



PROPHETIC TIMES

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PM, BITTER BUT DIGNIFIED, SAYS HE'LL QUIT AFTER KADIMA PRIMARY

July 30, 2008 The Jerusalem Post reported: "President Ehud Olmert intends to hand his resignation letter to President Shimon Peres the day after the September 17 Kadima primary and ask him to entrust the new party leader with forming a new government, Olmert's associates said Wednesday night.

They spoke soon after the prime minister had made a somber speech at his official residence in Jerusalem in which he announced that he would not seek to retain the leadership.

By law, Olmert will remain prime minister until a new government is formed. If the new Kadima leader forms a government soon after the primary, Olmert will then leave office. But if no government is established, Olmert, despite having formally tendered his resignation, could remain prime minister until after the general election that would likely be held in the spring of 2009.

Olmert decided 10 days ago to announce his imminent departure on Wednesday - to coincide with the last day of the Knesset's winter session and the Kadima election committee's formal decision to set the September 17 date for the primary.

He kept his decision a secret. However, before his speech, Olmert called US President George W. Bush to inform him of his impending move, he briefed his lawyers, and his office alerted the four Kadima leadership candidates.

"He didn't want to humiliate himself by waiting until the last minute as some people thought he would," an Olmert associate said. "He is the most realistic person in the world. He didn't want to look like he cared only about himself by staying as long as possible. He decided he wanted to play the responsible adult."..."



BARAK: U.S. TO PROVIDE ISRAEL WITH DEFENSE SYSTEMS AGAINST IRAN STRIKE

July 30, 2008 Haaretz.com reported: "The United States will soon link Israel up to two advanced missile detection systems as a precaution against any future attack by a nuclear-armed Iran, Defense Minister Ehud Barak said on Tuesday.

The allies are also in advanced talks on upgrading Israel's Arrow II ballistic shield, though they disagree over whether it should incorporate an American interceptor missile, Barak said after meeting U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates. Washington has been leading efforts to curb Iran's atomic ambitions through sanctions, mindful of Israel's threats to resort to military strikes if it deems diplomacy a dead end.

Barak told reporters that the Israeli and U.S. governments "see eye to eye on the need to keep all options on the table ... though we may not agree on each and every detail."

"It's important the Americans understand our position, and I think that they understand it a lot better after this visit," said Barak, who was one of the more vocal Israeli critics of a U.S. intelligence report last year that concluded Iran had shelved a military nuclear program in 2003.

Barak declined to give details on whether Israel, which is believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal, would be prepared to take on Iran alone. Iran denies seeking atomic weapons and has vowed to retaliate for any attack.

The dispute has fed speculation in the global financial markets about a possible confrontation between Iran and Israel or the United States. That helped push oil prices to record highs earlier this month.

Signaling willingness to focus on defensive measures, Barak said he had secured the Pentagon's agreement to post a powerful radar, known as the forward-based X-band, in Israel "before the new (U.S.) administration arrives" in January.

Built by Raytheon Co, the system has been described by U.S. officials as capable of tracking an object the size of a baseball from about 2,900 miles (4,700 km) away. It would let the Arrow engage an Iranian Shehab-3 ballistic missile about halfway through what would be its 11-minute flight to Israel.

The X-Band radar system is the same as the one the United States plans to base in the Czech Republic as part of a missile defense system to protect allies in Europe. The United States also discussed possibly providing Israel with access to missile launch data.

A senior U.S. defense official confirmed the United States was looking to deploy the X-band system to Israel. "We're stationing our system there so it may benefit them," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity when discussing high-level talks."..."

REPORT: AHMADINEJAD SAYS IRAN NOW HAS 6,000 CENTRIFUGES

July 26, 2008 Haaretz.com reported: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Saturday that Iran now possesses 6,000 centrifuges, machines used to enrich uranium, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

"Islamic Iran today possesses 6,000 centrifuges," Fars quoted Ahmadinejad as telling university professors in the northeastern city of Mashhad. The new figure is double the 3,000 centrifuges Iran had previously said it was operating in its uranium enrichment plant in

Natanz.”...

However, Ahmadinejad said those nations - the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany - have tempered their demands, asking Iran not to freeze enrichment but rather not to expand its current program beyond 6,000 centrifuges, state-run radio reported.”...”

A total of 3,000 centrifuges is the commonly accepted figure for a nuclear enrichment program that is past the experimental stage and can be used as a platform for a full industrial-scale program that could churn out enough enriched material for dozens of nuclear weapons.”...”

BELGIAN SOUTH KEEN TO JOIN FRANCE

July 17, 2008 The EU Observer reported: “Almost one out of two French-speaking Belgians would like to join France if their country splits up, a new survey says, amid a deepening political crisis in the host-state of the European Union's top institutions. Forty nine percent of people in the south-lying Belgian region of Wallonia said they would support "rattachement" - a rejoining - with France in the event of a break-up with the northern Dutch-speaking region of Flanders.

The figure shows a huge jump from 29 percent six months ago, even though just 23 percent of Walloons believe the country might actually fall apart, an Ifop poll for Belgian and French papers *Le Soir* and *La Voix du Nord* found. On the French side, 60 percent of respondents would like to join-up with their Belgian neighbours, up from 54 percent in previous surveys. The majority in favour is even higher in bordering regions such as Pas-de-Calais.

The news comes after more than a year of political paralysis in Belgium, which saw government coalition talks drag on for nine months after June 2007 elections and whose prime minister has resigned three times since March.

The Dutch-speaking leader, Yves Leterme, last threw in the towel on 14 July in a row over giving more power to local governments, with French-speakers worried that richer Dutch-speaking regions might hold back financial support. The Belgian king rejected his resignation and has appointed three "wise men" to propose a solution by the end of the month, with early general elections in mid-2009 looking increasingly likely.

Around half of the people in Flanders regularly say they would like to split from Wallonia - caricatured by Flemings as lazy, poor and pretentious - with a minority in the north keen to join the Netherlands instead.

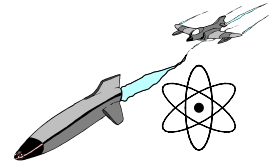
"We shouldn't touch Belgium...unless the Flemish make life so impossible for the Walloons that the Walloons throw themselves into our arms," an editorial in *Le Soir* quoted former French leader Charles de Gaulle as saying in 1965.”

U.S. INTEL: IRAN PLANS NUCLEAR STRIKE ON U.S.

July 31, 2008 Newsmax.com reported: “Iran has carried out missile tests for what could be a plan for a nuclear strike on the United States, the head of a national security panel has warned. In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee and in remarks to a private conference on missile defense over the weekend hosted by the Claremont Institute, Dr. William Graham warned that the U.S. intelligence community “doesn't have a story” to explain the recent Iranian tests.

One group of tests that troubled Graham, the former White House science adviser under President Ronald Reagan, were successful efforts to launch a Scud missile from a platform in the Caspian Sea. “They've got [test] ranges in Iran which are more than long enough to handle Scud launches and even Shahab-3 launches,” Dr. Graham said. “Why would they be launching from the surface of the Caspian Sea?”...”

Another troubling group of tests involved Shahab-3 launches where the Iranians "detonated the warhead near apogee, not over the target area where the thing would eventually land, but at altitude,” Graham said. “Why would they do that?”...



“The only plausible explanation we can find is that the Iranians are figuring out how to launch a missile from a ship and get it up to altitude and then detonate it,” he said. “And that's exactly what you would do if you had a nuclear weapon on a Scud or a Shahab-3 or other missile, and you wanted to explode it over the United States.”

The commission warned in a report issued in April that the United States was at risk of a sneak nuclear attack by a rogue nation or a terrorist group designed to take out our nation's critical infrastructure.

"If even a crude nuclear weapon were detonated anywhere between 40 kilometers to 400 kilometers above the earth, in a split-second it would generate an electro-magnetic pulse [EMP] that would cripple military and civilian communications, power, transportation, water, food, and other infrastructure," the report warned.

While not causing immediate civilian casualties, the near-term impact on U.S. society would dwarf the damage of a direct nuclear strike on a U.S. city.”...

The United States “would quickly revert to an early 19th century type of country.” except that we would have 10 times as many people with ten times fewer resources, he said. “Most of the things we depend upon would be gone, and we would literally be depending on our own assets and those we could reach by walking to them,” Graham said.”...”