

International Intelligence

Green leader unnerved by terrorist arrest

The joint Franco-German police operation which succeeded in the Sept. 9 arrest of Hans-Joachim Klein—one of the terrorists involved in the “Carlos” gang that took the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil ministers hostage during their meeting in Vienna in 1975—may not only provide further revelations on that, and other international terrorist operations.

More immediately interesting, Klein also was a close friend of German Green party leader Joseph “Joschka” Fischer in the Frankfurt “revolutionary underground” of the early 1970s. Back in 1970, Klein borrowed Fischer’s car to transfer 18 stolen weapons from American depots in Butzbach. In 1981, one of those weapons was used in the assassination of Hesse state economics minister Heinz-Herbert Karry.

Fischer has reason to fear the arrest of Klein, because Fischer hopes to become foreign minister in a red-green coalition after the Sept. 27 elections, and is making efforts to look “moderate,” so that any reminder of his own flirtation with the Molotov cocktail circuit is unwelcome.

Blair’s ‘honeymoon with the voters is over’

The London *Guardian* noted on Sept. 9 that the stock in Prime Minister Tony Blair is plunging. Under the headline “Blair Bubble Bursts,” Alan Travis wrote that “the extraordinary bubble of popularity surrounding the Prime Minister, which broke records in the aftermath of Labour’s [May 1, 1997] landslide victory, has now burst.” His “personal ratings . . . have plummeted.”

Interestingly, the annual *Guardian* “state of the nation” survey shows that Labour’s reputation for being the best party to manage the economy “has taken a sharp knock,” with only 35% of voters agreeing with that proposition. Travis notes that this comes amidst “growing talk of recession, redundancies [layoffs] and volatile stock mar-

kets.” The *Guardian* editorial the same day was entitled, “Blair’s Star Wanes.” The *Guardian*, is close to the Labour Party in Britain.

The analysis was confirmed by Trades Union Congress President John Edmonds in an interview with the *New Statesman*, which was reported by the *Guardian* on Sept. 10. Blair is walking into a “Greek tragedy” by insisting on holding down public sector salaries, which will likely lead to “big trouble” and to widespread disruption in public services.

Public sector workers were being “pushed into a corner” by the fact that the current “New Labour” government is continuing Tory wage policies in the public sector, he said: “Industrial action doesn’t arise from one year’s grievance. It arises from a rising sense of grievance and frustration, a feeling that we can’t do anything else except this industrial action.”

Habibie: Poverty may fuel rights abuses

In his speech to the third annual meeting of Asia-Pacific human rights commissions on Sept. 9, Indonesian President B.J. Habibie warned, “If our economic problems cannot be solved within a short time, their influence will be felt in other areas. Social unrest will prevail. Crime will rise. The feeling of being safe and tranquil will be further away. Economic poverty is one of the important factors giving rise to abuses of human rights.” Meanwhile, student demonstrations played cat and mouse with security troops, who have prevented the students from getting back into the Parliament building, after 2,000 students broke through the main gates on Sept. 7. Students from 35 universities are involved in revolving actions, demanding that Habibie lower prices or resign.

At an earlier appearance in the second largest city of Surabaya, some 4,000 students and supporters of opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri chanted for lower prices and Habibie’s resignation. Habibie was forced to cancel some appearances due to the turmoil, after which thousands of dem-

onstrators broke through the police lines to demonstrate on the front steps of the governor’s office.

In Central Java, a fight between a Chinese shopowner and his Indonesian worker, led to rioting when a mob returned to torch the shop in Kebumen. The explosion of poverty is at the heart of the eruption, which continued into Sept. 8, with an estimated 49 shops destroyed.

Egypt, Libya take on British-backed terrorism

The Sept. 16-17 Arab League meeting of all 21 Arab states will deal with Libya’s request that the British government hand over terrorist elements given shelter in Britain, and that it not support groups conspiring against the Arab states. The Arab League, heavily influenced by Egypt, has agreed to add a new item proposed by Libya to the 110th session, at League headquarters in Cairo.

Libya’s leader Muammar Qaddafi told an Arabic television interviewer that Libya will present evidence on the assassination attempt by British intelligence against him, referencing a forthcoming film to be broadcast on Libyan TV, which will include footage of the bombing of Qaddafi’s motorcade. Qaddafi also stated that Libya might bring the issue to the United Nations.

Recently, the Libyan people’s general committee for foreign relations and cooperation called upon the British government to open a separate investigation on disclosures by former British intelligence officer David Schayler, who said that British intelligence in 1996 made a failed attempt to assassinate Qaddafi through a member of a Libyan terrorist group whose headquarters are in London.

Military analyst: Right wing threatens Israel

Ze’ev Schiff, one of Israel’s leading military commentators, warned that one of the greatest dangers facing Israel is from the right-wing extremists. Writing in the daily

FRANCE'S Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement suffered cardiac arrest during elective surgery on Sept. 3 and went into a coma at the Val de Grâce Hospital. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin named Jean Jacques Queyranne, as interim Interior Minister. Only one year ago, Chevènement had arrived at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital to await the ambulance carrying Princess Diana.

A CARBOMB KILLED 17 people and wounded over 80 others in Makhachkala, the capital of regional administration of Dagestan in southern Russia. The target of the Sept. 5 bomb was said to have been the region's Prime Minister, Khizri Shikhsaidov. This was the tenth attempt on his life. The Grand Mufti of Dagestan was just recently assassinated.

LITHUANIA'S parliamentary chairman and former President, Vytautas Landsbergis, called for international humanitarian aid to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad on Sept. 8. He was responding to a statement by Russian Baltic Navy commanders that the force has enough food only for the next 40 days.

PAKISTAN'S delegate to a UN conference on disarmament in Geneva rebuked New Zealand, after its delegate condemned India and Pakistan for their nuclear tests. Munir Akram asked, "What God has ordained that there will be five legitimate nuclear weapons states?" He added that the accepted nuclear powers are acting like "drunkards preaching abstinence to the rest of the world."

STUDENTS IN MYANMAR held the largest demonstrations since 1996 on Sept. 2. "End the military government," chanted up to 800 students at the Yangon Institute of Technology, as riot police cordoned off a one-mile perimeter around the campuses, according to witnesses. Another 3,000 students rallied at the Hlaing campus in the city. Foreign diplomats reported that the police were unarmed, signaling the government's attempt to avoid violence.

Ha'aretz on Sept. 4, he pointed out that both Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and the former Shin Bet chief Carmi Gilon have been the target of demonstrations and accusations by right-wing extremist organizations which branded them "persecutors of the Jewish people," the same epithet thrown against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin prior to his assassination. Such charges against these figures were first levelled, not by the radical groups, but by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu has been accusing Mordechai in particular of being soft on the Palestinians.

"Rabin's killer, Yigal Amir, did not act alone. Although he was the only one to pull the trigger, Amir enjoyed the support of many persons. The extreme right had a history of assassinations even before Rabin was gunned down. . . . Members of the extreme right have even smuggled weapons and explosives from the Israeli Defense Forces," Schiff said. The greatest danger, he said, lies in something like "an outbreak of violence on the Temple Mount, for example, in order to kill the peace process."

Indian Congress Party prepares for elections

India's Congress Party held a three-day meeting on Aug. 29-31, chaired for the first time by Sonia Gandhi, widow of the late former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1991. The economic resolution points to a policy of taking India back to the 1980s' idea of the "mixed economy," with the government directing economic policy. While Sonia Gandhi would tend to support former Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who was a key promoter of free-trade "reforms" in India, this was not the policy which emerged from this meeting, well-informed political figures said. The Congress Party, which is in opposition, was meeting to prepare for four state elections this November. This new economic resolution will go to the voters in these elections.

The majority of the Congress politicians have turned decidedly against the neo-liberal reforms, and the economic resolution reflects this. It calls for the return to a

"mixed" economy, similar to that of the 1980s, which was the central planning policy under Indira Gandhi. This means that government controls on the economy are to be maintained, and that the government must keep in its hands, the instruments necessary to exert control over the economy. The Congress Party is not, yet, calling for already-implemented reforms to be rescinded, but will oppose further reforms.

High court confirms Cambodian elections

More than a month after Cambodia's July 26 elections, the highest court, the Constitutional Council, has rejected all complaints of fraud filed by opposition figures Sam Rainsy and Prince Norodom Ranariddh on Sept. 1. The vote results have been upheld, with Hun Sen's CPP taking 41% of the vote, Ranariddh's Funcinpec 32%, and the Sam Rainsy Party 14%. Rainsy, especially, has championed a nine-day protest, or "camp-in" opposite the National Assembly, which was punctuated by demonstrations of up to 10,000 the preceding weekend. Earlier in the protests, Rainsy had "joked" that he wished President Clinton would hit Hun Sen's home with missiles, as he had hit Sudan's Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant. Moreover, Rainsy's renewed incitement to violence against ethnic Vietnamese led to the deaths of five people.

On Sept. 7, unknown persons lobbed three grenades into the Phnom Penh residential compound of Second Prime Minister Hun Sen—two exploded, causing no injuries. Hun Sen, who was not present, called for Rainsy's arrest, and left open the same option for Ranariddh, leading to a stand-off outside the UN High Commission for Refugees office, where Rainsy sought protection. The order was later rescinded.

In recent days the European Union and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have appealed to the three winners in the July 26 elections to get on with forming a coalition by the Sept. 24 date for dissolution of the current session. King Norodom Sihanouk has threatened to abdicate if progress is not made.