

PROPHETIC TIMES

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NORTH KOREA AND THE U.S. TRADE HARSH CRITICISM

July 31, 2003 The AP reports: "North Korea and the United States traded harsh criticism on Thursday, with a U.S. official describing the communist nation as a 'hellish nightmare' and the North accusing Washington of 'all sorts of lies and plots.' The accusations came amid uncertainty over prospects for a new round of talks on North Korea's suspected development of nuclear weapons, despite South Korean claims that the process was moving forward.

In Seoul, U.S. Undersecretary of State John Bolton said North Korea had not agreed to a U.S. proposal for multilateral talks, and was instead sticking to a demand for one-on-one talks with Washington like a 'one-note piano concerto.'

'The ball is in North Korea's court,' said Bolton, who was in Beijing earlier this week to discuss diplomatic efforts to resolve the standoff. In April, China hosted and participated in contentious talks involving the United States and North Korea. 'The key now is to get South Korea and Japan, and ultimately Russia and others, a seat at the table,' Bolton said. 'Those with a direct stake in the outcome must be part of the process. On this point, we will not waver.'

In remarks likely to infuriate North Korea, Bolton described the country's totalitarian leader, Kim Jong Il, as a 'tyrannical dictator' and criticized the North's human rights record and weapons exports

North Korea, in turn, said the United States should be brought to 'international justice' for spreading 'misinformation' about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction before the Iraq war. Repeating a long-standing accusation, it claimed Washington is building up its forces in South Korea as a prelude to an invasion of North Korea

HAMAS TESTS NEW KASSAM MISSILE

July 31, 2003 The Middle East Newline reports: " Hamas has been testing a new Kassam-class short-range missile in the Gaza Strip. Israeli military intelligence officials said Hamas has been firing the new missile as part of efforts to develop a Kassam with a range of up to 20 kilometers. The officials said the missile firings take place nearly nightly north of Gaza City toward the Mediterranean Sea.

Hamas has sought to develop a missile with a range long enough to strike a major Israeli city. The officials said the Hamas target appears to be Ashkelon, the city closest to the Gaza Strip. The city also contains a major power station.

'We know that this missile can reach a range of 14 kilometers,' an Israeli official said. 'But Hamas wants something that can strike Ashkelon from the northern Gaza Strip and this would require a range of at least 20 kilometers.'

CHINA SEEKS TO EXPAND MISSILE EXPORTS TO MIDEAST

July 30, 2003 The Middle East Newline reports: "The United States has assessed that China seeks to expand missile exports to the Middle East. U.S. officials said the Bush administration has determined that Beijing has violated its pledges to end the proliferation of missiles as part of a Chinese campaign to increase exports and expand clients in the Middle East. The officials said China has been exporting missiles directly to such countries as Egypt, Iran, Libya and Syria as well as transferring missiles via North Korea.

The Chinese missile exports were discussed during a hearing last week by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Officials expressed concern over China's increasing failure to enforce its own nonproliferation laws, announced in August 2002.

"China does not appear to be enforcing controls at its borders, allowing unauthorized transfers to go undetected,' Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance Paula DeSutter told the commission on Thursday."

ISLAMISTS BUTCHER NEW CHRISTIAN

July 30, 2003 WorldNetDaily.com reports: "After slaughtering a Muslim-turned-Christian, Islamic extremists have reportedly returned the man's body to his Palestinian family in four pieces.

According to a report from the Barnabas Fund, the newly converted man left his friends and family earlier this month bound for a mountainous region of the Palestinian Authority area. He reportedly took Christian material with him — videos, cassette tapes and a Bible. After approximately 10 days, the body of the man, who left behind a wife and two small children, was returned to his home, having been cut into four pieces. The family believes the act was meant a warning to other Muslims who might consider becoming Christians.

The Barnabas Fund is withholding further details about the story due to concern for the safety of the family. The organization records incidents of Christian persecution in the Holy Land and elsewhere, and works for changes in the way Islam is taught. Under Muslim sharia law, any male who leaves Islam faces the death penalty"

NORTH KOREA IS SANCTIONED FOR SCUD SALE TO YEMEN

July 29, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "The United States has imposed sanctions on North Korea for its Scud missile sale to Yemen. The Bush administration approved sanctions on North Korea's Changgwang Sinyong Corp. for what officials described as the company's missile exports to Yemen. In December 2002, North Korea shipped 15 Scud B and Scud C missiles to Sanaa in an episode that threatened relations between the United States and Yemen.

The State Department said the sanctions on Changgwang were imposed on July 16, seven months after the North Korean shipment was seized by a Spanish naval vessel. Days after the capture, the United States ordered the release of the missiles to Sanaa.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the imposed missile proliferation sanctions on North Korean company concerned the transfer of what he termed Control Regime Category 1 Scud missiles to Yemen in December of 2002. The reference was to missiles 300 kilometers or more in range and banned by the Missile Technology Control Regime"

THOUSANDS BEING RECRUITED FOR 'JIHAD'

July 29, 2003 GulfNews.com reports: "Despite official pledges of action to stop militancy, the 'jihad' movement in the country seems to be growing. This appears to be especially true in the Punjab and also the NWFP, where it is said 'more people have linked up to jihadi forces in the post-Iraq war scenario than at any other time in years.'

'Jihad is spreading like wildfire in Pakistan,' claims an official in the country's Interior Ministry. He says that according to several jihadi publications between January and June 2003, Islamic groups recruited over 7,000 young boys aged between 18 and 25. Jihadi groups are finding the Pakistani environment particularly receptive after the U.S.-led attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq.

Millions of pamphlets featuring ballads, speeches, interviews and profiles of young jihadis are distributed free by these organizations. For his part, Pakistan Interior Minister Syed Faisal Saleh Hayat maintains, 'The government is monitoring the activities of these jihadi groups and will take stern action if it got any proof or substantial evidence. But we cannot proceed against them without any evidence. The government also can't ban them unless they are really involved in anti-state activities.'"

REPORT: SAUDIS REFUSE TO COOPERATE ON AL QAIDA

July 27, 2003 The Middle East Newsline reports: "Saudi Arabia refused to cooperate with the United States regarding Al Qaida in the years leading up to the suicide strikes by the organization in New York and Washington in 2001.

An unclassified version of the congressional investigation into the Sept. 11 attacks asserted that Saudi Arabia failed to provide information on Al Qaida, including members believed to have been planning attacks on U.S. facilities. The unclassified version said the United States arrived at that conclusion as early as 1996, two years before the Al Qaida bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa and five years before the suicide hijackings.

"According to a U.S. government official, it was clear from about 1996 that the Saudi government would not cooperate with the United States on matters related to Osama Bin Laden," the report said.

Congressional sources said the unclassified version of the report eliminated most references to Saudi involvement in the Sept. 11 attacks, including whether Riyadh helped Al Qaida in its plot to attack the United States. Fifteen of the 19 Al Qaida airplane hijackers in the September 2001 attacks were Saudi nationals"

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