

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" - Luke 21:28

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Middle East Christians facing 'extremist atrocities'

BBC News reports: "The Archbishop of Canterbury has warned that there are extreme forces at work that have turned the Arab Spring into a 'very anxious time' for Christians.

Dr Rowan Williams told the *BBC* that the vacuum left by the end of autocratic regimes was being filled by extremists.

He claimed there had been more killings of Christians and burnings of churches in Egypt than people were aware of.

Life was unsustainable for Christians in northern Iraq, and tensions in Syria were nearing breaking point, he added.

The Middle East is the birthplace

of Christianity and home to some of the world's most ancient Christian denominations.

There is no agreed figure for the number of Christians in the region, though some experts believe there are as many as 10 million.

In an interview with *BBC Radio 4's The World at One*, Dr Williams said he was 'guardedly optimistic' that the political upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa would bring greater democracy to the region.

'In the long term, of course, a real participatory democracy in the region is bound to be in the interests of minorities because good democracies look after minorities,' he said.

But in the short term, he warned, people were using the chaos it had brought to attack Christian minorities.

'There is no doubt at all that it is a very anxious time for Christian communities. There have been extremist atrocities already, especially in Egypt,' he said... (There is a move on in America called 'Chrislam' to join Christianity and Islam together as the beginning of the One World Religion, the final prophetic sign before Christ returns. This time has arrived. On June 26th, 2011, Christian churches met in 26 states with Muslims to create the apostate Antichrist movement — Revelation 13:6-18; II Thessalonians 2:3, 4; I John 2:18, 22; II John 1:7-9.)

CYBER THREATS

Cyber-attacks outpace global response, U.S. warns

Reuters reports: "The technical sophistication of cybercriminals is swamping the world's ability to cope, a

top U.S. official warned, demanding an accelerated cross-border campaign to combat the security threat.

'Most countries don't even have a legal framework that really governs

cyber. It is such a new phenomenon in that regard so the legal systems — both domestic and international — have not kept pace with the technological advances we have seen,' U.S. Secretary

of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano said.

‘And that is just the plain fact of it. We need to accelerate that in response,’ she told reporters in Vienna.

Prominent cyber-attacks of late have targeted the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Senate, and companies such as Citigroup and Lockheed Martin Corp.

The attacks have raised questions about the security of government and corporate computer systems and the ability of law enforcement to track down hackers...”
(II Timothy 3:1; Luke 21:25 — nations will be in distress with perplexity [mass confusion] just preceding Christ’s return. See the next two reports.)

Cyber-attack can ‘collapse states,’ Knesset committee warns

The Jerusalem Post reports: “An internet-based cyber-attack can lead to the collapse of states if proper defenses are not in place, the chairman of the Knesset’s Science and Technology Committee warned.

The committee heard a range of views on the latest threats, some of which emphasized the need to bring defenses around vital civilian infrastructure, such as financial services, up to speed.

Knesset Member Meit Sheerit said during the meeting that ‘without tanks and without planes... it is possible to bring about the collapse of a state, and no military can come to the rescue. It is vital that basic steps are initiated to ensure the continuity of computing systems,’ according to a report by Calcalist.

Sheerit added that legislation was needed to provide cyber defenses to crucial civilian potential targets...”

IMF hit by ‘very major’ cyber security attack

BBC News reports: “The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says it has been targeted by a sophisticated cyber-attack.

Officials at the fund gave few details but said the attack earlier this year had been ‘a very major breach’ of its systems, the *New York Times* reports.

Cyber security officials said the hack was designed to install software to

create a ‘digital insider presence’.

The IMF, which holds sensitive economic data about many countries, said its operations were fully functional.

The cyber-attack took place over several months, and happened before former IMF chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn was arrested over sexual assault charges.

‘I can confirm that we are investigating an incident,’ said spokesman David Hawley.

‘I am not in a position to elaborate further on the extent of the cyber security incident.’

The *New York Times* said IMF staff had been told of the intrusion by e-mail, but that the Fund had not made a public announcement.

The e-mail warned that ‘suspicious file transfers’ had been detected and that an investigation had shown a desktop at the Fund had been ‘compromised and used to access some Fund systems’.

There was ‘no reason to believe that any personal information was sought for fraud purposes,’ it said...”

A WORLD GONE NUCLEAR

Ahmadinejad: Iran Not Afraid to Build Nuclear Weapons

Israel National News reports: “Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that the Islamic Republic is not afraid of manufacturing nuclear weapons, but does not intend to do so.

‘If we do want to make a bomb, we are not afraid of anybody,’ Iran’s state television quoted Ahmadinejad as saying.

Ahmadinejad’s statements come on the same day that five Russian scientists involved in designing Iran’s Bushehr nuclear power plant were killed in a Russian plane crash...”
(A gigantic nuclear war is coming as Russia, China, and Arab Muslim nations join together with Russia and China for Armageddon – Revelation 16:16. When this war begins one third of the earth is burned and one third of

humanity dies — Revelation 8:7; 9:14-18. See also the next two reports.)

UK: Iran tested nuclear-capable missiles

YnetNews.com reports: “Iran has carried out secret tests of ballistic missiles capable of delivering a nuclear payload in breach of UN resolutions, British Foreign Secretary

William Hague said.

Hague's comments came a day after Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards said they had fired 14 missiles in an exercise, one of them a medium-range weapon capable of striking Israel or U.S. targets in the Gulf.

In a statement to lawmakers, Hague said: 'Iran has also been carrying out covert ballistic missile tests and rocket launches, including testing missiles capable of delivering a nuclear payload in contravention of UN resolution 1929.'

He said Iran had also announced plans to triple its capacity to produce 20% enriched uranium, adding: 'These are enrichment levels far greater than is needed for peaceful nuclear energy.'

'We will maintain and continue to increase pressure on Iran to negotiate an agreement on their nuclear program,' including sanctions, he said.

There was no immediate reaction from Tehran, which denies Western

claims that it is pursuing nuclear weapons under the guise of its civil atomic program..."

Riyadh will build nuclear weapons if Iran gets them, Saudi prince warns

Guardian.co.uk reports: "A senior Saudi Arabian diplomat and member of the ruling royal family has raised the spectre of nuclear conflict in the Middle East if Iran comes close to developing a nuclear weapon.

Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former Saudi intelligence chief and ambassador to Washington, warned senior NATO military officials that the existence of such a device 'would compel Saudi Arabia ... to pursue policies which could lead to untold and possibly dramatic consequences'.

He did not state explicitly what these policies would be, but a senior official in Riyadh who is close to the

prince said his message was clear.

'We cannot live in a situation where Iran has nuclear weapons and we don't. It's as simple as that,' the official said. 'If Iran develops a nuclear weapon, that will be unacceptable to us and we will have to follow suit.'

Officials in Riyadh said that Saudi Arabia would reluctantly push ahead with its own civilian nuclear programme. Peaceful use of nuclear power, Turki said, was the right of all nations.

Turki was speaking at an unpublicized meeting at RAF Molesworth, the airbase in Cambridgeshire used by NATO as a center for gathering and collating intelligence on the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

According to a transcript of his speech obtained by the *Guardian*, Turki told his audience that Iran was a 'paper tiger with steel claws' that was 'meddling and destabilizing' across the region..."

TERROREST THREATS

Pair charged with plotting to attack US military target

BBC News reports: "Two men have been arrested and charged with plotting to attack a U.S. military recruiting station in the city of Seattle with machine guns and grenades, the justice department has said.

Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif, 33, of Seattle, and Walli Mujahidh, 32, of Los Angeles, were arrested on June 22, 2011.

The men are charged with attempting to murder U.S. employees, conspiracy to use grenades and other firearms offences.

They were arrested after they contacted a third man, who alerted police.

Officials said Mr. Abdul-Latif, also known as Joseph Anthony Davis, and Mr. Mujahidh, also known as Frederick Domingue Jr, were Muslim converts.

It is alleged that they planned to attack a station in Seattle in Washington State where military enlistees are processed.

Agents became aware of the plot earlier through an individual the two men attempted to recruit for the plot.

Prosecutors said the two men initially planned to attack the Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington, but later switched to the processing centre.

Mr. Abdul-Latif said the attack would be in retaliation for alleged crimes by U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, according to an FBI document setting out the

alleged crimes.

'Abdul-Latif explained that, in his view, murdering American soldiers was justifiable,' the affidavit said..." **(Home grown Muslim converts are preparing to kill multitudes of America's and Canada's citizens. They are even planning to place bombs within the bodies of Islamic terrorists who volunteer to blow up their bodies on planes and in crowds. Such traitors are predicted to arise in II Timothy 3:1, 3-5.)**

Anti-Terror Sensor That Scans Crowds for Bombers Tested in U.K.

Fox News reports: "A sensor that can scan huge crowds and pick out a lone

suicide bomber by homing in on hidden explosives has undergone official tests, *The Sun* reported.

The revolutionary gadget — similar to airport scanners but top secret — is believed to silently analyze materials using the unique ‘terahertz’ waves emitted by different substances.

British government scientists began testing it a year ago on mock crowds where one person in every 75 carried a ‘Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device.’

Heavily-censored reports obtained by the newspaper in a freedom of information request reveal other trials saw the guinea pigs armed with ‘handguns and knives.’

Real terrorists would have no idea they had been scanned from a distance — and could be intercepted before causing mayhem.

The futuristic device — officially known as a ‘stand-off imaging system’ — could be used to protect Al Qaeda

targets such as rail stations, shopping malls and sporting events.

The device is thought to be sophisticated enough to differentiate between plastic explosive and plasticine.

British government sources have not ruled out the system being in place at the London Olympics...” **(Big Brother has arrived and will become global by 2017 as planned in the Bilderberg convention in Virginia in 2008 — Revelation 13:16-18.)**

Missing SAMs in Libya alarms the West

SpaceWar.com reports: “The United States and its allies are concerned that al-Qaida and other terrorist groups may have gotten their hands on scores, if not hundreds, of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles plundered from Libyan military bases after the civil war erupted there in March.

So far, only four missiles have been recovered, mainly by two European

mine-clearing outfits — the Mines Advisory Group of Britain and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Actions — hired by the U.S. State Department to scour Libya for the missing SAMs.

Russia has sold countless thousands to Moammar Gadhafi’s regime over the years, mainly Strela-2s, also known as SA-7s. But it’s not known how many Libya had when fighting broke out there.

This type of missile, known in military-speak as man-portable air defense systems, or manpads, were designed to shoot down military aircraft using heat-seeking or radar-base guidance systems...” **(The world is sitting on a powder keg. The secular world ignores the warning by global leaders. Christians of the Laodicean stripe are acting as though it will never happen — Revelation 3:15-18; Matthew 24:12; II Peter 3:3, 10; II Corinthians 6:2.)**

NEWS FROM ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

‘Dozens of missiles could hit Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in next war’

The Jerusalem Post reports: “Dozens of medium-range missiles could fall in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in the next war, Homefront Commander Maj.-Gen. Yair Golan said in a Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee conference.

‘The threats are not just limited to one zone. They are spread throughout the country, with a greater extent of weapons,’ Golan explained at the conference on emergency preparedness, which was organized in cooperation

with the Union of Local Authorities in Israel.

Golan added that the next war will probably be longer, because ‘our enemies have a larger weapons inventory than they had before.’

‘The way their arsenal has developed is a dramatic threat,’ he explained, adding that Israel could face attacks on power stations and water treatment facilities. ‘The threat has become more significant,’ Golan said.

The homefront commander also presented a chart of major cities in Israel

and what kind of missiles it may face in the next major conflict. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv were both listed as targets for dozens of medium-range missiles, as well as a few long-range ones...” **(A message for Israel — Amos 4:12. See the next report.)**

Iran test fires long-range missiles capable of striking Israel, U.S. bases

Haaretz reports: “Iran’s Revolutionary Guards tested 14 missiles on the second day of war games intended a show

of strength to the Islamic Republic's enemies in Israel and Washington.

The Iranian-made surface-to-surface missiles, with a maximum range of 2,000 km (1,250 miles), were fired simultaneously at a single target, the official *IRNA* news agency reported.

The head of the Revolutionary Guards' aerospace division emphasized Iran's preparedness to strike Israel and U.S. interests in the event of any attack on Iran.

'The range of our missiles has been designed based on American bases in the region as well as the Zionist regime,' Commander Amir Ali Hajizadeh told the semi-official *Fars* news agency.

Washington and Israel have said they do not rule out military strikes on Iran if diplomatic means fail to stop it from developing nuclear weapons.

Tehran denies its nuclear program is aimed at building bombs.

IRNA said the Guards fired nine Zelzal missiles, two Shahab-1s, two Shahab-2s and one upgraded Shahab-3 missile.

Iranian officials have previously announced that the Shahab 3 can reach targets up to 2,000 km away, putting Israel and U.S. bases in the Gulf within reach..."

Iranian President: We must expose the truth about Holocaust, 9/11

Haaretz reports: "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the real dimensions of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. as well as genocide in the Second World War should be exposed in order to be able to stop terrorism.

'If the black box of the 9/11 incident and Holocaust were opened, then some of the truth would be exposed, but the United States does not allow this,' Ahmadinejad said at the two-day

international summit on terrorism in Tehran.

The president said both the Holocaust and the 2001 terror attacks were pretexts by the U.S. to put down Muslims and at the same time make huge economic benefits by spreading panic in the region. Ahmadinejad has often questioned what he called accepted truths.

He said the roots of terrorism should be explored before it can be fought effectively, and blamed U.S. militarism for causing security to deteriorate.

'There are networks which have thousands of members and sympathizers and it is the duty if the Islamic countries to fight these groups without any foreign interference,' Ahmadinejad said..." **(It is impossible for Iran's President to expose truth of any kind because his spiritual father, Satan, is a liar and the religious head of liars. Islamic Sharia Law states that it's perfectly permissible to lie and use deceit when promoting Islam.)**

Iran Funnels New Weapons to Iraq and Afghanistan

The Wall Street Journal reports: "Iran's elite military unit, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, has transferred lethal new munitions to its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent months, according to senior U.S. officials, in a bid to accelerate the U.S. withdrawals from these countries.

The Revolutionary Guard has smuggled rocket-assisted exploding projectiles to its militia allies in Iraq, weapons that have already resulted in the deaths of American troops, defense officials said. They said Iranians have also given long-range rockets to the Taliban in Afghanistan, increasing the insurgents' ability to hit U.S. and other coalition positions from a safer

distance.

Such arms shipments would escalate the shadow competition for influence playing out between Tehran and Washington across the Middle East and North Africa, fueled by U.S. preparations to draw down forces from two wars and the political rebellions that are sweeping the region..." **(Iran's President is a Shia Muslim who is pushing to bring his messiah Mahdi to prominence. Mahdi will only come when Ahmadinejad eliminates most Jews. Ahmadinejad's provision of weapons to Muslim terrorists is to speed Mahdi's reign of terror. See the next two reports.)**

'Iran infiltrating Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt'

YnetNews.com reports: "Military Intelligence chief Major-General Aviv Kochavi said Iranian influence was growing in Middle Eastern countries experiencing unrest or upheaval — such as Egypt and Syria.

'Assad understands today that his solution cannot only come from military responses, and that is why he is turning to reform,' Kochavi told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, referring to the protest-plagued president of Syria.

In Egypt, meanwhile, Tehran is trying to influence the outcomes of elections by tightening relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, the MI chief added.

'We must not belittle the reform package Assad has begun to promote. These reforms regard the improvement of wages, subsidies, and the opening up of more jobs,' Kochavi said.

He added that Bashar Assad's army has so far remained loyal because soldiers have retained the belief that the suppression of protests is a legitimate way to prevent total rioting..."

Muslim Brotherhood Eying Major Victory in Parliamentary Elections

The Fars News Agency reports: “A senior member of the Egyptian Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) party announced that the influential party is ready to form a united front in the upcoming parliamentary elections, and announced that the party plans to win 30 to 40 percent of the parliament seats.

‘We have a plan to nominate a number of Ikhwan al-Muslimun members in

a bid to win almost 30 to 40 percent of the seats in the parliament,’ Kamal al-Halbawi told *FNA*, adding that the party will take part in the country’s political trend through participation in the parliamentary elections.

He mentioned that debates are underway inside the party to identify and introduce proper candidates, adding that the party has already evaluated the public opinion through opinion polls, the results of which show their high

chances of victory in the parliamentary elections.

Meantime, Halbawi voiced the party’s preparedness to form alliance with other political parties, and stated, ‘We have plans to form an alliance with a number of Egyptian political parties.’

‘We are ready to form alliance with anyone who works for Egypt’s freedom and dignity. We will be a friend to anyone who respects the human rights,’ the politician reiterated..”

SIGNS IN THE SUN, MOON & STARS

Alien encounters ‘within twenty years’

The Guardian.co.uk reports: “Russian scientists expect humanity to encounter alien civilisations within the next two decades, a top Russian astronomer said.

‘The genesis of life is as inevitable as the formation of atoms... Life exists on other planets and we will find it within 20 years,’ said Andrei Finkelstein, director of the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Applied Astronomy Institute, according to the *Interfax* news agency.

Speaking at an international forum dedicated to the search for extraterrestrial

life, Finkelstein said 10% of the known planets circling suns in the galaxy resemble Earth.

If water can be found there, then so can life, he said, adding that aliens would most likely resemble humans with two arms, two legs and a head.

‘They may have different colour skin, but even we have that,’ he said.

Finkelstein’s institute runs a programme launched in the 1960s at the height of the cold war space race to watch for and beam out radio signals to outer space.

‘The whole time we have

been searching for extraterrestrial civilizations, we have mainly been waiting for messages from space and not the other way,’ he said...” **(I know that life exists in space because 1/3 of Heaven’s angels defected — Revelation 12:4 — and fill heavens 1 and 2 called space — Ephesians 2:2; 6:12. I also believe there are over one billion galaxies like ours that will have a purpose for all eternity because Christ created the worlds — plural — Hebrews 1:2; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:10, 11.)**

KNOWLEDGE INCREASED

Heartbreaker: Major Setback in Quest for ‘God Particle’

Fox News reports: “The quest for the elusive Higgs boson seemed over in April, when an unexpected result from an atom smasher seemed to herald the discovery of the famous particle — the last unproven piece of the physics

puzzle and one of the great mysteries scientists face today.

Researchers were cautious, however, warning that it would take months to verify the finding.

Their caution was wise.

Scientists with the Tevatron particle accelerator at Chicago’s Fermilab

facility just released the results of a months-long effort by the lab’s brightest minds to confirm the finding. What did they find? Nothing.

‘We do not see the signal,’ Dmitri Denisov, staff scientist at Fermilab, told *FoxNews.com*. ‘If it existed, we would see it. But when we look at our

data, we basically see nothing.’

‘At this point I’d say the chances are 50/50 for the Higgs to exist at all,’ he said.

The results — submitted to the science journal Physical Review Letters — are a heartbreaking setback for scientists and armchair experimenters worldwide, who have been following the particle-physics treasure hunt like a baseball fan monitoring stats.

After all, the quest for the Higgs boson — called the ‘God Particle’ because it is believed to be the fundamental

particle of matter, the smallest piece of substance that gives all other matter weight — has been among the most prominent scientific pursuits of the last 20 years.

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the multi-billion dollar, 17-mile long particle accelerator in Geneva was built in part to help prove the theoretical bit’s existence.

James Gilies, a spokesman for CERN, the agency that operates the LHC, told *FoxNews.com* that it was still too soon for his group to release any analysis -- and way too early for hopes to have been raised in the first place.

‘Still too early to get excited, I’m afraid... I think this story will reach a conclusion at the main summer conferences this year — end of July. By then, the LHC experiments will have analyzed enough data to be able to say something,’ Gilies said...” **(All this nonsensical equipment created by scientific geniuses will fail because “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God” — Psalm 14:1; 53:1. The Hadron collider was created to prove God is unnecessary because mankind can also create the Big Bang theory. Really? They fail.)**

PLAGUES & PESTILENCES

Deadly and spreading, superbug on the loose in Ontario hospitals

The Globe and Mail reports: “Ontario hospitals are bracing for an influx of a highly contagious superbug that has already claimed the lives of at least 18 elderly patients in the province.

One in 14 hospitals in Ontario were dealing with an outbreak of *Clostridium difficile*, commonly known as *C. difficile*, according to statistics collected by the Ministry of Health for the month of May. While some have since been taken off the list, several others have been hit with their own outbreaks.

Health-care practitioners say it is not just the spike in cases that is a concern. They are also worried about the virulence of the strain, the same one that killed 2,000 people in Quebec a few years ago and that Australia is now struggling to contain...” **(Pestilences — Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11; Revelation 6:7, 8.)**

THE ECONOMIC EARTHQUAKE

IMF warns of increased risks to the world economy

BBC News reports: “The International Monetary Fund has warned that the risks facing the world economy have increased.

The fund said it was concerned about the continuing Greek debt crisis, the arguments over U.S. deficit plans and the need to curb growth in Asia.

But it said it expected global growth to remain on track, though it lowered its forecasts for the U.S. and UK.

The IMF predicted that the world economy would grow at a rate of 4.3% in 2011 and 4.5% in 2012.

The fund called for greater political leadership in dealing with the eurozone debt crisis and the budget crisis in the US.

‘You cannot afford to have a world

economy where these important decisions are postponed, because you’re really playing with fire,’ said Jose Vinals, director of the IMF monetary and capital markets department.

The IMF’s latest forecasts came as it updated its assessments of financial stability, country finances and the global economy. Its last review was in April...” **(James 5:1-4; Revelation 18:10, 17, 19. See the next report.)**

Senior Analyst Calls US Decline "Irreversible Trend"

The Fars News Agency reports: "A senior political analyst said nations' growing resistance against the U.S. and its allies indicates that the United States' decline is imminent and irreversible.

Chandra Muzaffar, President of the International Movement for a Just World

and Professor of Global Studies at the University of Sains in Malaysia, made the remarks in an interview with *FNA*.

"The decline of the U.S. is irreversible. Given the resistance of the people in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon, and of the Palestinians towards the U.S.'s close ally, Israel, and the principled opposition of states such as Iran and Syria, the

U.S. elite has not been able to impose its will upon West Asia and the world. At the same time, the rise of China as an economic power of tremendous significance has been a challenge to the U.S. Equally important, the people and governments of Latin America are no longer prepared to accept U.S. hegemony," he said..."

HATE SPEECH ON TRIAL

Dutch Court Acquits Anti- Islam Lawmaker

Voice of America News reports: "Dutch far-right Member of Parliament Geert Wilders was acquitted of all charges in his hate speech trial in Amsterdam. Judges found the populist politician's comments against Islam may be offensive to many, but that they fall within the scope of protected free speech.

Supporters of Geert Wilders erupted into applause in the public gallery as the presiding judge acquitted the populist politician of all charges of hate speech

and discrimination against Muslims.

Judges called some of Wilders' comments crude and denigrating — but not illegal. Although they found Wilders' warning about a 'tsunami' of immigrants to be at the limit of what is permissible, they said he stayed within the bounds of the law — especially because his remarks were made during the Netherlands' heated political debates on multi-culturalism.

For his part, Wilders said he is happy with the verdict and will continue to speak out against what he calls the threat of Islam.

"Now the good news is, it's also legal to be critical about Islam, to speak publicly in a critical way about Islam, and this is something that we need because the Islamization of our societies is a major problem and a threat to our freedom and I'm allowed to say so," he said..." **(Praise God the blasphemy law being promoted by the UN and President Obama has failed in Holland. One goes to trial if he speaks a word against Islam. Three others await trials in other European Union nations. So much for freedom of speech.)**

NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's President Medvedev "won't stand against Putin"

BBC News reports: "Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said he finds it 'hard to imagine' that he and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin would run against each other at next year's presidential election.

Competition between them could, he said, 'be harmful'.

But, speaking to the *Financial Times*, Mr. Medvedev declined to confirm whether he would stand for a second term.

He said reports that there was a growing rivalry between the two men were 'absolutely inappropriate'.

The president's statements were full of mixed messages, says the *BBC*'s Steve Rosenberg in Moscow.

When asked in the interview if he intended to seek a second term in the Kremlin, the Russian president said 'any leader who holds the post of president simply must want to run'.

But, he added — 'it was another issue' whether he would 'take this decision or not'.

He appeared to rule out standing against Mr. Putin, if the prime minister decided to put forward his candidacy.

"Vladimir Putin and myself — and Vladimir Putin is my colleague and an old friend — represent, to a large extent, one and the same political force. And therefore competition between us may be detrimental to [our] tasks and goals," he told the *FT*..." **(Could Putin become the "Gog of Magog" for World War III? — Ezekiel 38:1, 2; 39:1, 2, 12, 13.)**