



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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PERU EARTHQUAKE DEATH TOLL RISES TO 510

August 16, 2007 The Associated Press reported: "The death toll rose to 510 on Thursday in the magnitude-8 earthquake that devastated cities of adobe and brick in Peru's southern desert. Survivors wearing blankets walked like ghosts through the ruins.

Dust-covered dead were pulled out and laid in rows in the streets, or beneath bloodstained sheets at damaged hospitals and morgues. Doctors struggled to help more than 1,500 injured, including hundreds who waited on cots in the open air, fearing more aftershocks would send the structures crashing down.

Destruction was centered in Peru's southern desert, at the oasis city of Ica and the nearby port of Pisco, about 125 miles southeast of the capital, Lima...

The San Clemente church in the main plaza of the gritty fishing port of Pisco was perhaps the single deadliest spot in the magnitude-8 earthquake, which devastated cities and hamlets of adobe and brick across Peru's southern desert.

Hundreds had gathered in the pews of the San Clemente church Wednesday - the day Roman Catholics celebrate the Virgin Mary's rise into heaven - for a special mass marking one month since the death of a Pisco man. The church ceiling began to break apart as the shaking began and lasted for an agonizing two minutes, burying 200 people, according to the town's mayor."..."

ISRAEL'S NETANYAHU VOWS TO WIN PREMIERSHIP AFTER PARTY ELECTION VICTORY

August 16, 2007 The VOA News reported: "Hawkish opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu won the chairmanship of his Likud party by a landslide, capturing 73 percent of the vote. He said the next stop is the prime minister's office.

He told Israel Radio that his election gives the entire nation hope for a future that is better and more secure.

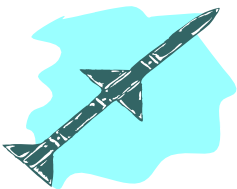
Mr. Netanyahu is known as favoring tough security policies, and he has soared in the polls since last year's Lebanon War, which an official inquiry described as a failure. As a result, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's popularity has plunged. National elections are not due until 2010, but if Mr. Olmert's fragile government collapses, early elections could take place next year."...

Netanyahu needs the votes of Israelis in the center if he wants to win re-election, so he has sought to project a more moderate image. Though he opposes a Palestinian state in most of the West Bank, he says he would agree to peace talks and territorial concessions, if the Palestinians keep their commitments to fight terrorism."

SYRIAN MISSILE BUILDUP CONTINUES, ISRAEL CALLS SITUATION 'TENSE'

August 16, 2007 The World Tribune reported: "Syria continues to deploy missiles supplied by Russia and has established an anti-aircraft umbrella around Damascus and the Golan Heights.

Israel's military has reported that the regime of Syrian President Assad deployed a range of surface-to-air missile assets in southern Syria. The military said the assets were purchased over the last year from Russia and financed by Iran.



"The situation is tense," a senior Israeli officer said. On Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi met at the military's Northern Command headquarters near the Lebanese border. The three men, on the first anniversary of the conclusion of the 34-day war with Hizbullah, received briefings on Syrian military preparations.

"I don't think it is in Syria's interest to start a war," Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai said. "It is not in our interests to start war. This tension is unnecessary."

Military sources said Syria has been deploying short- and medium-range missiles and rockets in southern and central Syria. They said the Assad regime has been engaged in accelerated deployment of the Scud C and D missiles, with ranges of 550 and 700 kilometers, respectively.

"There are more than 100 mobile Syrian launchers in the Golan Heights," a source said. "This means that within an hour, they can fire at least 400 missiles into Israel."..."

BISHOP URGES CHRISTIANS TO CALL GOD 'ALLAH'

August 16, 2007 WorldNetDaily reported: "Catholic churches in the Netherlands should use the name Allah for God to ease tensions between Muslims and Christians, says a Dutch bishop. Tiny Muskens, the bishop of Breda, told the Dutch TV program "Network" Monday night he believes God doesn't mind what he is called, Radio Netherlands Worldwide reported. The Almighty is above such "discussion and bickering," he insisted.

Muskens points to Indonesia, where he served 30 years ago, as an example for Dutch churches. Christians in the Middle East also use the term Allah for God.

"Someone like me has prayed to Allah yang maha kuasa (Almighty God) for eight years in Indonesia and other priests for 20 or 30 years," Muskens said. "In the heart of the Eucharist, God is called Allah over there, so why can't we start doing that together?"

Muskens thinks it could take another 100 years, but eventually the name Allah will be used by Dutch churches, promoting rapprochement between the two religions, he said, according to Radio Netherlands."..."

PETRAEUS PAVES THE WAY FOR US TROOP WITHDRAWALS NEXT YEAR

August 16, 2007 Online Times reported: "The US general overseeing President Bush's surge strategy in Iraq said last night that he would recommend troop reductions by next summer, but cautioned against a significant withdrawal.

General David Petraeus, in comments that appeared to lay the ground for his pivotal report to the US Congress next month, said that the US footprint in Iraq would have to be "a good bit smaller by next summer". But he also signalled that the surge would continue into next year, and gave warning against a quick or hefty withdrawal that could surrender "the gains we have fought so hard to achieve".

General Petraeus said that the "horrific and indiscriminate attacks" on the Yazidi community in northwestern Iraq on Tuesday night were the work of al-Qaeda fighters. The bombings occurred near the Syrian border, and US officials charge the Damascus regime has not done enough to police the frontier against infiltration by foreign fighters who dominate al-Qaeda. Those bomb attacks would bolster his argument, General Petraeus said, against drawing down the 30,000 additional US troops that have made up the surge too quickly. "We know that the surge has to come to an end, there's no question about that. I think everyone understands that by about a year or so from now we've got to be a good bit smaller than we are right now.

"The question is how do you do that . . . so that you can retain the gains we have fought so hard to achieve and keep going. We are not at all satisfied where we are right now. We have made some progress but again there's still a lot of hard work to be done against the different extremist elements that threaten the new Iraq."

IRAN PLAY THE CENTRAL ASIA CARD

August 15, 2007 Asian Times Online reported: "This week, Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad kicks off a tour of neighboring states in South and Central Asia with a trip that begins in Kabul and ends in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in time to attend the next summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

With the security deterioration in Afghanistan, openly admitted to by that country's President Hamid Karzai on his recent trip to Washington, and rising Islamic militancy in the region and in China's western autonomous region of Xinjiang. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a key regional player that can be counted on by the SCO member states, irrespective of China's recent misgivings about Iran's inclusion as a full member.

In Afghanistan, Ahmadinejad will reiterate Iran's good-neighborly policy, perhaps much to the chagrin of US President George W Bush, who openly disagreed with Karzai's pro-Iran comments at their recent joint press conference. With their porous 936-kilometer border, Iran and Afghanistan are grappling with a growing menace of drug traffic that exacts the lives of hundreds of Iranian law-enforcement agents annually, in addition to the deadly resurgence of the Taliban who, having regrouped in Pakistan, have stepped up their attacks on the Afghan government and US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces stationed in the war-ravaged country...



All five Central Asian states and Afghanistan are members of the regional Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which has been a forum for discussion among these states for trade and transportation linkages among them. By more organically connecting Afghanistan to Central Asia within the scope of its regionalist approach, Iran hopes to see a certain geopolitical dividend emerge..."..."

US CONSIDERING TERRORIST LABEL FOR IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS

August 16, 2007 The VOA News reported: "The action, which officials here confirm is under consideration, would be the first time the United States has placed the armed forces of any foreign government on a list of terrorist organizations. U.S. officials link the Revolutionary Guards, an elite branch of the Iranian military, with Iran's presumed nuclear weapons program and the smuggling into Iraq of armor-piercing weapons being used with deadly effect against American troops.

Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* reported Wednesday that action against the Revolutionary Guard is pending. The *Post* said the designation would be made under an executive order issued by President Bush after the September 2001 terrorist attacks aimed at obstructing the funding of terror groups.

Briefing reporters, State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said he would not discuss administration actions that might be under consideration, saying....that an early tip-off might allow the prospective targets of U.S. sanctions to move threatened assets."..."

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