

WORLD AGENDA

MAY 2009

1 May 8, Jerusalem: **Pope Benedict XVI** begins a week-long pilgrimage to Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The visit is an effort to ease tensions over the canonization of **Pope Pius XII**, accused of turning a blind eye to the Holocaust

2 New York, May 13: Countries wishing to lay claim to extensions of their continental shelf must make their submissions before the UN deadline. If a claim is approved, it confers the right to exploit the mineral resources on and below the seabed up to 350 nautical miles offshore

3 May, Brussels/Washington:

The **European Central Bank** is expected to lower interest rates to 1% as the world continues to battle the global downturn. In the U.S. the recession becomes the longest since the **Great Depression** of the 1930s

4 May, Gulf of Aden: Japan and Sweden join international efforts to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia where hundreds of sailors have been captured and held for ransom. Tokyo has been agonising over the decision because of its post-war pacifist constitution

5 May 6, Tbilisi: NATO military exercises, involving 1,300 troops from 19 countries, begin in Georgia, despite demands from Russia that they be called off

6 May, France: The bodies of 400 unnamed Allied soldiers, killed in the **Battle of Fromelles** in July 1916, are to be exhumed and identified using DNA tests. Mass graves were found at the site of the two-day battle in 2008

7 May, Riyadh: Human rights and child protection groups will closely monitor Saudi Arabia's appeals

court which hears the case of the marriage of an 8-year-old girl to a 47-year-old man. A judge has twice refused to annul the union

8 May 4, Malawi: **Madonna** appeals against a court ruling that she can not adopt four-year-old **Mercy James**. The U.S. star, who adopted a Malawian boy in 2006, has been told she cannot adopt a second child because she is not a resident

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