



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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BIN LADEN WARNS EU OVER PROPHET CARTOONS

March 20, 2008 The National Post reported: "Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden threatened the European Union with grave punishment on Wednesday for publication of cartoons mocking Islam's Prophet Mohammad. In an audio recording posted on the Internet coinciding with the birthday of Islam's founder, bin Laden said the drawings, considered offensive by Muslims, were part of a "new crusade" in which Pope Benedict was involved.

"Your publications of these drawings -- part of a new crusade in which the Pope of the Vatican had a significant role -- is a confirmation from you that the war continues," said the Saudi-born militant leader, addressing "those who are wise at the European Union". You are "testing Muslims ... the answer will be what you shall see and not what you hear."

Bin Laden also urged Palestinians on Thursday to use "iron and fire" to end an Israeli blockade of Gaza. "My speech is about the Gaza siege and the way to retrieve it and the rest of Palestine from the hands of the Zionist enemy," the Saudi-born militant said. "Our enemies did not take it by negotiations and dialogue but with fire and iron. And this is the way to get it back."

It was bin Laden's first message since November 29 when he urged Europe to end participation with U.S. forces in Afghanistan."...

He added: "It's only ominous when he says 'don't listen to our words, watch for our actions' ... that means they clearly are intending to attack in Europe."..."

VATICAN SECURITY WORRIES OVER BIN LADEN TAPE

March 21, 2008 The NY Times reported: "The Vatican on Thursday rejected an audiotaped accusation from Osama bin Laden that Pope Benedict XVI was leading a "new Crusade" against Muslims, but Italian security officials were concerned about the threats included in Mr. bin Laden's new message.

"These accusations are absolutely unfounded," the Rev. Federico Lombardi, the pope's chief spokesman, said in a telephone interview. "There is nothing new in this, and it doesn't have any particular significance for us."

The audio message attributed to Mr. bin Laden was released Wednesday night and was addressed to "the intelligent ones in the European Union." It was posted on a militant Web site on Wednesday, and an English transcription was distributed Thursday by the SITE Intelligence Group in Bethesda, Md., which tracks postings by Al Qaeda on the Internet.

The audiotape listed broad grievances, but specifically mentioned the pope, and coincided with the busiest week of the year at the Vatican, the week leading up to Easter Sunday. The pope, who turns 81 next month, will appear at several public events, including the annual Good Friday procession of the Stations of the Cross at the Colosseum.

In the five-minute message, the speaker said there would be a "severe" reaction against the publication in Europe of cartoons many Muslims considered offensive to the Prophet Muhammad. He said the cartoons — one reprinted last month in Denmark, more than two years after they were first published there — "came in the framework of a new Crusade in which the pope of the Vatican has played a large, lengthy role."



Vatican City

UN SAYS INDONESIA IS LOSING BATTLE TO FIGHT AVIAN FLU EPIDEMIC

March 19, 2008 VOA News reported: "The United Nations' food agency says the battle to contain the lethal form of avian flu in Indonesia is failing.

Joseph Domenech, the head of the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization, says the East Asian archipelago is facing "an uphill battle" trying to control the H5N1 form of the virus. Domenech says he is concerned that the high levels of infected birds in Indonesia could help the virus mutate into a form that could be passed among humans, triggering a worldwide pandemic that could kill millions.

The H5N1 form of avian flu has killed nearly 240 people across Asia since it was first detected in 2003, including 105 in Indonesia.

Domenech says major financial and human resources, stronger political commitment and better coordination between all levels of government in Indonesia are needed to fight the virus."

TONY BLAIR POPULAR CHOICE AS EU PRESIDENT

March 18, 2008 The London Daily Telegraph reported: "Tony Blair is a popular choice to become the first president of the European Union, according to a pan-Europe opinion poll. The Financial Times Harris poll, carried out in five countries, showed that most Europeans would like to see a prominent political figure as EU president. The post, created under the Lisbon Treaty, comes into effect next year.

Fifty per cent of Britons backed a high-profile figure, rising to around 80 per cent in France, Italy and Spain. Only the Germans were less enthusiastic, with 45 per cent favouring a political star.

Mr Blair scored well inside and outside his own country. Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, was the only other figure to enjoy the same widespread popularity, and she is not a candidate. In France, after backing from President Nicolas Sarkozy, Mr Blair had a 12 per cent support rating. It rose to around 17 per cent in Italy.

The survey was a blow to candidates such as Jean-Claude Juncker, the prime minister of Luxembourg, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish prime minister.”

THREATS TO ISRAEL ARE THREATS TO US, SAYS MERKEL

March 16, 2008 YnetNews.com reported: “German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed solidarity with Israel in the face of threats to the Jewish state on Saturday, the eve of a three-day visit to the country, and said Iran must halt its nuclear program.

“The threats to which the Israeli state is exposed are also threats to us,” Merkel said in her weekly podcast. She said she would underline on the trip that “the Iranian nuclear program cannot continue and Iran must finally play to international rules.”

The UN Security Council imposed a third round of sanctions on Iran earlier this month for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment, adopting a resolution that Germany co-sponsored, though not itself on the council.

Merkel will be the first German chancellor to address Israel's parliament, more than six decades after the end of World War II. Her visit will launch yearly talks between the governments. She will also visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial on Monday. “With this (visit) we want to take responsibility for the past ... we want to show clearly that Israel's right to exist is a permanent part of German foreign policy,” she said.

Her visit marks the 60th anniversary of the creation of Israel in 1948 and is intended to help further normalize relations between Germany and Israel. Some commentators say Merkel has been less vocal in her public criticism of Israel than her predecessor, Gerhard Schroeder, on issues including military action in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.”...”

NANOPARTICLES ALREADY ON EU SHELVES WARN GREEN GROUPS

March 17, 2008 The EU Observer reported: “Environmental groups are warning that advances in the science of nanotechnology are racing ahead of public policy with neither consumers, regulators nor scientists fully aware of the toxicity of so-called nanoparticles...”

A new report from Friends of the Earth groups in Brussels, Germany, the US and Australia has identified at least 104 food and agricultural products containing manufactured nanomaterials, or produced using nanotechnology, which are already on sale in the European Union, and warns that consumers are unknowingly ingesting them, despite concerns about the toxicity risks of nanomaterials.”...

Nanotechnology, the manipulation of matter at a scale of 100 nanometres or smaller – the levels of atoms and molecules, is already used in the manufacture of products such as nutritional supplements, cling wrap and containers, antibacterial kitchenware, processed meats, chocolate drinks, baby food and chemicals used in agriculture.

Nanotechnology engineers say that a new era of food free of the negative effects of fatty or sugary foods is upon us, enthusing that future generations of humanity will be able to eat any kind of food no matter how rich or salty or high in cholesterol, thanks to the new science of the very small.”...”

ISRAEL TO HOLD MASSIVE EMERGENCY DRILL

March 18, 2008 The Jerusalem Post reported: “In the face of a possible escalation with Syria and Iran's efforts to obtain a nuclear weapon, parts of the country will shut down next month in what security officials say will be the largest emergency exercise in Israel's history. The drill, which is being organized by the newly-established National Emergency Authority, will take place over five days starting on Sunday, April 6.

But first, on Tuesday, a first-of-its-kind hospital emergency exercise will take place to see how Ashkelon's Barzilai Medical Center would cope with a Grad missile hitting a five-story hospitalization building and an outpatient clinic's laboratory filled with toxic chemicals and a fire breaking out, requiring patients to be lowered from the roof.

Around 100 firemen, 10 fire service vehicles and various other equipment, as well as doctors and nurses, will participate in the drill, to be held between 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Preparations for the April exercise are being overseen by Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilna'i.

On the first day of the drill, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will convene the cabinet in Jerusalem in response to an “enemy attack” and to decide on an Israeli response.

Based on a lesson learned in the Second Lebanon War and in preparation for Iranian nuclear bombs and enemy use of chemical and biological weapons, the Israel Police, IDF Home Front Command and other military branches, all of the country's hospitals, the Fire and Rescue Service, Magen David Adom and other rescue services will all participate in the drill.”...”



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