



PROPHETIC TIMES

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LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER HARIRI WARNS OF ISRAEL 'THREAT'

February 10, 2010 BBC News reports: "Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri says he is concerned about 'escalating' threats posed to the Middle East by Israel. Mr. Hariri told the BBC that Israeli planes were entering Lebanese airspace every day, and he feared the prospect of another war with Israel. He accused Israel of making a huge mistake by allegedly threatening both Lebanon and neighboring Syria. His comments come days after Syria and Israel exchanged hostile accusations.

The BBC's Natalia Antelava in Beirut says that while such rhetoric is hardly new, there is concern it could lead to more serious confrontation. In an interview with the BBC, Mr. Hariri said: 'We hear a lot of Israeli threats day in and day out, and not only threats. 'We see what's happening on the ground and in our airspace and what's happening all the time during the past two months - every day we have Israeli war planes entering Lebanese airspace.

'This is something that is escalating, and this is something that is really dangerous.'

Mr. Hariri also said that Lebanon was united, and that the government would stand by Hezbollah - the Lebanese militant group which fought Israel in 2006..."



Lebanon

CHINA CONFIRMED AS WORLD'S TOP EXPORTER

February 7, 2010 The Financial Times reported: "China overtook Germany last year to become world export champion, official figures confirmed on Tuesday.

December trade figures for Germany highlighted the hit Europe's largest economy took in 2009 from the collapse in global economic confidence at the start of the year. German goods' exports fell by 18.4 per cent compared with the previous year - the biggest year-on-year fall since 1950, according to the federal statistics office.

Overall, German exports last year were equivalent to \$1,121.3bn, which compared with the \$1,201.7bn exported by China.

In Germany, the loss of the "Exportmeister" label is not seen as a massive blow, however. China had long been on track to take the title and its loss might deflect some of the international criticism the German government has faced for not doing more to boost domestic demand. German imports fell by 17.2 per cent last year - almost as fast as exports.

Meanwhile, Germany can take comfort from a surprisingly strong rebound in exports at the end of last year. Exports rose in December for the fourth consecutive month and were 3 per cent higher than in November, continuing a robust recovery since the May."..."

GERMANY'S CALL FOR REMOVAL OF US MISSILES IN EUROPE REOPENS DEBATE

February 9, 2010 The Voice of America reported: "Germany's new coalition government is calling for U.S. nuclear missiles to be removed from Europe. A London research organization says Germany's announcement has reopened the global debate about whether nuclear weapons help or hinder global security. U.S. President Barack Obama put forth his vision of a nuclear-free world in a speech last April in Prague.

"The United States will take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons. To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same."...Mr. Obama said."...

Former NATO Secretary General George Robertson says that is a bad idea. "I think that they have not yet fully realized how symbolically important the American nuclear umbrella is, and how dangerous it might be and how risky it might be if one component of America's nuclear guarantee was to be removed without considering all of the consequences," Robertson said. He says one of the consequences could be nuclear escalation, if nations do not feel safe.

"Far from making Europe safer, and far from producing a less nuclear dependent Europe, [the policy] may well end up bringing more nuclear weapons into the European continent, and frustrating some of the attempts that are being made to get multi-lateral nuclear disarmament," Robertson said.

Europe's main security structure is the NATO alliance, comprising 28 countries - including most of Europe, the United States and Turkey, among others. Article Five of its charter guarantees collective security. Former Pentagon official Franklin Miller says that is why its newest members joined.

"I think the Eastern European nations joined the Alliance in large part because they received a guarantee from NATO of their territorial integrity, and what that means is there will be no war in Europe. Not just no nuclear war in Europe, but no conventional war, no conventional aggression. NATO has been the most successful defense alliance in history, largely in part because it has had a nuclear element to its Article Five guarantee," Miller said.

Miller and Robertson co-wrote a report on Germany's call to remove nuclear weapons, along with Security Analyst Kori Schake of the Hoover Institution.

"The Russians have 5,400 tactical nuclear weapons. It is in NATO's interests and I would argue it is in Russia's interests to bring these under control of a treaty that is verifiable and that builds security in Europe," Schake said.

The report's title is "Germany opens Pandora's Box," but Robertson says the renewed debate is positive."..."

IRAN ATOMIC CHIEF: TEHRAN TO INITIATE 2 NEW NUCLEAR SITES THIS YEAR

February 11, 2010 Haaretz.com reported: "Iran will start building two new nuclear enrichment sites in the upcoming years, the Islamic Republic's Atomic Energy Organization chief told Reuters in an interview on Thursday.

"Hopefully, in the upcoming Iranian year [starting in March], we will be starting construction of one or two sites," Ali Akbar Salehi said. Iran has one enrichment plant in operation. The Tehran nuclear chief also said that Iran's newly launched 20 percent nuclear fuel production was going "very well."

Salehi also said Iran had the capacity to enrich uranium up to a level of 100 percent -- above the level experts say is needed for a bomb...

Ahmadinejad told hundreds of thousands of cheering Iranians on the anniversary of the 1979 foundation of the Islamic republic on Thursday that the country was now a nuclear state, but insisted that Iran had no intention to build nuclear weapons.

The United States and some of its allies accuse Tehran of using its civilian nuclear program as a cover to build nuclear weapons but Tehran denies the charge, saying its nuclear program is just geared towards generating electricity."...

Enriching uranium produces fuel for a nuclear power plants but can also be used to create material for atomic weapons if enriched further to 90 percent or more."..."

ANGELA MERKEL DASHES GREEK HOPES OF RESCUE BID

February 11, 2010 Guardian.co.uk reported: "Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, mounted stiff resistance tonight to any swift bailout of Greece, as a rift opened up between European capitals over how best to tackle the risks posed to the euro.

Despite a show of Franco-German unity on the crisis and the first statement from EU leaders pledging to safeguard the currency's stability, hopes on the markets of a German-led rescue plan to shore up Greece's critical public finances were dashed by Merkel, who repeatedly emphasized that Athens would need to put its own house in order and brushed aside all questions of financial support.

"Germany is stepping totally on the brakes on financial assistance," said a senior EU diplomat. "On legal grounds, on constitutional grounds and on principle." Another senior diplomat said of the Germans: "They're not waving their chequebooks."

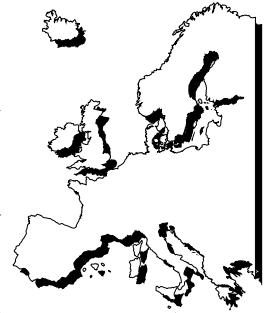
An EU summit of 27 government chiefs in Brussels was the first opportunity to tackle the Greek crisis and also send a strong message to the financial markets, which have been betting against the euro for the last week.

Following talks between the Greek prime minister, George Papandreou, Merkel, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, and Jose Manuel Barroso and Herman Van Rompuy, the European commission and European council presidents, the leaders issued a statement aimed at restoring calm and voicing political support for Papandreou's programme of swingeing budget cuts and structural reforms.

The statement said the 16 EU countries who use the single currency, including Greece, "will take determined and co-ordinated action, if needed, to safeguard financial stability in the euro area as a whole." That was seen as a strong political signal to speculators that the big euro economies such as Germany and France would act persuasively to restore confidence in the currency."...

The European currency and the eurozone's stock markets gave a lukewarm reception to the outcome of the summit."...

Merkel and Sarkozy held a joint press conference after the summit to demonstrate Franco-German unity, but that masked fundamental differences over how to proceed."...The split meant 16 finance ministers could not agree a common position before the summit..."



IRAN: DESTROY ISRAEL IF IT STRIKES

February 11, 2010 The Jerusalem Post reported: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told Syrian President Bashar Assad that Israel "must be resisted" and finished off "once and for all" if it launches a military operation in the Middle East, Reuters cited an Iranian report as saying on Thursday.

"We have reliable information ... that the Zionist regime is after finding a way to compensate for its ridiculous defeats by the people of Gaza and Lebanon's Hizbullah," Ahmadinejad told his Syrian counterpart in a phone conversation on Wednesday evening, according to IRIB, Iran's state broadcaster.

"If the Zionist regime repeats its mistakes and initiate a military operation, then it must be resisted with full force to put an end to it once and for all," Ahmadinejad reportedly asserted.

The Iranian president has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map" multiple times and has voiced harsh criticism against Israeli policies.

At the UN General Assembly in New York in September, Ahmadinejad gave a fiery speech that targeted Israel as a "Zionist regime" guilty of "inhumane policies in Palestine."..."

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