



# PROPHETIC TIMES

January, 1998

The Weekly Reader of World News

October 24, 2020

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## Mexico broadcaster: Pope's civil union quote not broadcast

*October 22, 2020* jpost.com reported: "A Mexican television broadcaster confirmed Thursday that Pope Francis' bombshell comments endorsing same-sex civil unions were made during a May 2019 interview that was never broadcast in its entirety.

Broadcaster Televisa said Thursday that the emphasis of its interview was on clergy sexual abuse and suggested it didn't consider the comments on civil unions as newsworthy because Francis had previously indicated support for them." ...

The civil union comments caused a firestorm, thrilling progressives and alarming conservatives, given that official Vatican teaching prohibits any such endorsement of homosexual unions.

While serving as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio endorsed extending civil union protections to gay couples as an alternative to moves by the country to approve same-sex marriage, which he firmly opposed. However, he had never come out publicly in favor of legal protections for civil unions as pope, and no pontiff before him had, either." ..."

## Estonia imposes sanctions on Hezbollah

*October 22, 2020* jpost.com reported: "The Baltic country of Estonia imposed sanctions on the Lebanese Shi'ite terrorist organization Hezbollah, following a proposal of the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in response to acts of terrorism committed by the group, according to a government press release on Thursday.

'Hezbollah poses a considerable threat to international – and thereby Estonian – security. With this step, Estonia stands by the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and Lithuania as well as other countries who have concluded that Hezbollah uses terrorist means and constitutes a threat to the security of many states,' Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said.

The sanctions will entail restrictions of entry to anyone associated with the terrorist group, on the basis that there are reasonable grounds to believe that their activity supports terrorism, and pose a threat to Estonians..."

## Australia Joins Unprecedented Military Exercises with U.S., Japan, and India

*October 21, 2020* breitbart.com reported: "Australia announced that, for the first time since 2007, it will participate in the Malabar military exercises, joining India, Japan, and the United States in a large-scale naval drill designed to prepare for any potential Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific, *Reuters* reported Tuesday.

Authorities have not confirmed the location of this year's drills, but reports suggest they will take place in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, according to the Indian Ministry of Defense.

Though they have engaged in joint exercises before, the 2020 Malabar drills will mark the first time that all four members of the 'Quad' — an unofficial coalition consisting of Australia, the United States, Japan, and India — have collectively run a joint training operation of this scale. Japan is participating despite not having a formal military since World War II, but a 'self-defense' force..."

## Rouhani Says Next U.S. President Must Admit Defeat, 'Surrender to Iran'

*October 21, 2020* breitbart.com reported: "Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday the Islamic republic is entirely uninterested in the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election because the next incumbent of the White House will have to surrender to the Iranian nation.

'It is by no means important for the Islamic Republic of Iran who will win the U.S. presidential election, because any government taking power in the U.S. would have to surrender to the Iranian nation,' Rouhani said at a weekly cabinet session on Wednesday.

According to the *Tasnim News Agency*, he argued the U.S.' actions against the Iranian nation have all 'ended in failure,' claiming the termination of the U.N. arms embargo on Iran is evidence of a victory for Islamic rationalism against force..."



Iran Pres. Rouhani

## Pentagon chief stresses stronger alliances to counter China, Russia

*October 21, 2020* spacewar.com reported: "US Defense Secretary Mark Esper revealed a new initiative Tuesday to strengthen and expand US alliances with 'like-minded democracies' to counter Russia and China.

Esper said the Pentagon would systematically monitor and manage its relationships with partner countries, aiming to find ways to coordinate militaries and also to advance US arms sales.

The initiative, called the Guidance for Development for Alliances and Partnerships (GDAP), came just two weeks before the presidential election that, if President Donald Trump loses, could see Esper replaced in January.

It also came after nearly four years of Trump's efforts to restructure and even dismantle alliances, including threatening NATO.

'America's network of allies and partners provides us an asymmetric advantage our adversaries cannot match,' Esper said, calling the network 'the backbone of the international rules-based order.'

He cited longstanding partnerships, from NATO to little Malta — which helped the US fight to break from Britain in the 18th century..."

### **Chinese military beefs up coastal forces as it prepares for possible invasion of Taiwan**

*October 19, 2020* South China Morning Post reported: "Beijing is stepping up the militarization of its southeast coast as it prepares for a possible invasion of Taiwan, military observers and sources have said.

The People's Liberation Army (is) upgrading its missile bases, and one Beijing-based military source said it has deployed its most advanced hypersonic missile the DF-17 to the area."..."

"The new missile has a longer range and is able to hit targets more accurately."

The DF-17, which has a maximum range of 2,500km (1,550 miles), made its first public appearance on last year's October 1 National Day parade to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Beijing regards Taiwan as a breakaway province which it has vowed to take back, by force if necessary. Relations between Beijing and Taipei have deteriorated since Tsai Ing-wen from the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected as president in 2016 and refused to accept the One-China principle.

The deployment of missiles on the coasts of Fujian and Zhejiang provinces previously peaked during the presidency of Tsai's DPP predecessor Chen Shui-ban. Ties have come under further strain this year as Taipei moved closer to the United States and signed a series of arms deals, including for Patriot missiles and an upgrade to its F-16 Viper jets.

Satellite images show that both the Marine Corps and Rocket Force bases in Fujian and Guangdong provinces have expanded in recent years, according to Andrei Chang, editor-in-chief of the Canada-based *Kanwa Defence Review*.

"Every rocket force brigade in Fujian and Guangdong is now fully equipped," he said.

"The size of some of the missile bases in the Eastern and Southern theatre commands have even doubled in recent years, showing the PLA is stepping up preparations for a war targeting Taiwan." ..."

Beijing has sought to keep up the pressure on Taiwan with a series of exercises around the island, including a large-scale invasion drill last weekend and multiple air sorties that saw almost 40 fighters crossing the median line in the Taiwan Strait in a single day last month.

On Monday, retired major general Wang Zaixi, who once led the mainland's semi-governmental organisation for managing ties with Taiwan, described the recent exercises as "unprecedented".

"Until today, the possibility of peaceful reunification was slim," he told Chinese news site Guancha.cn. "The live-fire military exercises showed it is just one step away to actual combat." ..."

### **US destroyer sails through Taiwan Strait, provoking China**

*October 15, 2020* SinoDaily.com reported: "A US warship sailed through the Taiwan Strait in what the American military described as a 'routine' passage Wednesday, but enraging China, which claims sovereignty over the island and surrounding seas.

Ties between Beijing and Washington have deteriorated in recent months, over issues including trade and Hong Kong, with the self-ruled island of Taiwan a long-running source of tension.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Barry passed through the Strait on October 14, according to a statement by the US Pacific Fleet.

'The ship's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the US commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific,' the statement said. 'The US Navy will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows,' it added..."



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