

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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NO-DONG EXTENDS RANGE TO 1,500 KM

June 9, 2004 Middle East Newswire reported: "North Korea has extended the range of its No-Dong missile in a move that could benefit Pyongyang's clients in the Middle East.

The No-Dong intermediate-range missiles was said to have been extended over the last year in a North Korean research and development effort, Asian intelligence sources said. They said North Korea appeared to have employed advanced technology to reduce the weight of the warheads to extend the range of the No-Dong.

North Korea's No-Dong was believed to have a range of 1,200 to 1,500 kilometers. But the only test of the No-Dong was in 1991 and the missile was said to have reached a range of 565 kilometers.

U.S. officials said North Korea was certain to offer for export its improved No-Dong. They said the most interested clients would be Iran and Syria."

WATCHDOG'S 'ALARM' OVER ID CARDS

June 8, 2004 The BBC News reported: "Plans for a national ID card scheme risk changing the relationship between the British state and its citizens, the information watchdog has warned. Richard Thomas said he had initially greeted the plans with "healthy scepticism" but the details had changed his view to "increasing alarm".

The government hopes a pilot scheme will pave the way for compulsory identity cards within the next decade. Mr. Thomas told MPs the scheme was "unprecedented" in international terms. The information commissioner's warning came as part of the Commons home affairs select committee's inquiry into the draft legislation on identity cards. Mr Thomas was essentially delivering a preview of his formal critique of the law plans, which he hopes to give to ministers in mid-July.

His comments will come as a blow to Home Secretary David Blunkett, who has faced opposition over the idea of compulsory cards inside the cabinet from ministers such as Jack Straw and Patricia Hewitt. BBC political editor Andrew Marr said Mr Thomas had used strong language which ministers could not just brush aside.

The commissioner keeps checks on the UK's data protection and freedom of information laws. He said he was not opposed to identity cards in principle. But he was worried the British plans were more comprehensive and ambitious than any other scheme in the world.

Mr Thomas told the MPs: "This is beginning to represent a really significant sea change in the relationship between state and every individual in this country." It was now clear the scheme was not just about identity cards but about a national identity register, he said. "It is not just about citizens having a piece of plastic to identify themselves. It's about the amount, the nature of the information held about every citizen and how that's going to be used in a wide range of activities."..."

EU IS THE 'MOST TRUSTED' INSTITUTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

June 8, 2004 The Euobserver reported: "It seems that the European spirit is alive and well amongst the young people of the EU. An internet survey of EU citizens aged between 18 and 30 has revealed that four fifths of them consider themselves European citizens and two thirds of them think the EU has "a positive future".

And the poll - published on Monday (7 June) by a group called "Youth decide", which is partly funded by EU institutions - revealed that young people trust the EU more than other World organizations such as the World Trade Organization or the United Nations. They even trust the EU more than their own national governments.

The youth of the EU also seems to be more aware of - and more keen to vote in - the forthcoming European elections. Over nine out of ten people are aware that Europe will be electing its MEPs on 10-13 June and over three quarters said that they planned to vote in these elections. Overall turnout across the EU is expected to be much lower than this.

Despite the majority of respondents saying that they identified themselves as a European citizen and 76 percent saying that the policies of the EU directly affected their lives, the bad news for the EU is that two-thirds of people do not believe that the EU represents them as an individual."

ISRAEL TARGETED FOR NUKE DISARMAMENT

June 5, 2004 The Middle East Newswire reported: "The International Atomic Energy Agency, directed by Arab states and Iran, plans to launch a campaign to force Israel to permit international inspections of its Dimona nuclear facility.

Israeli officials said the campaign was meant to be sparked by a spate of articles and television documentaries based on information provided by Israeli nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu was released from an Israeli prison on April 21 and has been living in a monastery in Jerusalem.

"There has been a feeling within the international community that too much attention has been paid to Iran's nuclear program at the expense of Israel," a senior Israeli official said. "There is a drive to switch the focus from Iran to Israel over the next few months by portraying Israel as an immediate nuclear threat."

IAEA director-general Mohammed El Baradei plans to visit Israel over the next two months, officials said. The visit was expected to take place following the IAEA board of directors's meeting in mid-June to discuss Iranian compliance with international nuclear inspection efforts. The United States has charged that Teheran has violated its pledge to the IAEA."

SAUDIS FAIL TO ENFORCE AL QAIDA SANCTIONS

June 5, 2004 The Middle East Newslite reported: "Saudi Arabia has failed to enforce sanctions against nationals and organizations that finance Al Qaida.

Saudi and U.S. officials acknowledged that a ban announced by the kingdom in 2003 on the transfer of charity funds abroad has been ignored. They said a prominent Saudi fired from a leading charity has continued to relay funds to Al Qaida and related groups outside the kingdom.

It was the first time that Riyadh and Washington admitted the failure of Saudi enforcement of anti-Al Qaida measures. Over the last two years, the Bush administration has repeatedly praised Saudi decisions to block financing to Al Qaida and related groups.

But statements by U.S. and Saudi officials as well as a U.S. Treasury Department communique portrayed a Saudi government unable or unwilling to implement its ban on financiers of Al Qaida. They described a Saudi government-sponsored and -administered charity that ordered its employees to flout the kingdom's decision to halt activities abroad and conceal financing of Al Qaida and related groups under a different guise."

GCC CONVENES TO DISCUSS AL QAIDA

June 5, 2004 The Middle East Newslite reported: "Gulf Arab foreign ministers plan to convene for cooperation talks in the war against Al Qaida. Officials said the foreign ministers of the six Gulf Cooperation Council states were scheduled to meet in the Saudi port city of Jeddah on Saturday. They said the meeting intends to focus on cooperation in efforts to prevent Al Qaida and related groups from attacking their countries.

"The agency will particularly concern itself with the need to fight terrorism," GCC secretary-general Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al Attiyah said. Officials said Saudi Arabia has pressed GCC allies for a regional strategy against Al Qaida amid the insurgency movement's campaign against the kingdom. On May 29, Al Qaida captured a Western compound and killed 22 people, almost all of them foreigners, who worked for the Saudi oil sector."

SOLANA EMERGES AS CONTENDER FOR COMMISSION PRESIDENT

June 3, 2004 The Euobserver reported: "A new name has joined those being considered by EU leaders as candidates to take over as President of the European Commission in autumn: Javier Solana, the EU's foreign policy chief. According to the Financial Times, Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero will meet his UK counterpart Tony Blair in London today (3 June) to discuss the issue. The newspaper says that London is showing signs of supporting Mr Solana as an alternative to Belgian prime minister Guy Verhofstadt, who is currently one of the favorites on the shortlist.

Although Mr Verhofstadt appears to have the support of French president Jacques Chirac, he is considered too federalist and pro-European to curry favour with London. Two of the other names in the hat - external relations commissioner Chris Patten and Danish prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen - are thought unlikely to get the position as they both come from countries that are outside the eurozone.

Outgoing President of the European Parliament Pat Cox is also interested in filling Commission President Romano Prodi's shoes, but some have criticised his lack of executive experience as he has never been in government.

Mr Solana, whose name has already been put forward for the post of the EU's first foreign minister should the EU Constitution be agreed, is popular among EU capitals for his discreet diplomacy and for the way he has handled the post of EU High Representative for foreign policy since 1999. EU leaders are to nominate a new name for Commission President when they meet later this month."