



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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NILE VIRUS HAS POTENTIAL TO KILL HUNDREDS

June 25, 2003 The Scotsman reports: "Health authorities in the United States have issued a nationwide alert over the West Nile virus, predicting an outbreak that could potentially claim hundreds of lives.

Unknown in the western hemisphere until it surfaced in New York four years ago, the mosquito-borne disease last year killed 284 people in the US, the highest annual toll so far. This year, say experts, there could be even deadlier consequences. The spread of the disease, which affected 39 states last year and is predicted to hit all 50 this year, is of such concern that the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service has joined the rest of the UK in barring donors from giving blood within 28 days of visiting the North American continent, in an attempt to protect stocks from infection.

'I think Britain's policy is a necessarily cautious one,' said Dr Paul Epstein, associate director of the Centre for Health and Global Environment at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. 'West Nile virus is becoming more and more of a concern,' he added, emphasizing that as well as infecting humans, the disease can jump species. 'It is now in 230 species of animals, 138 species of birds and carried by 37 species of mosquito. We really don't know where this disease is going,' said Dr Epstein.

The virus was first identified by scientists in Uganda in 1937, but has made occasional leaps north since then, at times reaching Israel, Romania and even parts of France as mosquitoes' habitat widens due to changing global weather patterns. In 1999, it jumped the Atlantic, infecting 62 people and killing four in the New York borough of Queens. Last year, a total of 4,146 people in the US became infected, around 7 per cent of them fatally... "

EU TELLS HAMAS TO AGREE CEASEFIRE IN MIDEAST OR RISK FUNDING FREEZE

June 24, 2003 Agency France-Press reports: "The European Union bluntly told the militant Palestinian group Hamas to agree a ceasefire in the Middle East or risk measures to cut off its financial support.

'The Union demands that Hamas and other groups declare immediately a ceasefire and halt all terrorist activity,' EU leaders said in a final statement at their summit meeting in a Greek beach resort. 'The council is urgently examining the case for wider action against Hamas fund raising,' they said.

The warning came as US Secretary of State Colin Powell and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called on the Palestinian Authority to crack down on the Islamic group which is behind scores of anti-Israeli attacks.

'We are ready, if this organization is not willing to cooperate in a constructive manner for a ceasefire, to take some measures particularly on the money and financial support of this organization,' EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said."

SUNNI INSURGENTS TARGET IRAQI INFRASTRUCTURE

June 24, 2003 The Middle East Newline reports: "Sunni insurgents are said to have targeted Iraqi infrastructure in the war against the United States. The Defense Department said insurgents loyal to deposed President Saddam Hussein have been attacking power stations, water and sewage systems. Pentagon officials said the insurgents appear intent to prevent U.S. provisions of basic services to the Iraqi people.

Sunday, Iraqi saboteurs blew up a fuel pipeline that transported natural gas to Turkey. The explosion delayed plans to resume fuel exports to Iraq's northern neighbor. Earlier, Sunni insurgents fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a transformer in a power plant near the city of Faluja. The attack injured two U.S. soldiers and disrupted power to half the city."

GREECE ROCKED BY MASSIVE UNREST

June 23, 2003 The Middle East Newline reports: "Greece has been rocked by massive unrest amid its hosting of a European Union summit. Thousands of protesters clashed with police and security forces in an attempt to disrupt the EU summit meeting over the weekend. Many protesters later rampaged through a northern Greek city and destroyed property.

Greek authorities reported extensive damage in the northern port city of Thessaloniki, located near the summit. Authorities blamed what they termed masked anarchists for damaging and looting stores in what they assert was an organized attack.

The EU leaders flew to an airport in Thessaloniki and from there were ferried by helicopter to a seaside resort at Port Carras 80 kilometers southeast. Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece."

U.S. DISCLOSES AL QAIDA PLOT TO DESTROY N.Y. BRIDGE

June 22, 2003 The Middle East Newslite reports: "The United States has disclosed a plot by Al Qaida to target major infrastructure in an effort to achieve massive civilian casualties. U.S. officials said Al Qaida leader Osama Bin Laden met with a key operative and ordered the attacks on U.S. bridges and trains. The operative was described as a U.S. citizen entrusted to list targets for Al Qaida strikes.

Attorney General John Ashcroft told a news conference on Thursday that a resident of Columbus, Ohio pleaded guilty on May 1 to charges of conspiracy as well as providing material support to Al Qaida. The plea by Lyman Faris, a 34-year-old truck driver, was concealed by U.S. authorities until Ashcroft's announcement.

'From late 2000 to March of this year, Faris worked in concert with Al Qaida, our enemies, to plot potential attacks against America and its citizens,' Ashcroft said. On any given day, Lyman Faris appeared to be a hard-working, independent truck driver. He freely crisscrossed the country making deliveries to airports and businesses without raising suspicion. But Lyman Faris led a double life."

RUMORS SWEEP BAGHDAD THAT U.S. SECRETLY CAPTURED SADDAM

June 21, 2003 The World Tribune reports: "Baghdad has been swept by rumors that the United States captured President Saddam Hussein earlier this week. The rumors stemmed from published reports within Iraq that a unit of the U.S. Fourth Infantry Division secretly captured Saddam and his younger son Qusay in a farmhouse in Tikrit earlier this week. U.S. Central Command has denied the reports while acknowledging the capture of Saddam's secretary.

The Iraqi newspaper *Sada Al Watan*, available on the Internet, reported that a U.S. force found Saddam, Qusay and the president's secretary Abid Hamid Mahmoud Tikriti in the Sunni city of Tikrit on Wednesday. The newspaper said the United States brought the three men to Baghdad airport and flew them to an unknown location for interrogation.

Sada Al Watan said the United States concealed the capture of Saddam and Qusay to prevent attempts by loyalists to free them. The United States has acknowledged capturing Tikriti, *Middle East Newslite* reported.

U.S. officials denied that Saddam, believed to be financing the Sunni insurgency against U.S. forces, was captured. But they acknowledged that U.S. military intelligence had thought that Saddam and Qusay were in the same house as Tikriti. The officials said military intelligence concluded that Tikriti helped facilitate Saddam's escape from Baghdad in April."

EUROPE WARNED ON ANTI-SEMITISM

June 21, 2003 BBC News reports: "The United States has said Europe must do more to tackle a resurgence of anti-Semitism around the world. The plea was made by former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, representing the US at a conference in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

About 400 officials from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have gathered for the unprecedented two-day meeting following a rash of anti-Jewish incidents in Europe in recent years. The European Union told the conference it was taking action against anti-Jewish hatred but denied there had been a distinctive rise in anti-Semitism.

Mr. Giuliani told delegates to take concrete steps to stamp out violence against Jews, including keeping statistics on hate crimes, identifying problems early on and comparing performances between countries. 'Words do not suffice to turn the tide of anti-Semitism that is once again growing in Europe and other parts of the world,' he said.

In a message read to the conference, US President George W Bush urged countries to 'ensure that anti-Semitism is excluded from school text books, official statements, official television programming and official publications.'

Last month, the LA-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre said attacks on Jews had reached the highest level since World War II. As well as physical attacks on Jews, many countries have reported vandalism of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries."

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