

# International Intelligence

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## **British Labour wins big in by-election**

The British Labour Party has had its best by-election result in 50 years, with a victory May 4 in the Welsh district of Vale of Glamorgan. The campaign was waged and won entirely on one issue: the Thatcher government's health policy.

Compared to the last election in the district, Labour's total vote went up by 14%, the Tories went down by 11%, and the smaller "centrist" parties, the Social Democrats and Social Liberal Democrats, suffered big losses. Reuters news agency is labeling this a "stunning victory" for Labour.

It is also an important warning signal to Mrs. Thatcher's government. Labour campaigned *only* on the issue of opposition to the government's plans to reform the National Health Service. So vehement is the opposition to Thatcher's policies, that doctors in and around the district called on the voters to boycott the Tories, and the call was overwhelmingly successful. One doctor in Vale of Glamorgan ran as an independent on his own ticket; he got almost no votes, but the fact that he was running had great symbolic importance.

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## **Japan, Soviets in Kuriles stalemate**

"There is nothing new on the territorial issue from either side," a spokesman for visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno told reporters in Moscow after a meeting with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

A dispatch from the Soviet news agency TASS said Shevardnadze had pointed to Moscow's initiatives to improve its relations in the Pacific, including scaling down its troop concentrations in the eastern Soviet Union and Mongolia.

But TASS also indicated that there was no agreement in the dispute over the Kurile Islands, the chain stretching north from Japan's Hokkaido Island to the Soviet Union's Sakhalin Peninsula. The Russians have occupied the islands since the closing days of

World War II.

TASS quoted Shevardnadze with the usual line that the state of relations between Moscow and Tokyo "was still not commensurate with the potential possibilities available to the Soviet Union and Japan and the standing of our countries in the world."

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## **Canadian bishops condemn Syria**

A press release from the Catholic Conference of Canadian Bishops dated April 17 made public a letter sent the week before by its president, Bishop James Hayes of Halifax, to Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, denouncing Syria's bloody actions in Lebanon.

Stressing that "Christians of Lebanese extraction residing in Canada have expressed their anguish at the fate of their families in Lebanon and of their fatherland," Bishop Hayes asked Mulroney to "deploy all diplomatic efforts susceptible of immediately putting an end to the shelling of Beirut and of bringing about renewed conciliation efforts," according to Montreal's *La Presse*.

"The Lebanese people is entitled to peace and security," added Bishop Hayes. "As a founding member of the U.N., it must be granted international diplomatic efforts. We heartily wish . . . Lebanon not be left alone and forgotten in this tragic hour of its history."

The Executive Committee of the Quebec Assembly of Bishops made a similar request of the Canadian government.

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## **Russians propose U.N. 'environment' agency**

The government of the Soviet Union, in a letter released May 5, proposed a U.N. body to organize an international response to "environmental emergencies."

The letter, signed by Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, followed up an idea put to the General Assembly in December by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov. "Overcoming the global threat to the envi-

ronment and ensuring universal environmental security through prompt and effective action is an imperative of our times," he said.

Shevardnadze said there should be a U.N. Center for Emergency Environmental Assistance headed by an undersecretary general. "The main function of the center would be the prompt dispatch of international groups of experts to areas where the state of the environment has badly deteriorated."

The team would examine the situation and draw up recommendations for improvement, he said. "When necessary, such groups would include lawyers to consider legal problems that may arise as a result of environmental disasters with trans-boundary effects."

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## **Chirac: three principles for NATO**

Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, the former French prime minister, visited Washington, D.C. on May 8 to present a French proposal on the dispute between the Bush administration and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl over modernization of West Germany's short-range nuclear missiles.

Chirac told an audience at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, "The time has not come, it seems to me, to bestow on the U.S.S.R. the certificate of democracy which some are urging us to award it."

Chirac told President Bush in a private meeting, "We have to keep a nuclear deterrent because without a nuclear deterrent we have not a chance to maintain the security and peace in Europe." Chirac predicted that French President François Mitterrand would intervene to try and persuade Kohl to give up his demands that the alliance begin short-range missile talks with the Soviets.

Chirac presented what he called "three principles" for NATO:

1) Reject any denuclearization and any negotiations on short-range weapons.

2) Reduce the number of missiles to a minimum and increase their range "lest deterrence should appear to Europeans as synonymous with limited nuclear war on their own soil."

3) Contribute independent British and French nuclear weapons "by means of agreements and of appropriate political and military mechanisms, among Europeans themselves, as well as with the United States."

For those left scratching their heads on point three, Chirac responded, "It is quite complicated. This is too open a discussion. It's very difficult and I cannot go into detail."

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## *The greening of Count Ripa di Meana*

Count Carlo Ripa di Meana of Venice is playing a surprisingly vigorous role in the "greening" of Europe, the May 7 *Financial Times* of London reported. Ripa was recently appointed to the European Community's Commission on the Environment.

According to the report, the Venetian count has helped persuade EC member states to take "unexpectedly drastic action" to "protect the ozone layer," and is "pushing ahead with a new, largely French-inspired idea to create a European Environmental Agency, to some extent modeled on the U.S.'s powerful Environmental Protection Agency."

Ripa wants to make environmental policy an integral part of the Europe 1992 scheme. He is also focusing on the global threat caused by damage to the Brazilian rain forests, and is privately advancing the idea of an EC energy tax to pay for correcting ecological problems in the Third World.

The *Financial Times* notes that the Venetian nobleman is an Italian Socialist, who joined the party in 1958 after an earlier attachment to the Communist Party.

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## *Nicaragua puts troops on alert*

Nicaragua put its armed forces and reserves on alert just prior to the elections in Panama May 7, in anticipation of a U.S. military intervention in Panama, according to a Reuters wire.

Defense Minister Humberto Ortega said, "We have ordered a high level of combat alert to respond to any implications for Nicaragua an invasion of American troops in Panama might have," he told a news conference. U.S. officials have not ruled out an armed intervention in Panama if elections failed to return the candidate of U.S. choice—which they did not.

Ortega, who is also head of the Popular Sandinista Army and the militia, said U.S. threats to invade Panama are very serious and could complicate the Central American conflict. "This is why we are on alert and ready to defend ourselves," he said. "What is happening in Panama is a lesson to the Nicaraguan people that we should be ready."

Nicaragua has planned national elections in February of 1990, as part of a peace plan being drawn up by Central American leaders, which also envisages the demobilization of 12,000 Nicaraguan rebels in Honduras.

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## *The underworld of Jacques Soustelle*

French anthropologist Jacques Soustelle, one of the leading inspirers of international narco-terrorism, has denied charges from the new Paraguayan government that he was involved in a fraud scheme with overthrown Paraguayan dictator Alfred Stroessner.

Paraguay's Trade and Industry Ministry charged that Soustelle and Stroessner embezzled over \$40 million. They are alleged to have done so through a Swiss-registered shell company that involved senior executives of Paraguay's state-owned National Cement Industry, which used overbilling in the fraud.

Stroessner is in exile in Brazil. Thirty of his aides are being investigated by the new government.

Soustelle, a former French Governor General of Algeria, was Information Minister in 1958-59 in the government of Gen. Charles de Gaulle. Soustelle quit and became a leading figure in the Secret Army Organization (OAS), which mounted several assassination attempts against de Gaulle.

# Briefly

● **SOVIET T-80 TANK** production soared in the first quarter of 1989 from about 3,500 a year to more than 4,200, while outdated models were retired, according to Pentagon officials with access to DIA information quoted in the May 8 *Washington Times*. Said one official, "On the face of it, it is a complete contradiction of Gorbachov's stated intention of taking 10,000 tanks out of service."

● **SOVIET Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev** arrived in Beijing unannounced on April 22, according to Yugoslavia's Tanjug news service. The Chinese Xinhua news service acknowledged his arrival and announced his departure April 28.

● **ADNAN KHASHOGGI'S** former second wife, Lamia, an Italian, flew to New Delhi in April to receive a special peace prize as the Woman of the Year. Admittedly, the Indian press noted, a peace prize for the spouse of a leading arms dealer is a bit odd.

● **CHINA** has indicated that it is unhappy with concessions made by Prince Norodom Sihanouk to Cambodian Premier Hun Sen during their talks in Jakarta April 30.

● **MAXWELL RABB**, Ronald Reagan's ambassador to Italy, told the Italian magazine *Epoca* that in October 1981, he was awakened in his hotel in Milan and told to fly home to the United States. "I was to have been assassinated the next day. Five Libyans had been captured by police in a Rome hotel, and one of them was to have been my killer."

● **PRESIDENT MITTERRAND** of France has sent his son and chief adviser on African affairs to Senegal and Mauritania to attempt to resolve tensions between two of the world's poorest nations, which led to the eruption of riots in late April.