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PRIESTS TO TRAIN ON TEMPLE MODEL

November 4, 2003 Israel Today reported: For several months, Jewish experts have been working on a replica of the Third Temple in the blazing heat near the Dead Sea. The Jewish community of *Mitzpe Yericho*, between Jerusalem and Jericho, is home to the model, which is built on a 1:1 scale.

Covering an area of 25,000 square meters (269,000 square feet), it will function as a training site to prepare priests (*kohanim*) for service in the Third Temple in Jerusalem. Backers of the project say the Jewish people are waiting for the Redemption and must prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah.

"After the Six Day War in 1967, when the Temple Mount was finally in our hands again, we all hoped for the building of the Third Temple," said the rabbi of Mitzpe Yericho, Yehuda Kreuser, who oversees the Temple model. "However, this did not happen. Political considerations aside, we were not prepared to restore the priestly service in the Temple. Now we would like to prepare ourselves for that eventuality."

Rabbi Kreuser says the Temple service must be approached with fear and trembling because it is most holy.

"Someone who makes mistakes in the priestly service in the Temple can be punished with death," he says. The rabbi bases this on Numbers 18:1: *"So the Lord said to Aaron: 'You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood.'"*

Among the Biblically mandated tasks of the priests are offering sacrifices, inquiring of God concerning His will, handing down judicial and ritual rulings, accompanying the holy Ark, and teaching the Divine commandments to the people. The regulations for the sanctified work of the Temple priests were codified in rabbinical writings many years ago. "A man who wants to serve as a priest in the Temple must be extremely responsible," explained Rabbi Kreuser. "It is not a job for everyone. The Temple priests are the ambassadors of the Almighty on earth."

CYPRUS AN 'OBSTACLE' TO TURKEY'S EU BID

November 5, 2003 The EUObserver reported: "Turkey was today told that the "anachronistic" situation in Cyprus could represent a "considerable obstacle" to its bid to join the EU. Commission President, Romano Prodi - unveiling an assessment of Turkey's progress toward EU membership in the last year - told the European Parliament that substantial progress had been made but that failure to achieve a settlement in Cyprus may hinder Turkey's own aspirations.

"Reaching a settlement quickly is in Turkey's interest too, because this would prevent the Cyprus issue from becoming an obstacle to its own aspirations" the President said. He later told journalists that the matter was "a considerable obstacle to Turkish accession".

Despite pressure from the Turkish authorities not to link the two issues - ahead of the release of the report today - the Commission chose to use its leverage to press for a settlement to the problems which have partitioned the island since 1974.

"There is a window of opportunity after the elections in the Turkish part of Cyprus", Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen said, referring to the upcoming elections in the north of the island which are scheduled for December. Mr Verheugen said that he thought the Commission's decision to informally link Turkish accession with Cypriot politics would help the government in Ankara counteract those who "want to put a spoke in the wheel" of an agreement.

Ankara will now be expected to redouble its pressure on Northern Cyprus' long-time ruler Rauf Denktash to accept an UN brokered agreement which has been on the table for well over a year. However, Mr Denktash continues to view the deal as unacceptable.

Despite the fresh political pressure on the Turkish government, European diplomats have consistently questioned the government's ability to "deliver" Mr Denktash, given its fragile relationship with the Turkish military. "We must put increased pressure on all sides", Mr Verheugen concluded. Next year's annual report will be crucial in deciding if Turkey can begin accession negotiations in 2005.'

FORMER ARCHBISHOP SAYS GAY BISHOP HARMS ANGLICANS

November 6, 2003 The Associated Press reported: 'The consecration of an openly gay bishop in America's Episcopal Church has done "incalculable" damage to the global Anglican Communion, former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said in a letter published Thursday. However, he urged all factions in the communion to hold together and strengthen their "bonds of affection." In a letter to The Times of London newspaper, Carey said he shared the distress

of conservative evangelicals following Sunday's consecration of Gene Robinson as Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire. The Episcopal Church is the U.S. branch of Anglicanism.

Subsequently, Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola, speaking in the name of the "Global South" of the communion, said he would no longer participate in any meetings with Episcopal leaders. "I can only share the principled distress of the primates of the Global South and others who have expressed themselves so strongly in recent days," Carey wrote. "They are surely right to do so. The damage done to ecumenical relations, interfaith dialogue and the mission of the worldwide church is incalculable."

Carey served as archbishop, and thus spiritual leader of the communion, from 1991 to 2002, and presided at the 1998 Lambeth Conference which denounced "homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture."

Carey's successor, Rowan Williams, has appointed a commission to examine the practical issues of governance, both within the Episcopal Church and the wider communion, because of the deep divisions over Robinson's ordination.

"Whatever the way forward in maintaining communion between the two sides, I can only add my voice to that of my successor in encouraging all those most deeply affected not to drift away from each other, but to strengthen the bonds of affection that remain at the heart of Anglicanism," Carey wrote.'

NORTH KOREAN ENVOY SAYS THEY HAVE NUCLEAR DETERRENT

November 6, 2003 Reuters reported: 'North Korea's envoy in Britain says Pyongyang has a nuclear deterrent that is ready to use and powerful enough to deter any U.S. attack. Ambassador Ri Yong Ho told Reuters in an interview on Thursday that North Korea would only use its capability in self-defense. Asked if North Korea had a nuclear bomb, he said: "What we are saying is, a nuclear deterrent capability."

North Korea has long hinted that it had a nuclear bomb. It said last month it was prepared to demonstrate the existence of its nuclear deterrent "when an appropriate time comes". But Thursday's comments appear to be the first time it has explicitly stated that it has a nuclear weapon ready to use. The ambassador said the deterrent was made with plutonium, most of which was recently reprocessed, and was now ready to use should the United States attack.

The latest crisis in North Korea-U.S. relations erupted in October 2002 when U.S. officials said Pyongyang was pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons program that violated its international commitments. The crisis showed signs of deepening on Thursday when the United States proposed suspending a project to build nuclear power stations in the communist country.

Ri said the suspension, if it went ahead, would have a "very negative impact on the dialogue process" aimed at defusing the standoff. The reactor project is based on a 1994 agreement under which the North Koreans froze their nuclear arms program in return for two light-water reactors.'

IAEA CHIEF SAYS "35 or 40" COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO MAKE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

October 31, 2003 Agence France Presse reported: 'Up to 40 countries are believed to be capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons, underlining the need to reinforce and update the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei told a French newspaper.

The treaty, which came into force in 1970, has been overtaken by a world in which developing nuclear arms has become attractive not only to many countries, but also to "terrorist groups," ElBaradei told Friday's issue of *Le Monde*. The number of countries believed to be able to create such weapons "is estimated at 35 or 40," he said.

"And under the current regime, there is nothing illicit for a non-nuclear state to conduct uranium-enriching activities ... or even to possess military-grade nuclear material," he said. Should any one of them decide to break their commitment to the non-proliferation treaty, experts believe it "could produce a weapon in just a few months."

A "new safety system" that would treat the causes of international insecurity, not just their symptoms, also should be created that would not be based on "dissuasion, but on fairness and universality," he argued.'

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