

International Intelligence

Argentine Armed Forces to be privatized?

The May 6 edition of the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín* revealed that the World Bank is the international agency overseeing and coordinating all privatizations of Argentina's defense-related companies, at the request of the Menem government. In its latest decision, during a May 2 cabinet meeting, the government resolved to privatize the Air Force's Cordoba Aircraft Co., and the Army's Argentine Intermediate Tank factory. There are 37 companies, partly or wholly owned by the Armed Forces, that are scheduled to be privatized. In a personal letter written to Defense Minister Erman González, World Bank director Peter Bottelier said that he had accepted "the Argentine government's proposal" to have the bank monitor the entire privatization process in the area of defense.

As an adjunct to this policy, Rosendo Fraga, adviser to Finance Minister Domingo Cavallo, is recommending that the "restructuring" of the Armed Forces, as demanded by the Bush administration, be implemented as part of the World Bank-financed plan to reform and reduce the size of the state sector. Military personnel could be sent home "with indemnizations in their pockets financed by the World Bank," Fraga says, and in this way the size of the Armed Forces would also be reduced.

Bronfman's WJC meets in Jerusalem

The World Jewish Congress has held its four-day annual meeting in Jerusalem this week. A May 6 feature in the *Jerusalem Post* heralds the organization as a "success story," and boasts that in the view of many emergent Eastern European leaders, "The door to Washington lies through Jerusalem"—and through Bronfman.

Bronfman was the keynote speaker on May 5, and also gave the closing address on May 8. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak

Shamir, Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, and President Chaim Herzog were among the many Israeli influentials who spoke. Eastern and Central European representatives included Czechoslovak Prime Minister Marian Calfa, former Hungarian Prime Minister Miklos Nemeth, and a personal representative of Polish President Lech Walesa. Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van der Broek addressed the gathering, and received a special award.

Another attendee was Neal Sher, director of the U.S. Justice Department "Nazi-hunting" section, the Office of Special Investigations. The OSI was responsible for the illegal deportation to Israel of Cleveland auto worker John Demjanjuk, who has been sentenced to death.

Against the backdrop of Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh's May 10 visit to Israel, it is noteworthy that a large delegation of Soviet Jews came to the meeting, the first such delegation ever to attend. However, for reasons ostensibly to do with the Soviet internal crisis, the group is calling itself the WJC "Eurasian division."

Pope to act to lift embargo against Iraq

On May 5, a delegation of the Christian churches of Iraq led by the Patriarch of the Chaldean Church of Baghdad, Raphael Bidawid, was received by Pope John Paul II to discuss concrete international actions to help the Iraqi people. Bidawid said, "This was an historical meeting. We presented to the Pope the situation of the population and of the Christians after the tragedy of the war. We asked the help of the Vatican to solve the problems, first of all the embargo which does not permit our people to live. Medicines and food are lacking, we cannot live only off charity. The people have the right to live. The Pope who is always close to the poor and the people in need will do everything possible, also acting in the international arena to remove the embargo."

With Bidawid were Patriarch of the Assyrian Church Mar Addal II; Assyrian Arch-

bishop of Baghdad Athanase Matti Shaba Matoka; Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Baghdad Severios Hawa; and Iraqi Orthodox Archbishop Avak Asadourian.

Soviet-Israel ties may resume 'soon'

The Soviets' willingness to restore diplomatic relations with Israel is conditional on a change in Israeli policy toward Middle East issues and on a positive outcome to the current policy debate in Israel, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Karpov told BBC May 7.

Karpov responded "yes," when BBC asked whether the Soviets would be restoring relations with Israel, and continued "maybe soon," when asked for a timetable. Asked to expand on this, he answered, "We feel Israel should be more positive as far as a Middle East conference is concerned. There are now debates in Israel on this matter. If that debate is resolved in a positive way, the time for restoration of relations will be fairly soon."

Did this mean the Soviets' intent toward Israel was "conditional" on a change in Israeli policy? asked BBC. Karpov: "We link the two, the position of Israel on Middle East issues, and the establishing of relations. Israel should be more positive. . . . Yes, yes, we are hopeful that Israel, in the long run, will be open." The Soviets judged the matter of having relations with countries on whether such relations could be "reciprocal," he noted.

Landsbergis airs his view of West

On May 2, one week before Landsbergis left for his U.S. tour, he went on Radio Vilnius to discuss his view of Western-Lithuanian relations. "We are struggling . . . in meetings with Western politicians, legislators, and state leaders to consolidate the necessary international solutions in multilateral forums that will discuss the Baltic problem.

Briefly

It seems that Western countries understand that to leave Lithuania to negotiate with the U.S.S.R. would mean washing their hands of the problem for an unlimited period of time without Lithuania having a chance of reaching an agreement under any acceptable conditions. . . . The United States has changed its political dictionary regarding the Baltic states; it has changed its firm attitude. . . . It is being very clearly stressed that the Baltic states are not just U.S.S.R. republics and that the issue is completely separate and must be solved in accordance with the principles of international law."

Landsbergis called for separating the problem of the Baltic states into a separate regional problem in Europe.

Ozal opponent to head Turkish court

A prominent opponent of President Tugut Özal was elected chairman of the Turkish constitutional court in early May. Gungor Ozden is known for uncompromising criticism of Ozal's policy in the past, especially concerning the disrespect for principles of modern Turkey's founder Kemal Ataturk, such as the strict distinction between state and the Islamic religion.

The appointment of Ozden is an indicator of the uncompleted internal power struggle in Turkey, but also of eventual deals and compromises arranged behind the scene. Turkish media have begun to liken Turgut Özal and his wife Semra to Byzantine Emperor Justinian and his wife Theophano, in recent commentaries. Some critics of Özal say that it is not the Ottoman Empire he wants to restore, but rather, the Byzantine Empire.

France unifies military intelligence

France has announced plans to unite the country's military intelligence bodies into a single branch of the Armed Forces, the *New York Times* reported May 8. Defense Minis-

ter Pierre Joxe conceded on May 7 that French forces were overwhelmingly dependent on military intelligence provided by the United States during the Gulf war.

"Without allied intelligence in the war, we would have been almost blind," he said. The intelligence shakeup is the first of several expected measures aimed at reorganizing the French Armed Forces.

"The Gulf crisis exposed the inadequacy of our forces, notably the Army, in the post-Cold War era," said François Heisbourg, a French analyst who heads the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. "It showed that we cannot be present in strength in a major regional conflict."

London blames starving Africans for starving

African regimes bear much of the responsibility for the suffering of their people, claimed the May 8 issue of the international, London-based daily *Financial Times* in a particularly cynical feature, "Cry, the Unloved Continent."

Could the suffering have been avoided that now plagues much of Africa?

Yes, says the *Financial Times*, "particularly if the United Nations and the West had been prepared to play as assertive a role in Africa as they are now in Iraq."

The crucial questions, it asserts, involve whether or not the world should place political considerations ahead of the delivery of humanitarian assistance—judging, for example, whether aid would simply extend the life of a repugnant regime. And how far should the international community go in overriding a nation's sovereignty when its government has demonstrated it is incapable of feeding its own people?

How little the onetime allies of "Desert Storm" care about the African continent is clear from the news that, the week before, a Belgian Air Force C-130 transport plane, the only one making daily relief flights from Nairobi of lifesaving food and medicines into war-torn Somalia, was transferred to the Kurdish relief effort.

● **PAMYAT** leader Konstantin Ostashvili, who had been convicted for violation of civil rights laws and for acts of violence at the Central House of Writers, was reported by *Izvestia* on May 1 to have hanged himself in the Tver "intensified regime colony." Pamyat is a Russian chauvinist, anti-Semitic organization.

● **SCOTTISH PROTESTERS** held an alternative service April 28 in central Glasgow to protest against a Service of Thanksgiving for the war in their cathedral to which the English Queen had invited herself and her leading churchmen. The 300 leaders of various anti-war groups were addressed by Scots Labour MPs who had opposed the war, by the Episcopalian Canon Kenyon Wright, and by an Iraqi physician.

● **HELMUT KOHL** was pelted with eggs and water balloons by a mob in the eastern city of Halle, which the chancellor visited at the conclusion of a tour of the chemical region May 10. The mob was characterized by security people as belonging to the leftist Autonomous Groups. The incident indicates the security crisis in the five eastern states, which suffer from alarmingly understaffed and badly equipped police and poor intelligence on activities of radical groups.

● **YEHUDI MENUHIN** criticized Israel's occupation policy in a statement issued in London May 6. The violinist said he feels very sad, because the moral principles that kept the Jews alive as a nation for 5,000 years are being betrayed by the present policy toward Palestinian Arabs.

● **UNESCO** sponsored the third international mayoral symposium on the war against drugs last month in Paris. Mayor Jacques Chirac presided over the discussions among 50 mayors and 200 experts.