

International Intelligence

Halliburton Nigeria Bribery Case Probed

The U.S. Security Exchange Commission has subpoenaed documents from Royal Dutch Shell, as part of a widening international probe into the \$170 million alleged bribery case at a Nigerian gas plant, the *Financial Times* reported Oct. 13. This case, which surfaced last year, involves alleged illegal bribe-making by Halliburton at the time when Vice President Dick Cheney was head of the company—a fact noted by the *Financial Times*.

The new development is that Halliburton itself, handed over documents to investigators, which appear highly incriminating, suggesting that payments had been made to Nigerian officials. The investigation has been going on quietly but intensely over the last year.

One of Halliburton's subsidiaries, KBR, was involved along with Total of France, Shell, Eni, and Marubeni, in a joint venture to construct a \$12 billion gas plant in Nigeria.

Brazil: PMDB Must Build Resistance Like de Gaulle

Gov. Roberto Requião, of the Brazilian state of Parana, issued a call to arms to the PMDB party, saying that it must build a movement against financier liberalism's rule over Brazil, like the resistance that de Gaulle organized against the Nazi occupation of France.

Speaking to a meeting of more than 3,000 PMDB members, Oct. 2, Requião asked:

"Are we a nation, or a market? A nation and the market are totally different," he said. "In today's Brazil, the Central Bank rules at the service of the bankers. . . . In the liberal's vision, Brazil should compete with Bangladesh, with Biafra, with India and China, offering . . . the slave labor of the Brazilian population."

Requião is a close ally of Carlos Lessa, former president of Brazil's National Economic and Social Development Bank, and

worked with Lessa in drafting the proposed program of government, "To Change Brazil" (see *EIR*, Oct. 14, 2005). Requião, like Lessa, comes from the generation which fought in the Brazilian Democratic Movement back in the 1960s, when the party was founded to lead resistance to military government.

Euro Parliament: Iran Has Right to Nuclear

The European Parliament adopted a resolution Oct. 13 acknowledging Iran's right "to develop a nuclear program, according to Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty." The resolution stated that it "supports the proposals of the European Union for cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field for peaceful use." The vote was 499 in favor, 43 against, and 89 abstentions. It also supported a diplomatic solution with the EU, and stressed cooperation with the United States, Russia, China, and non-aligned countries to consider complementary concepts. It excluded military options.

Interestingly, the resolution attacked U.S. plans for new nuclear weapons, voicing concern "about the intention of the U.S. Ministry of Defense to integrate the nuclear weapons option into its pre-emptive strike scenarios," and it calls on the United States "to immediately halt any such plans in the context of a revised security strategy."

Japan's Lower House OKs Postal Privatization

Japan's lower house rapidly approved Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's postal system privatization bill by a vote of 338 to 138, on Oct. 10, after the overwhelming election victory Sept. 11 made it possible for Koizumi to pass any bill he likes in the Diet. Koizumi simply re-submitted the bills, almost identical to those voted down in August. Of the 37 LDP "rebels" who voted against the bills in August, only 17 survived the election, and only 4 voted against the bills this time.

Now, timing is the big question: When would the \$4 trillion fund actually come under private-sector control, so that the cash could be sent out of the country to bail out Wall Street, for example? Under the legislation, Japan Post would be split into four different stock companies on Oct. 1, 2007 by function: mail delivery, savings, and so on, by a public stock sale, but not "fully privatized" until 2017. Even between now and 2007, there will be such momentous chaos and change on the global currency markets (for example, a huge dollar collapse) that it is far from clear whether a private management could send cash abroad, two years from now—let alone in 2017.

Guerrillas Attack in North Caucasus Again

Guerrillas stormed police, Internal Affairs Ministry, and Federal Security Service buildings in Nalchik, capital of Kabardino-Balkaria in Russia's North Caucasus region, Oct. 13. Fighting took place in the city of 235,000 people throughout the day, leaving 12 civilians, approximately the same number of security forces, and several dozen guerrillas dead, according to Russian TV reports. Unlike a similar raid in Nazran, North Ossetia, in June 2004 (where weapons were seized for later use in the September 2004 Beslan school massacre), most of the buildings were not taken over, although the attackers temporarily seized the first floor of a police station. Federal forces said they had the situation under control by day's end.

President Putin took a partially televised briefing on the situation from First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Alexander Chekalin, who then told reporters that Putin had ordered Nalchik sealed off, to prevent guerrillas from escaping. Deputy Prosecutor Victor Kolesnikov, Presidential Representative for the Southern Federal District, and Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky were among those giving televised updates during the day.

Based on interrogation of captured guerrillas, Kolesnikov announced that the attack was the work of the Jamaat Yarmuk group of

the “Wahhabite” Anzor Astemirov, founded by the late Muslim Atayev, an associate of Basayev. Strana.ru reported that Jamaat Yarmuk has been linked with the Moscow apartment bombings of 1999, attacks in Ingushetia in 2002, and last December’s raid on the Kabardino-Balkaria anti-narcotics agency. The Chechen separatist site kavkazcenter.com, meanwhile, claimed that the fighters were from “the Kabardino-Balkar sector of the Caucasus Front.”

In recent months, the British press, in particular, has kept up a drumroll of articles about the coming, allegedly inevitable, explosion of the entire Russian North Caucasus. The region has long served as a detonator of the manipulated clashes, identified in Lyndon LaRouche’s 1999 video, “Storm Over Asia.”

Suicide of Syrian General Raises Questions

Brig. Gen. Ghazi Kanaan, one of the best known figures in the Syrian military and intelligence establishment, reportedly committed suicide in his office on Oct. 12, according to Sana, the official news agency of Syria. From 1982-2002, Kanaan was head of security in Beirut. In 2002, he went back to Damascus and became head of the Political Security Branch, and in October 2004, he was appointed Interior Minister.

Two weeks before, Kanaan was questioned about the assassination of former Lebanon Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, by the United Nations investigators serving under UN investigator Detlef Mehlis (as were other Syrian officials). Mehlis’s report on the Hariri assassination is due out in late October, but there are reports, predating this death, that the deadline would be extended.

The Syrian government issued a short statement, saying that it is investigating Kanaan’s death.

One day before he died, Kanaan reportedly gave an interview to Voice of Lebanon (Sawt Libnan), in which he said: “I want to make clear that our relation with our brothers in Lebanon was based on love and mutual respect. . . . We have served Lebanon’s in-

terest with honor and dignity.” He said that Syrian troops in Lebanon had “done their utmost to preserve the unity of Lebanon.” He also said: “What is being reported about secret links exists only in the minds of those who spread such reports, to serve their political interests and malicious objectives. . . .” In the interview, he also denied press reports that he had shown UN investigators checks paid to him by Rafiq Hariri.

At the end of the interview, he said: “I believe this is the last announcement I can make.”

There are many questions about this death. Kanaan was clearly a target of the United States, which issued an order freezing his assets in July 2005, on grounds that they were used to aid terrorism in Lebanon. The seizing of the assets of Kanaan and another Syrian official was meaningless for the United States, because these were not located in the USA, but the order was being used as pressure against other countries that might have bank accounts belonging to these Syrian officials.

24 Sub-Saharan Nations Face Food Emergencies

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) issued its second Africa Report for 2005 on Sept. 28, “Food Supply Situation and Crop Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa,” which states that 24 sub-Saharan African countries face food emergencies. The situation is the worst in southern Africa, where about 12 million people need immediate emergency food assistance in the countries of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Zambia.

In Malawi, about 40% of the population—4.6 million—is facing food shortages, while in Zimbabwe the number of people at risk is estimated to be more than 3 million, or 25% of the population.

Regions of eastern Africa (Sudan and Somalia), central Africa (Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as western Africa (Niger, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) are all in need of assistance as well, according to the report.

THE ITALIAN government assigned its first contract for the Messina Bridge, connecting Sicily with the Italian mainland, on Oct. 13. This will be the longest suspension bridge in the world, at 2.3 miles, and its two towers will be higher than the Eiffel Tower. The Impregilo Corp., Italy’s largest construction company, will start work on the 3.9 billion euro project next year. The project, which is expected to be completed in 2012, will generate 40,000 jobs.

THE KASHMIR earthquake has left an estimated 2.5 million people homeless, according to the World Health Organization’s South Asia director, Hussein Gezairy, Oct. 13. Pakistan raised the official death toll to more than 25,000 dead and 63,000 injured, but diplomats told *EIR* that a death toll of 100,000 is likely. “I’ve never seen such devastation before,” the United Nations Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland stated, “and it’s getting worse daily.” Relief efforts are impeded by collapsed roads, rain, and mudslides, and soon there will be winter snows in the Himalayan areas affected.

A KOREAN official told *EIR* that the U.S. Administration is pushing a new “Plaza Accord” for financial meetings in Beijing and Tokyo, Oct. 16-17, in which U.S. authorities may demand that not only China, but also Japan, and South Korea, up-value their currencies by as much as 20% to 40%. This is “lunacy,” the Korean said.

INDIA and the United States will sign a “Science and Technology Umbrella Agreement” to increase cooperation between the scientists of both countries, announced Kapil Sibal, India’s Minister of Science and Technology. The accord will include space, energy, nanotechnology, health, and information technology.