



# PROPHETIC TIMES

January, 1998

The Weekly Reader of World News

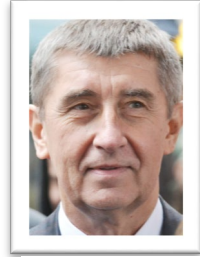
March 13, 2020

## **Czech Republic opens de facto embassy to Israel in west Jerusalem**

*March 11, 2021* jpost.com reported: “The Czech Republic opened a full-fledged diplomatic mission in west Jerusalem as a sign of its recognition that the city is Israel’s capital.

‘We, the Czech Republic, are opening here in Jerusalem on Washington Street our diplomatic representation,’ Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš said as he inaugurates the new office together with Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi on Thursday.

He clarified that the country’s embassy is still located in Tel Aviv, but explained that the new office would be a branch of that embassy...”



*Czech Republic  
Prime Minister*

## **Russia urges US, Iran to coordinate return to nuclear deal**

*March 10, 2021* spacewar.com reported: “Russia called on Washington and Tehran Tuesday to take mutual steps and coordinate their return to the Iran nuclear deal, as signatories to the historic accord work to salvage it.

Formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the 2015 deal offered sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on Tehran’s nuclear ambitions and guarantees it would not seek an atomic bomb.

But the accord has been hanging by a thread since former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from it in 2018 and reimposed punishing sanctions on Tehran.

‘To resolve this urgent task, we believe it is perfectly possible to work out synchronous steps — simultaneous steps to be taken in stages by both the Iranians and the United States,’ Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said...”

## **Xi Jinping tells China’s military ‘be prepared to respond’ in unstable times**

*March 9, 2021* South China Morning Post reported: “China’s military must be “prepared to respond” to complex and difficult situations as the country grapples with security challenges, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

Xi, who also heads the Central Military Commission, made the remarks at a panel discussion attended by armed forces representatives during the annual legislative sessions in Beijing.

“The current security situation of our country is largely unstable and uncertain,” Xi said. “The entire military must coordinate the relationship between capacity building and combat readiness, be prepared to respond to a variety of complex and difficult situations at any time, resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and provide strong support for the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist state.”

Xi also emphasized the need for “high-level strategic deterrence and a joint combat system”, and more technological innovation in the military.

The president’s remarks came after Defense Minister General Wei Fenghe on Saturday called for the military to boost combat readiness, saying China’s national security had “entered a high-risk phase”.

“We are facing mounting tasks in national defense ... and we must comprehensively improve military training and preparedness for battle so as to increase our strategic capabilities to prevail over our strong enemies,” Wei told military delegates at a meeting on the sidelines of the legislative sessions.” ...”

## **Iranian Defense Minister threatens to raze Tel Aviv and Haifa**

*March 8, 2021* Arutz Sheva 7 reported: “Iran’s Defense Minister Amir Hatami on Sunday threatened on Sunday to ‘raze’ the cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa ‘to the ground’ if Israel launches a preemptive attack against the Islamic Republic, *i24NEWS* reports.

At the same time, Hatami also played down the chances of direct hostilities breaking out between the two countries, saying Israel is well aware of the potential consequences of such actions.

'Sometimes, the Zionist regime [Israel] out of desperation makes big claims against the Islamic Republic of Iran to allegedly threaten it,' said the Iranian Defense Minister..."

### **Israel is updating attack plans against Iran's nuclear sites – Gantz**

*March 5, 2021* jpost.com reported: "The IDF is updating its attack plans against Iran's nuclear facilities, Defense Minister Benny Gantz revealed on Thursday in an interview with Fox News.

'We have them [the attack plans] in our hands, but we will continue [to] constantly improve them,' Gantz said.

'The Iranian nuclear aspiration must be stopped. If the world stops them before, it's very much good. But if not, we must stand independently and we must defend ourselves by ourselves,' Gantz said.

Gantz spoke as US President Joe Biden is working to renew negotiations with the Iranians as part of an effort to return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran – known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [JCPOA].

Israel is opposed to a return to the deal and has laid out a series of demands it would like to see addressed in a future deal..."

### **'The EU cannot defend Europe': NATO chief**

*March 4, 2021* spacewar.com reported: "NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg warned Thursday that Europe's defence depends on close transatlantic bonds and not on a quest for the continent's strategic autonomy.

Most EU member states are also NATO member states, and their citizens' safety relies on an alliance that far outspends their own capitals on security, he argued.

In an interview with AFP, after an address at the College of Europe in Belgium, Stoltenberg said he welcomed Brussels' efforts to boost spending and streamline its defence industry.

But he was dubious about calls for the continent to develop "strategic autonomy" of the kind championed by France's President Emmanuel Macron.

The European Union doesn't have an army of its own, but the European Commission is seeking what it calls a more "geopolitical role", with its own foreign and defence industry policy.

Fellow Brussels-based institution NATO, by contrast, bills itself as the most successful military alliance in the world -- in large part thanks to American military spending.

"I support EU efforts on defence, because more defence spending, new military capabilities and addressing the fragmentation of the European defence industry -- all of that will be good for European security, for transatlantic security, for all of us," he told AFP.

"So all these efforts -- as long as they complement NATO -- we welcome them, but the EU cannot defend Europe."

"More than 90 percent of the people in the European Union, they live in a NATO country. But only 20 percent of NATO's defence spending comes from NATO EU members," Stoltenberg said.

Under the previous US president, Donald Trump, transatlantic ties frayed.

Trump repeatedly accused the European allies of not pulling their weight, and Macron in turn accused NATO of failing to adapt to Europe's security priorities--famously branding its strategy as "brain dead".

There have also been tensions between European capitals and NATO ally Turkey, which is accused of breaking a UN arms embargo on Libya and violating Greek waters in a search for gas reserves.

During this period Britain, a major NATO member, left the European Union, further tipping the balance of spending between EU and non-EU allies in the latter's favor.

This has fueled calls from some in Europe for the continent to chart its own strategic course.

Macron told the Financial Times last month: "I am a defender of European sovereignty, of strategic autonomy, not because I'm against NATO or because I doubt our American friends, but because I am lucid on the state of the world.

"Nobody can tell me that today's NATO is a structure that, in its foundations, is still pertinent. It was founded to face down the Warsaw Pact. There is no more a Warsaw Pact," he said." ..."



*Defense Minister  
Benny Gantz*

**Compiled by L. Jim Tuck**

*UCG Minister*

*<ljt5053@sbcglobal.net>*