

Eye on the World

Jan. 9-10, 2010

This collection of short news items is from the "Eye on the World" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's Web site, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Jan. 9-10, 2010.

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Timesonline.com ran a article on Jan. 5, 2010, titled "Freed Guantanamo Inmates Are Heading for Yemen to Join al-Qaeda Fight.

According to writer Tom Coghlan, at least a dozen former inmates are fighting in Yemen with al-Qaeda.

The article also pointed out that the Jan. 22 deadline set by the Obama administration to close Guantanamo will not be met.

"Six prisoners were returned to Yemen last month. After the Christmas Day bomb plot in Detroit, U.S. officials are increasingly concerned that the country is becoming a hotbed of terrorism. Eleven of the former inmates known to have rejoined al-Qaeda in Yemen were born in Saudi Arabia. The organization merged its Saudi and Yemeni offshoots last year."

Many analysts think the country's poverty, lawless tribal society and mountainous terrain make it similar to Afghanistan in being a new terrorist hot spot.

Seventy-four of the 530 detainees are known or suspected to have returned to terrorist activity since being released according to government figures issued in May of last year.



An excerpt from Joseph Farah's G2 bulletin appeared on WorldNetDaily.com on Jan. 4, 2010. The article was titled "Next U.S. War Front? With Locals Failing to Stop al-Qaida, America's Hand May Soon Be Forced."

"The U.S. has supported the Yemeni government, which has tried to assist in the fight against terrorists since the 9/11 attacks. The government is considered weak, however, and sometimes has allowed al-Qaida terrorists to remain in the country.

"According to security experts, some Yemeni-based corporations have also helped fund the al-Qaida network there. Indeed, Yemenis affiliated with al-Qaida have targeted U.S. interests in Yemen, such as the October 2000 bombing of the U.S.S. Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden, killing 17 U.S. sailors."

According to the article, in spite of all this the United States has decided to double the \$70 million it now sends Yemen in counterterrorism assistance. Is it too little? Is our government too late?

Due to increased U.S. involvement in fighting al-Qaida in Yemen, it may need to commit more forces. It may have to commit more forces throughout the whole Arab Peninsula.

The article went on to say that "many al-Qaida fighters have left Afghanistan and Pakistan for Yemen, where al-Qaida has been present for some time. Ironically, most of the Islamist militants at Guantanamo are from Yemen.

"Indeed, al-Qaida in Yemen has assisted Islamic rebels trying to topple the Somali government. According to U.S. officials, the Somali insurgent group Al-Shabab is considered an al-Qaida proxy in East Africa and has supplied fighters and weapons through Yemeni smugglers across the narrow Red Sea between the two countries.

"At the same time, Yemen also has become a battleground for a resurgence of Iranian-backed Shiites fighting against the Sunni Yemeni government, which has dragged Saudi Arabia into the fray to halt the spread of the Shiite Houthis."

Due to these troops' fighting, al-Qaida has been diverted to battle the well-trained Houthis.

"The Houthis are from the Zaydi sect, which follows a strict form of Shiite Islam. Supported by training and arms from Iran, the Zaydis seek to restore the Zaydi imam, who was overthrown in 1962.

"Iran has vowed to take over the Arabian Peninsula with the rise of Shiites in the various Arab nations there and create the Republic of Eastern Arabia."

The article went on to say Iran would also like to include Yemen and Oman in the new republic.

"Besides these countries, Iran also wants to take advantage of the Shiite resurgence in the Persian Gulf States of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates."



The Associated Press ran an article titled "Pump Prices On Pace to Top 2009 by Weekend" on Jan. 5, 2010. It was written by Mark Williams.

According to the article, pump prices will pass 2009 pump highs for fill-ups by this weekend. This is due to the soaring crude prices.

Part of the reason is the weather, and part of it is economic.

The article went on to say that the cold weather has of course caused higher consumption of fuel. This in turn lowers the amount of supplies on hand. Which in turn causes an increase in price.

"When the dollar falls, investors holding stronger currency can essentially buy more dollar-based crude and they have, doubling oil prices last year."

Tuesday crude closed at \$81.77 a barrel. That was the highest it has been since Oct. 9, 2008, according to the article.

Heating and gasoline futures also closed higher.

"One of the breaks consumers got was cheap energy."

This may not prove to be true for 2010.



"Guess Who Uses Christians to Test Bio-Chem Weapons" reads the headline of a WorldNetDaily.com article. The article was posted on Jan. 6, 2010, and was written by Bob Unruh.

"North Korea, which reportedly has used believers as guinea pigs to test chemical and biological weapons, is the world's worst persecutor of Christians, while Iran, which may be using Christians as scapegoats for internal opposition to its president, is No. 2 on the Open Doors 2010 World Watch List.

"Iran is among eight nations in the top 10 of the group's ranking of the 50 worst persecutors of Christians in which Shariah, the Islamic religious law, is dominant. A total of 35 nations on the list are under some form of Shariah."

Open Doors uses a questionnaire that is sent to church leaders, experts and Open Doors workers in 70 nations. They are asked 53 questions that are then used to determine the rankings of various countries.

"It examines every aspect of persecution, including the degree of legal restrictions, state attitudes, how free the church is to organize itself, church burnings, anti-Christian riots and the murders of Christians that make headlines."

For the eighth straight year North Korea has held the No. 1 spot. Religious activities are viewed as an insurrection against Kim Jong-Il, the country's dictator. North Korean officials want to control all of society, the article states. That means that torture, arrests and death are routine in the country.

"Open Doors reports an estimated 200,000 North Koreans are in political prisons, including 40,000 to 60,000 Christians.

"'Christians are the target of fierce government action and, once caught, are not regarded as human,' said a veteran observer of North Korea who cannot be identified for security purposes. 'Last year we had evidence that some were used as guinea pigs to test chemical and biological weapons.'

"Dykstra notes Kim Jong-IL insists on the adulation of his citizens as if he were a god."

According to the article, the Christian religion continues to grow despite all of this. Iran moved to No. 2, taking that spot from Saudi Arabia.

“Following are No. 3, Saudi Arabia; No. 4, Somalia; No. 5, Maldives; No. 6, Afghanistan; No. 7, Yemen; No. 8, Mauritani; and Uzbekistan, which ranked No. 10. Laos, another communist nation like North Korea, is ranked at No. 9.”