



# PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 06 2008

## CHENEY IN UKRAINE AS POLITICAL CRISIS DEEPENS

*September 5, 2008* AFP reported: "US Vice President Dick Cheney arrived in Ukraine on Thursday as a bitter row between pro-Western political forces in the ex-Soviet republic threatened to bring down the government.



Cheney was expected on Friday to meet President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, whose political feuding has intensified over ties with Russia during its confrontation with Georgia and the West.

Cheney has said his visit is intended to bolster US allies in the former Soviet region. Ukraine has applied to join NATO and the European Union, angering Moscow which sees the country as part of its sphere of influence.

European officials have suggested Ukraine could be the next flashpoint for tensions between Russia and the West after a war in Georgia last month that has left Russian troops occupying positions deep inside Georgian territory."..."

## SARKOZY VISIT SEALS SYRIA RETURN TO DIPLOMATIC FOLD

*September 4, 2008* Agence France-Presse reported: "French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrived in Syria on Wednesday for a two-day visit aimed at sealing a rapprochement with the former colony and giving a push to its renewed peace talks with Israel.

Sarkozy went straight to the presidential palace for talks with his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad ahead of a four-way summit on the peace process to be joined by Turkish and Qatari leaders on Thursday. Sarkozy was to dine with Assad at a restaurant in Old Damascus.

The French president is the first Western head of state to visit since the murder of Lebanese ex-premier Rafiq Hariri in a 2005 bombing in Beirut that was widely blamed on Damascus. Syria has hailed the trip as an acknowledgement of its central role in the Middle East peace process.

"Today there is a new era between Syria and France based on France's new policy, a realistic, pragmatic policy that is aimed at achieving peace and that calls for dialogue," Assad told French television on Tuesday.

Sarkozy's predecessor Jacques Chirac had broken off all high-level contact with Syria over the assassination of Hariri, who was a personal friend.

It was only six weeks ago that Assad returned to the international fold with a visit to Paris for talks with the new French president.

"As I told President Bashar al-Assad when he came to Paris on July 12, the path of peace in this region passes through our countries," Sarkozy told Syria's Al-Watan daily ahead of Wednesday's visit. "Syria can provide an irreplaceable contribution to solving Middle East issues. It is important that Syria plays a positive role in the region," he said.

On Thursday, Sarkozy, whose country holds the European Union presidency, will join a four-way summit on the peace process with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Turkey has been brokering indirect negotiations between Israel and Syria and a fifth round of talks is expected to be held in Ankara on Sunday.

Syria has said that ultimately only the United States has the clout to sponsor direct peace talks and that that must await the inauguration of a new president next year. But it has been keen in the meantime to win greater international support for the preliminary negotiations already under way."..."

## SARKOZY WARNS IRAN IT RISKS ATTACK BY ISRAEL

*September 4, 2008* The Financial Times reported: "Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, warned Iran on Thursday that it was taking a big risk by seeking to obtain a military nuclear capability, saying that one day it could find Israel had decided to attack.

In one of the most explicit warnings to Tehran by a western leader, Mr Sarkozy said: "One day, whatever the Israeli government, we could find one morning that Israel has struck.

"The question is not whether it would be legitimate, whether it would be intelligent. What will we do at that moment? It would be a catastrophe. We must avoid that catastrophe."

Iran insists it is pursuing a civilian programme, but western powers suspect it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Israel has not ruled out military action against Iran if the crisis over its nuclear programme is not resolved, and in June tension increased with further military exercises by the Jewish state seen by some as a warning to Tehran.

Israel is the only Middle Eastern state thought to possess a military nuclear capability, although it does not publicly acknowledge the fact.

Mr Sarkozy was speaking at a summit in Damascus with Bashar al-Assad, his Syrian counterpart, and the leaders of Turkey and Qatar. Syria is an ally of Iran and Mr Sarkozy has asked Mr Assad to help to resolve the stand-off between Iran and the west.

“The United States knows the role Syria can play,” Mr Sarkozy said. “Syria can play a major role on this issue.”...

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## **FIDEL CASTRO SAYS GUSTAV HIT CUBA LIKE 'NUCLEAR BLAST'**

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*September 4, 2008* AFP reported: “Cuba's longtime leader Fidel Castro said Hurricane Gustav hit his country like a nuclear blast, and estimated it would take three to four billion dollars to cope with the emergency.

In one of his frequent columns in state media, the man who was Cuba's president for almost five decades said television images of the destruction wrought by Gustav on Cuba's Isle of Youth reminded him of a "nuclear blast" hit and "the devastation" he saw when he visited Hiroshima in August 1945.

"Now the battle is to feed the victims of the hurricane," Castro said estimating Cuba needs three to four billion dollars "just to handle our most basic needs."

But "such an effort must come from the work of the people. No one can do it for us," Castro, 82, stressed. Cubans earn under 20 dollars a month on average.

Gustav crashed across the Isle of Youth and then the western Cuban mainland Saturday with blasts of wind up to 340 kilometers (211 miles) per hour, leaving widespread destruction and injuries but no reported deaths. Early estimates are that some 130,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. Crops were wiped out, schools and workshops were damaged and power lines knocked down.

Castro quoted a letter sent him by prominent painter Alexis Leyva, known as Kcho, who is a native of the Isle of Youth and visited after the storm. "There are problems getting food ... the island is like a prison now. Money has no value; there is nothing to buy or anywhere to buy anything," Castro quoted him as saying."



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## **WALL DATING TO SECOND TEMPLE UNEARTHED**

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*September 3, 2008* The Jerusalem Post reported: “The remains of the southern wall of Jerusalem that was built by the Hasmonean kings during the time of the Second Temple have been uncovered on Mount Zion, the Antiquities Authority announced Wednesday.

The 2,100-year-old wall, which was destroyed during the Great Revolt against the Romans that began in 66 CE, is located just outside the present-day walls of the Old City and abuts the Catholic cemetery built in the last century where Righteous Gentile Oskar Schindler is buried.

The sturdy wall, which is believed to have run 6 km. around Jerusalem, was previously exposed by an American archeologist at the end of the 19th century, the state run archeological body said.

The Israeli archeologist who started the ongoing excavation a year-and-a-half ago also uncovered the remains of a city wall from the Byzantine Period (324-640 CE) that was built on top of the Second Temple wall at a time when ancient Jerusalem reached its largest size after its southward expansion.

"In the Second Temple period the city, with the Temple at its center, was a focal point for Jewish pilgrimage from all over the ancient world, and in the Byzantine period it attracted Christian pilgrims who came in the footsteps of the story of the life and death of their messiah," said Yehiel Zelinger, the excavation's director.

He said the builders of the Byzantine wall were unaware of the existence of the earlier structure, yet they placed their wall precisely along the same route due to its advantageous location for the defense of the city.

The Second Temple Period wall, which was built without mortar, was "amazingly" well-preserved today to the height of three meters, more than 2,000 years after it was constructed, Zelinger said. He voiced the hope that the First Temple wall would be uncovered next.

The excavation was initiated as part of a plan to build a promenade along the southern side of Mount Zion.”...”

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## **SYRIA WARNS OF 'CATASTROPHIC' EFFECT OF ANY ISRAELI STRIKE ON IRAN**

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*September 2, 2008* SpaceWar.com reported: “Syrian President Bashar al-Assad warned Tuesday that an attack by Israel on Iran would have catastrophic consequences for the entire world.

"We think that Israel could try to launch attacks against Iran, even against Lebanon or Syria," he said in an interview with France 3 television. "Any attack by Israel or by anyone else will have catastrophic results not only on the region but on the whole world," he said.

In recent months several Israeli politicians have talked of the possibility of a preemptive military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities to avoid any possibility of Tehran acquiring an atomic weapon.

Iran has responded by threatening retaliatory strikes with its Shahab-3 missiles which have a nominal range of 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles) -- enough to reach Israel.”...”

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