

International Intelligence

Nigerian leader hits British 'colonialism'

Addressing a group of African ambassadors to the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi decried "Britain's unguided vested interests," people who assume they can dictate the internal affairs of Nigeria.

According to Lagos TV on April 20, "he described Britain's role as dubious and the representation of the vestiges of colonialism, since they failed to leave behind a viable framework for the advancement of democracy. The minister said there was nothing wrong in prolonging General [Sani] Abacha's tenure if it augurs well for the future of the 250 ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. . . . 'The point we are making here is that our society is strong. General Abacha has made it economically strong. Since General Abacha took power in 1993, because of all this pressure, Nigeria has not obtained one dollar as loan or aid from any country. Yet, we are surviving.' "

Iranian paper: Brits attempt Mideast takeover

The *Iran Daily*, an English-language newspaper, charged in an editorial on April 21 that Britain's latest Mideast peace effort is part of an attempt to recolonize the region. "After successive attempts by the U.S. to jumpstart the terminally ill Middle East peace process, it's now Great Britain's turn to try and make the impossible possible," the official Iranian state news agency IRNA quotes the paper as saying. "British Prime Minister Tony Blair, currently on his first Mideast tour since taking office, said he hoped to inject 'new impetus' into the troubled dialogue."

The daily asks: "Of course, other world leaders like U.S. President Bill Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac have earlier made attempts to revive the Mideast process, but to no avail. One has to seriously wonder, what can Blair do to change things?" It answers: "Looking at the bigger picture of Blair's visit to the troubling Mid-

east region, one has to note that Britain is again trying to establish a niche for itself in what was a traditional sphere of influence. This latest attempt comes 50 years after ending its infamous mandate over Palestine, which turned into today's disaster for the Palestinian people. Like France's Jacques Chirac, Blair has aspirations of reviving part of his nation's past glory by acting as an all powerful peacemaker, when in reality it's all being done for Britain's narrow national self-interest."

The editorial situates Blair's initiative in the context of British, French, and U.S. rivalry, and comes down against Britain: "As a matter of fact, the Middle East and the African continent have become a cultural and economic battleground for the U.S., France, and Britain, to increase or at least maintain their varying degrees of influence. Given Britain's history in the Middle East, people in the region have a right to be skeptical of their intentions. After all, the Palestinian-Israeli flashpoint is stamped 'Made in England.' "

Student protests turn violent in Indonesia

Violent clashes took place in three cities starting on April 23, with police using tear gas and firing rubber bullets, in response to demonstrators throwing Molotov cocktails, in an effort to forcibly move demonstrations off campus and into public streets. The action began at Medan Technological Institute, and continued at St. Thomas Catholic University in Medan. On April 25, some 1,000 students at the University of North Sumatra in Medan took on 100 troops. One student suffered a gunshot wound, several suffered from tear gas, and five were reported taken into custody.

On April 27, two thousand students gathered at the gates of North Sumatra University, chanting slogans against President Suharto. A two-hour standoff ensued, as troops fired tear-gas and sprayed yellow dye on the students with water cannon. By nightfall, some 5,000 students were reported blockaded on campus grounds. Wire services claim that the students blamed Suharto for

failure to solve the financial crisis, quoting one as saying, "It's going to be like Tiananmen Square."

Also, one student was wounded when 1,500 students from Jambi University in Sumatra clashed with police, as they marched to the local parliament on April 25. Eight were injured in a similar incident in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara. Forty students were detained after 500 tried forcibly to leave campus grounds at Ibnu Chaldun University on East Jakarta.

WFP appeals for food aid for North Korea

Catherine Bertini, the executive director of the World Food Program, appeared at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on April 27, to report on her most recent visit to North Korea. She said that the government's food distribution system has almost no food in it now, because no food has been coming into the country. She said that people are going back to eating roots, leaves, and tree bark. This fills stomachs, but has no nutritional value and causes digestive problems. She also reported that the average birth weight of newborn babies in North Korean hospitals has dropped to approximately one kilogram (2.2 pounds), and 3 out of 10 infants don't survive.

There are also, still, problems with the government allowing aid agencies access to all 210 counties of the country, she said. The WFP currently has access to 161 counties, and the government has agreed in principle to allow access to the other 49, but the bureaucratic machinery hasn't yet moved on this.

The WFP is requesting 658,000 tons of food aid this year and hopes that the international community will match this in bilateral donations, in a manner similar to the past year. In response to a question from this news service on the outlook for getting all this food aid, in view of the economic crisis that has hit Asia, she said that South Korea has pledged to continue to help "its brothers in the North," despite the economic crisis there, and that China has already contributed 50,000 tons. Japan, while committed to help-

KURDISH TERRORIST Semdin Sakik, number-two man of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), who was captured by Turkish troops in northern Iraq in April, says that the PKK killed Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme in 1986. The Turkish paper *Sabah* quoted Sakik saying that PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan ordered the assassination, because of Sweden's decision to extradite eight PKK operatives living there. This is the first direct claim of PKK involvement in the murder.

SHIMON PERES, in an interview with *Le Figaro* on April 29, said that he is "clearly in favor of a Palestinian state." The choice is clear, the former Israeli Prime Minister said: There will be either two states or a binational state, and the latter would mean a binational tragedy.

A HIGH-RANKING member of Britain's MI6 was caught by Iranian authorities and confessed to spying, according to the Iranian newspaper *Jumhuri Eslami*. "Robert Gavin was arrested while filming unauthorized (military) areas in Kurdistan and was in detention for a week of questioning," the paper said. It said that Gavin had a tourist visa, and presented himself as a BBC reporter. He allegedly entered military areas without permission and took pictures and films.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl, who had planned to visit China at the end of June, cancelled his trip on April 29, since it would have overlapped with President Clinton's visit there. According to reports from Bonn, the decision was made in view of the urgency of President Clinton's diplomacy.

THE RAND CORP. has released a study forecasting a Turkish-Greek war and an Indo-Pakistani war in the first decade of the 21st century. The basis for the former is said to be "revival of regional competition in the Balkans"; the latter scenario has to do with Kashmir, with both India and Pakistan using nuclear weapons.

ing Indonesia with its food shortages, has yet to make a decision on North Korea, for political reasons. In short, said Bertini, "we do not expect the Asia economic crisis to have an impact" on food donations. What will have a bigger impact, is the skepticism of governments about the seriousness of the situation in North Korea.

Opponents of Kabila denounce massacres

A press release signed by leaders of the Congo opposition to dictator Laurent Kabila, charges that Rwandan, Ugandan, and Congolese troops carried out massacres in the town of Butembo in Kivu province on April 14. According to the report, the town was surrounded by troops, and then massacres were carried out against the civilian population. The statement, which was reported by AFP, said that the Ugandan-Rwandan-Kabila forces were "imposing agony on the peoples of Kivu in general and those of Butembo and Beni in particular," and called for an international investigation into the ongoing war in Kivu province.

The release was issued by the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, whose leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, has called for non-violent struggle against Kabila, and the Rally of Congolese Patriots, led by former Foreign Minister Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda, one of the few voices who defended the Rwandan and Burundian refugees during the invasion of Zaire in 1996-97.

Azerbaijani party wants cross-border alliance

Fazail Agamaly, chairman of the pro-government Ana Vatan Party, has advocated creating a confederation of the Azerbaijan Republic and Iranian Azerbaijan, as the first step toward the reunification of the two regions, which have been severed since the Napoleonic wars, the newspaper *Turan* reported on April 27. The report was monitored by Radio Free Europe in Prague.

If true, the call marks a potentially serious development, particularly considering

Azerbaijan President Heidar Aliyev's reported recent call for the stationing of Turkish troops in the Caucasus, to guard oil pipelines.

Speaking at Ana Vatan's third congress in Baku on April 25, Agamaly also expressed support for the leadership of President Aliyev, in whose favor he rejected a bid by delegates to nominate him as a candidate for the October Presidential elections.

In December 1997, Radio Free Europe notes, former Azeri President Abulfaz Elchibey formed the Single Azerbaijan Union, to lobby for the unification of the two Azerbaijanians. Elchibey's Turkish-supported efforts to "reunify" Azerbaijan, that is, bust up Iran, was one of the reasons that Iran backed Armenia in the war over Nagorno-Karabakh. Elchibey was overthrown by Aliyev in 1993. Elchibey unexpectedly returned to Baku in March, from internal exile in Nakhichevan.

Swiss court rules in Raúl Salinas case

The Swiss Supreme Court's April 24 decision, to permit the release to the U.S. government of Swiss government documents related to Mexican drug cartel agent Raúl Salinas's Swiss bank accounts, reveals that the U.S. government is assembling a case against the brother of former Mexican President Carlos Salinas, on charges of money laundering, bribery, and drug trafficking, according to wire service reports. The U.S. case is said to charge that the Colombian cartels paid Raúl Salinas to secure Mexico as a safe transshipment point for their cocaine.

The joint U.S.-Swiss effort against Salinas, with which the current Mexican government is cooperating, came to light in November 1995, when Salinas's Swiss bank accounts were frozen. It now has entered a new phase.

On March 13, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that former Cali Cartel accountant Guillermo Pallomari had told U.S. authorities that the cartel paid some \$80 million to Mexican politicians during 1990-93, and half of that money went to Raúl Salinas.