



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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RUSSIA RATCHETS UP US TENSIONS WITH ARMS SALES TO IRAN AND VENEZUELA

September 19, 2008 TimesOnline.com reported: "Russia defied the United States yesterday by announcing plans to sell military hardware to Iran and Venezuela.

The head of Russia's state arms exporter said that he was negotiating to sell anti-aircraft systems to Iran despite American objections. Russia has already delivered 29 Tor-M1 missile systems under a \$700 million (£386 million) deal with Iran in 2005."

Reports have circulated for some time that the Kremlin is preparing to sell its S-300 surface-to-air missile system to Iran, offering greater protection against a possible US or Israeli attack on the Islamic republic's nuclear facilities. The missiles have a range of more than 90 miles (150km).

Sergei Chemezov, the head of the state-owned Russian Technologies, also disclosed that Venezuela's leader, Hugo Chávez, wanted to buy anti-aircraft systems, armoured personnel carriers, and SU35 fighter jets when they come into production in 2010.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Igor Sechin, one of the closest allies of Mr Putin, the Prime Minister, visited Venezuela and Cuba this week. *Kommersant*, the financial newspaper, said Russia was forming "alliance relations" with the two anti-American regimes as a response to US involvement in former Soviet republics.

The Russian moves mark a serious deterioration in relations between Washington and Moscow. Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, stepped up the rhetoric yesterday by threatening to block Russia's membership of key international organisations.

She told the Kremlin that its "authoritarian policies" could prevent it from joining the World Trade Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which coordinates economic policies among industrialised countries. In an outspoken speech to the German Marshall Fund, an institution promoting greater cooperation between America and Europe, Dr Rice said: "The picture emerging is of a Russia increasingly authoritarian at home and aggressive abroad."...

Mr Putin said last month that Russia should "restore its position in Cuba", amid persistent speculation that it may seek to open a military base on the island as a retort to the US missile shield."..."

BLOOMBERG WARNS OF POSSIBLE 'NEXT WAVE' CRISIS

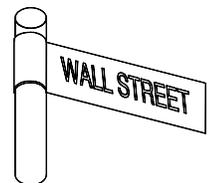
September 17, 2008 The Associated Press reported: "New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg warned Wednesday a "next wave" of financial pain may come from overseas if foreign entities stop buying U.S. debt.

The billionaire mayor spoke before an audience at Georgetown University, telling them it's not clear who is going to continue buying U.S. debt as financial firms try to cope with a crisis of confidence on Wall Street.

The mayor is scheduled to meet Thursday morning with Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson and Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Chris Cox.

Before becoming mayor, Bloomberg made a fortune by launching a financial information company that bears his name, and he has more credibility than most politicians on economic matters.

Bloomberg said he was concerned that the credit crisis in the United States may scare off foreign investors that, until now, have been willing to buy debt that the U.S. uses to maintain a deficit. "It's not clear who's going to be buying our debt," said Bloomberg. "It may very well be that the next wave is going to come back and bite us."..."



IRAN WARNS ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION, RATTLES SABRE OVER GULF

September 16, 2008 Agence France-Presse reported: "Iran warned on Tuesday it will not respond to every adverse claim about its nuclear drive, after a damning report from the UN atomic watchdog left the global community divided about future action.

Amid fears that one response might be a US or Israeli strike on Tehran's nuclear programme, a top aide to Iran's supreme leader warned again that Iran could bring oil shipments from the Gulf to a halt if attacked.

On Monday the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a report accusing Iran of stalling over a probe into its nuclear work and said it was continuing uranium enrichment in defiance of UN demands. "We do not think there should be an open forum so America can bring up a new claim every day and pass it on to the agency, expecting Iran to address any claim," Borujerdi said.

Iran's envoy to the IAEA also warned that Tehran would only cooperate within the framework of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its safeguard agreements.

Iran stopped applying the additional protocol, which gives inspectors broader access to its nuclear sites, after the nuclear case was referred to the UN Security Council in 2006.

The IAEA complained it was making little headway in probing allegations that Tehran has been involved in studies to make a nuclear warhead, as Iran refused to provide access to documentation, individuals or sites that could reveal the true nature of its activities.

Tehran said the alleged weapon-related studies were based on fabricated documents and that it had provided the IAEA a 117-page response in May addressing some of the agency's questions.

The United States, which is spearheading moves against Iran's nuclear drive, and France warned that Tehran could face possible new sanctions in the wake of the IAEA report. China said sanctions would not resolve the stalemate.

High-ranking diplomats from the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany were to meet in Washington on Friday to discuss Iran's nuclear drive, US officials said.”...”

US SKEPTICAL OF N. KOREAN OFFER TO TURN MISSILES INTO SPACESHIPS

September 19, 2008 AFP reported: “The United States expressed skepticism Wednesday over North Korea's reported pledge to give up its missile program in exchange for access to space rocket technology.

Officials on the sidelines of the Middle East peace summit here reacted warily to the vow, reportedly made to Russian President Vladimir Putin during his landmark trip to North Korea.

"I would remind you that the North Koreans demonstrated ballistic missile capability with what they called a space or satellite launch," one official said, referring to Pyongyang's 1998 firing of a missile over Japan.

The United States and other nations expressed deep concern over the test of the Taepodong I missile, but North Korea insisted their fears were misplaced as the device had merely put into orbit a satellite emitting revolutionary songs.

State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said the United States needed to see clear evidence that North Korea was serious about ceasing missile production. "We look forward to concrete action by North Korea on its missile program to achieve real progress in addressing the concerns of the international community," he said.”...

North Korea's missile program has been cited by officials here as a primary justification for a proposed national missile defense scheme, currently in the early stages of development. Strategists here fear North Korea will soon be capable of hitting US territory with one of its missiles, and have accused Pyongyang of funneling missiles to potential US enemies.”...”

LIVNI HEADS TOWARD VICTORY IN ISRAELI PRIMARY

September 17, 2008 The Associated Press reported: “Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni headed toward victory early Thursday in the Kadima Party's primary for its leadership post, an outcome that would put her in a good position to become Israel's first female leader in 34 years and send a message that peace talks with the Palestinians will proceed.

Television exit polls late Wednesday said Livni posted a clear victory in the day's election. But the actual partial vote count showed a tighter race. Cheers and applause broke out at party headquarters when Israel's three networks announced their exit polls gave Livni between 47 percent and 49 percent, compared to 37 percent for her closest rival, former defense minister and military chief Shaul Mofaz.

But with about 80 percent of the votes tallied early Thursday, Livni had 45 percent to 41 percent for Mofaz, party officials told Israel Radio.”...

Livni will have 42 days to form a new ruling coalition. If she succeeds, she will become Israel's first female prime minister since Golda Meir.”...”



CANADA-EU TRADE PROPOSAL RIVALS SCOPE OF NAFTA

September 18, 2008 Globe and Mail reported: “Canadian and European officials say they plan to begin negotiating a massive agreement to integrate Canada's economy with the 27 nations of the European Union, with preliminary talks to be launched at an Oct. 17 summit in Montreal three days after the federal election.

Trade Minister Michael Fortier and his staff have been engaged for the past two months with EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and the representatives of European governments in an effort to begin what a senior EU official involved in the talks described in an interview yesterday as “deep economic integration negotiations.”

If successful, Canada would be the first developed nation to have open trade relations with the EU, which has completely open borders between its members but imposes steep trade and investment barriers on outsiders.

The proposed pact would far exceed the scope of older agreements such as NAFTA by encompassing not only unrestricted trade in goods, services and investment and the removal of tariffs, but also the free movement of skilled people and an open market in government services and procurement – which would require that Canadian governments allow European companies to bid as equals on government contracts for both goods and services and end the favouring of local or national providers of public-sector services.”...”

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