

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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HOMOSEXUAL COUPLES TO WED IN CANADA

June 11, 2003 AP reported: "Nearly two dozen homosexual couples applied for marriage licenses, taking advantage of a court ruling that led to Canada's first legal same-sex wedding the day before. Two Canadian men were married a few hours after an Ontario appeals court ruled Canada's ban on homosexual marriage was unconstitutional. The Ontario attorney general, Norm Sterling, said the province would respect the court ruling, meaning marriages that follow it would be registered.

The appeals panel declared Canada's legal definition of marriage invalid and ordered Toronto's city clerk to issue marriage licenses to the homosexual couples involved in the case. Canadian law defines marriage as a union of man and woman. Tuesday's ruling changed it in Ontario to a union between two people. If the federal government refrains from filing an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, the Ontario ruling becomes the law of the land.

A Parliament committee is studying the matter, and opinion polls indicate a slight majority of Canadians favor legalizing same-sex marriages. Some Cabinet ministers said it was time to change the marriage definition to reflect modern social mores, but divisions emerged among members of Parliament of the governing Liberal Party.

"We're taking an institution that's 5,000 years old - it's underpinned society for millennia and has been the chief way by which men relate to women, women relate to men, and children relate to their parents - and we're just deconstructing it," said John McKay, who represents a Toronto district.

Conservative political parties, however, called on the Liberal Party government to appeal, and Alberta Premier Ralph Klein said he would fight any effort to force his province to allow same-sex marriages.

In the United States, homosexual marriage lacks full legal recognition in all 50 states. Vermont recognizes civil unions that give homosexual couples the full benefits and responsibilities of marriage but are separate from legal marriage.

U.S. CAN'T RULE OUT NORTH KOREA STRIKE, PERLE SAYS

June 12, 2003 Reuters reports: "The United States should be ready to smash North Korea's Yongbyon reactor if necessary to keep Pyongyang from trafficking in nuclear weapons, an influential member of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's advisory panel said on Wednesday.

'Whether we can effectively mobilize a coalition -- including China, Russia, the South Koreans, the Japanese, ourselves -- and so isolate them that they will abandon this program, that remains to be seen,' said Richard Perle, an architect of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

'That's certainly the preferable way to deal with it,' he added in a speech to an Iraqi reconstruction conference sponsored by King Publishing Group, a Washington-based newsletter publisher.

'But I don't think anyone can exclude the kind of surgical strike we saw in 1981,' he said, citing Israel's surprise air attack that destroyed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor near Baghdad on June 7, 1981. 'We should always be prepared to go it alone, if necessary,' he said.

Yongbyon, site of a reactor and a plutonium reprocessing plant that North Korea has said it has restarted, lies about 60 miles north of Pyongyang..."

HAMAS THREATENS 'EARTHQUAKE' OF REVENGE

June 11, 2003 The Sydney Morning Herald reports: "The armed wing of the Palestinian Islamic radical group Hamas warned of an 'earthquake' of revenge attacks for Israel's helicopter raid today against the group's political chief.

'From now on all options are open. We will attack at the heart of the Zionist enemy. Our response will be very hard, of the magnitude of an earthquake,' Ezzedin al-Qassam warned in a statement issued in Gaza City.

Two people were killed and a child left 'clinically dead' after Israeli helicopters fired several missiles at the car in Gaza City. Hamas political chief Abdul Aziz al-Rantissi escaped with light injuries.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said today Israel would continue to 'act against the enemies of peace'. 'We will continue to fight against terrorism so long as nobody in the other (Palestinian) camp does so. We will continue to struggle against the heads of extremist terrorist organizations,' he said.

The premier singled out those who 'organize and finance terrorists to kill Jews.'

US President George W Bush said today he was 'troubled' by Israel's helicopter strikes on Palestinian militants, and said 'responsible leadership' from all parties was needed for Middle East peace..."

UNITED STATES WARNS EU NATIONS IT FACES FIGHT OVER WAR CRIMES COURT

June 11, 2003 *The London Daily Telegraph* reports: "The Bush administration has formally warned European Union nations of a new rift between them and America, telling them that they face a 'very damaging' fight if they continue opposing immunity for US citizens at the International Criminal Court.

European officials, in return, accuse the United States of bullying impoverished and vulnerable states into signing pacts that grant American citizens blanket immunity for war crimes, fatally undermining the fledgling world war crimes court.

The dispute technically centers on the right of forces overseas personnel to be shielded from frivolous or politically inspired prosecutions. It has become the latest battle between Washington and the traditional European powers for influence in the new Europe. The United States last week sent a confidential diplomatic note to the capitals of all 15 EU member nations, accusing them of lobbying other countries, especially the 10 future members of the EU, not to sign immunity pacts with Washington.

In unusually blunt language, the note - leaked to yesterday's *Washington Post* - explicitly linked Washington's anger to the poisonous battles that preceded the war in Iraq. 'This will undercut all our efforts to repair and rebuild the transatlantic relationship just as we are taking a turn for the better after a number of difficult months,' the note read. 'We are dismayed that the EU would actively seek to undermine US efforts.'..."

U.S. DEMANDS IAEA ISSUE A NON-BIASED REPORT ON IRAN

June 11, 2003 *The Middle East Newline* reports: "The United States has demanded that the International Atomic Energy Agency issue what officials termed a non-biased report on Iran's nuclear program. The U.S. demand was relayed amid growing suspicion in Washington that IAEA director Mohammed El Baradei was planning to play down or ignore evidence of alleged Iranian violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and agency regulations.

Administration officials said Washington has sought Russia's cooperation in demanding what they termed a straightforward IAEA report regarding Iran's nuclear facilities. The IAEA inspected two Iraqi facilities in February and is scheduled to release a report to the agency's board of governors on June 16.

'Following sustained high-level exchanges, Russia shares our concern about Iran's nuclear activities, joins us in supporting the IAEA's ongoing inspections, and wants director-general El Baradei to make a full and unbiased report to the board of governors on what his inspectors in Iran have found,' Undersecretary of State John Bolton said..."

EUROPEANS WANT TO KNOW: WHO RUNS THE EU?

June 8, 2003 The EU Observer reports: "Europeans want to know, who runs the EU? They request a simple system - understandable to all - to manage the EU and to strengthen the role of politicians, rather than civil servants.

These are some of the main conclusions drawn by Franck Biancheri and the *New Europeans Democracy Marathon* after having hosted 80 conferences in 20 countries meeting 8000 Europeans in discussions about the future of EU.

In an open letter handed to members of the Convention today, Thursday 5 June, Mr. Biancheri concludes that there is a general wish among Europeans for the EU to become an efficient global actor, speaking with one voice. The differences between citizens from big and small countries are minor on this point and the Iraqi crisis has weakened even these smaller differences, he concludes. However, the major concern seen from citizens' points of view, is on democracy.

Citizens in general have no attachment to 'their' Commissioner, or 'their' European Member of Parliament, for the simple reason that they usually don't know who they are nor what they do, the paper concludes..."

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