



## News from the Nations

### Prague link to Kenya missiles

The missiles fired at an Israeli airliner in Mombasa recently have been linked to an attempt in Prague last year to bring down an aircraft carrying the then Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres, according to an Israeli intelligence official. The discovery is the latest in a series of clues found by Israel security experts investigating the double attack on Israeli tourists in Kenya, and may help identify the perpetrators, alleged to be al-Qa'eda. The discarded missile launchers' serial numbers linked them to two similar missile launchers found near a runway at Prague airport in November last year. According to a report, the missiles in the two attacks were from the same series of missiles manufactured in 1974 by the Zid factory, just outside Moscow.

### Australia to be part of Islamic superstate

The militant Islamic group Jemaah Islamiyah aims to incorporate northern Australia into a vast Islamic superstate, according to a news report. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation quoted intelligence from the Philippines stating that the group has four cells in the region. One of the cells covers the Indonesian province of West Papua along with northern Australia, according to a documentary made after a two-month investigation. Mr Golez, the Philippines' national security adviser, confirmed that Australia was part of a plan for an Islamic superstate taking in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

### Church wants God included in Euro charter

The Catholic Church in Europe has been lobbying Brussels in an attempt to ensure that a mention of God and of key Catholic concepts is incorporated into a future European constitution. The outline constitution also suggests that all Europeans should be given dual citizenship of the Union and their member states. The constitution would cover matters such as foreign policy, rights and the distribution of roles and powers within the governance of the European Union—areas of deep concern to the Church. The Vatican has arranged a series of meetings in Rome to discuss the question. The Commission of the Bishops Conferences of the European Community made its initial contribution to the debate on the future of the European Union in May, when it recommended that “a future constitutional Treaty of the European Union should contain an invocation of God, with an inclusive reference to the Transcendent”. Such a reference, the Commission said, “would facilitate citizens' identification with the values of the European Union”. It has been monitoring the submissions to the convention made by the two major political blocks in the European Union: the centre-right European Peoples' Party (EPP) and the Socialists. The Socialists oppose mention of religious rights in the Constitution, believing that individual freedom of worship is protected in human rights guarantees.

### BUSH PRESSURES NORTH KOREA

The US made slow but methodical progress, according to a report, in its effort to build a chorus of international disapproval urging North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons programme. The US will seek the containment and isolation of North Korea as a response to the Communist state's self-admitted uranium enrichment programme, according to officials. Leaders of Apec, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum that includes the US, recently issued a statement calling on North Korea to “honour its commitment to give up its nuclear weapons programme”. A senior US official said the US had evidence of large-scale procurement activities by North Korea that suggested a uranium enrichment programme similar to that used by Pakistan. The US suspected, he said, that the programme was taking place at an underground facility.

### Russia to retain influence in Iraq

Russia's biggest oil company has been assured by President Putin that it will be able to keep its huge stake in Iraq's oilfields in a post-Saddam Hussein era, as Moscow seeks to exact a heavy commercial price for backing the hard-line US position on Baghdad.

### **Russia adds range to Iran's missiles**

*Iran has been supplied by Russia with powerful new technology and parts for long-range missiles that will put Israel and the whole of the Middle East—including British and US forces in the region—within its reach, according to a report from the Sunday Telegraph. The missiles' range of up to 1,300 miles would also allow Iran to strike parts of North Africa and south-eastern Europe. The basic Shahab 3 missile can strike targets about 800 miles away, Shahab 4 would have a range of about 1,300 miles, whilst it is not known how far the upgraded Shahab 3 could reach. Successful test-firings were conducted this summer with the help of Russian and North Korean scientists at a desert range in central Iran, according to the opposition National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and American intelligence. Teheran has been pressing ahead with its plans to become an international missile power in tandem with its efforts to develop compatible chemical warheads. The revelations about Moscow's new role in building the military strength of a state named as part of the "axis of evil" by President Bush follow America's anger earlier this year when it emerged that Russia was building a new Iranian light-water nuclear power reactor. Western and Israeli intelligence and the Iranian opposition have received fresh details of the crucial contribution of Russian, North Korean and Chinese scientists and companies in Teheran's missile programme. Teheran has signed a £4.6 million contract with a Russian company for the transfer of SS-4 missile parts to Teheran, according to documents seen by the NCRI. When presented with evidence of the deals, Russian officials insisted that individual companies were acting without authorisation.*

### **YUGOSLAVIA HELPS IRAQ**

*According to a Newsweek report, the ship Boka Star seemed like just another ship seeking shelter from an Adriatic storm, but authorities reportedly found some surprises in its hold when the vessel docked in the Croatian port of Rijeka very recently. On its way from Yugoslavia to Iraq, the Boka Star was said to be carrying material used to spark Scud missiles. The discovery has in turn sparked accusations of a large arms-smuggling operation between the two countries. "This is just the tip of the iceberg", says James Lyon, head of the International Crisis Group's Serbia Project. Lyon says that Iraq is not the only shady recipient of Yugoslav aid; of the many countries facing UN-imposed arms embargoes, Yugoslavia has also traded with Libya and Liberia. According to recent reports from the Belgrade-based newspaper Bic, Yugoslav expertise is also being exported. Bic reports that documents found in the October raid of a Bosnian Serb state-owned factory confirm that Yugoslav engineering experts are in Iraq at this moment, installing military equipment such as Mig-21 jet engines. The documents reportedly include instructions to remove the labels of Judo-import, a state-owned company allegedly responsible for shipping the goods, headed by a longtime crony of former Yugoslav President Slobadan Milosevic, and even outline concealment procedures in the event of UN inspection so as to cover up all evidence of Judo-import's involvement.*

### **Deal over Kaliningrad**

The main achievement of the recent European summit in Brussels was to end years of wrangling over Moscow's isolated enclave in Kaliningrad. The EU and Russia reached a compromise deal that will prevent Russian citizens from being cut off in the Baltic port as the EU's borders move east in 2004 to incorporate the countries surrounding Kaliningrad. The Russian press had warned of a "blue curtain" encircling a million Russians in EU territory. Under the deal, residents of Kaliningrad will be given cheap multiple visas that will allow Lithuania and Poland to comply with the Schengen agreement, which obliges them to eliminate their western border posts once they join the EU but at the same time erect more rigid barriers to the east, including tougher visa restrictions on Russians. The agreement clears away one of the last obstacles to the EU's 'Big Bang' enlargement by ten mostly ex-Communist states.

### **Putin says West in danger from Islam**

Islamic radicals are pursuing the systematic annihilation of non-Muslims, President Putin claimed recently. The Russian leader said at a European Union summit in Brussels that Western civilisation faced a mortal threat from Muslim terrorists, and that they had plans to create a "worldwide caliphate". Mr Putin said the world no longer faced isolated acts of terrorism but a "concerted effort and programme" by a global network bent on slaughter, perhaps with nuclear weapons. He said the West should face up to the reality that Chechen terrorists were religious extremists in league with al-Qa'eda, rather than a separatist movement, and the Moscow theatre siege and the Bali bombing could happen "all over the world".