president, elected from the current batch of heads of state for two and a half years. He also favors creating the post of EU foreign minister to represent the bloc on the world stage.

Perhaps as important, at least to the British, was that the document does not use the term 'federal' and the European Union will not be renamed 'United Europe' or the 'United States of Europe.'

Welsh Secretary Peter Hain, who represents Britain on the 105-member convention, said the draft text showed London had made 'good progress' in influencing the proposals. 'We are burying once and for all the fantasies of a Brussels super-state. Europe will remain a union of sovereign nation states with governments such as Britain's in charge,' he said.

However, the opposition Conservative Party -- which wants a referendum on any future EU constitution -- said the draft constitution was still 'unacceptable' and would 'sign away crucial areas of national competence' to Brussels."

HEZBOLLAH SAYS WILL NOT LAY DOWN ARMS

May 27, 2003 Ha'aretz reports: "Speaking at a rally marking three years since Israel withdrew from south Lebanon, Hezbollah chief Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said Sunday that armed resistance was the only viable weapon against occupation, and the Lebanese experience in the south could be repeated elsewhere in the region.

Syrian and Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas said that they would not lay down their arms, despite growing U.S. pressure on Damascus to clamp down on the Shi'ite Muslim group. Nasrallah urged fellow Arabs in Iraq and the Palestinian territories to take up arms and drive 'occupation' forces off their land. 'They want to disarm us, but we refuse to do so. Today we need to keep betting on the resistance,' he told thousands of Lebanese gathered in the eastern city of Baalbek, the group's stronghold.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell used his visits to Damascus and Beirut this month to demand steps to rein in the group, which Washington believes was behind the bombing of its marine barracks and kidnapping of Westerners during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

Syrian President Bashar Assad said in remarks published on Sunday, that his country would continue to support Hezbollah for as long as the group limits its operations to defending Lebanon from potential Israeli threats..."

CHINESE PRESIDENT IN MOSCOW ON FIRST FOREIGN TRIP



May 27, 2003 The Washington Post reports: "Chinese President Hu Jintao, on his first foreign trip as head of state, meets Russian officials on Tuesday to discuss economic ties between the two countries. Hu, accompanied by his wife, arrived in Moscow on Monday and plunged straight into talks with President Vladimir Putin at an informal dinner.



'This is my first foreign tour after being elected chairman of China, and Russia is the first country in it,' *Interfax* news agency quoted Hu as saying at his meeting with Putin. 'This shows the level of importance we attach to our relations with Russia,' he added, expressing confidence that his Moscow visit would 'bring important results.'

Russia is the first stop on Hu's four-nation trip and he is seeking to use his debut on the world stage to repair China's battered image after its cover-up of the SARS outbreak.

Putin was quoted by *Interfax* as saying Russia was satisfied 'an experienced politician became the chairman of China, and not simply an experienced politician, but a person with a special feeling for Russia.'

Hu's 11-day trip, his first since becoming president in March, will also take him to France, Kazakhstan and Mongolia..."

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