

International Intelligence

Sweden fears replay of 'great war'

Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt warned that it is "not improbable" that Sweden's traditional neutrality could be upset by a Russian attack on Finland or the three Baltic states at some point in the future, in an interview with the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* on Aug. 11. He said that Sweden might one day be faced with a similar dilemma to that of 1939, when Stalin invaded neighboring Finland.

Bildt warned of the coming to power in Moscow of an authoritarian Russian regime with "revanchist" ambitions. Should the Baltic states or Finland then be threatened, "Who could assert that automatic neutrality should be Sweden's line?" he asked.

Professors Gerner and Hedlund, two Russia experts from Lund University, warned of parallels between the crises in the Balkans and what is now unfolding in the former Soviet Union, in an article in the Swedish weekly *Sunday*. Headlined "The Impending Risk of a Great War," they warned that there are already in the former U.S.S.R. more than 1 million internal ethnic refugees, which is a sign that the situation is "on the way to an explosion." A Russia-Ukraine conflict is looming, and a big confrontation is shaping up in the Baltics, where shooting has already begun. Because of all this, they argue, "it is high time for Swedish politicians to recognize that the old patterns of passivity and wishful thinking" must come to an end.

Gerner and Hedlund proposed that Russian troops leave the Baltics immediately, in return for the Baltic governments guaranteeing the rights of Russian minorities living there.

Malaysia faces wrecking operations, Mahathir warns

"Some sectors overseas want us to face problems and disunity like in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the former Soviet Union," Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed told a function of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in late July, Bernama news agency reported.

On Aug. 8, Mahathir charged that the foreign press was praising the rival party government in Malaysia's northeastern Kelantan state, the only state government ruled by the opposition fundamentalist Parti Islam (PAS), in an attempt to wreck Muslim unity in the country. He noted that the western press particularly disliked Islamic fundamentalists but had showered praise on the PAS-run government. Mahathir said that writers from several foreign magazines had visited Kelantan and filed reports that it was a moderate regime which did not oppress anyone, "but in actual fact, they want to see more conflicts among the Muslims." "The Kelantan government welcomed these people although they used to describe these magazines as anti-Islam," he said. He said the PAS government had become "hot-headed because they thought they got the support of the international community."

Recently, the Kelantan government barricaded roads leading to the site of a Malaysian-sponsored dam project to back its demand for compensation. It removed the barricades only after the federal government agreed to pay yearly compensation for 35 years.

Kuwait accused of abusive treatment

The Washington-based human rights group Middle East Watch released a report in mid-August on the widespread abuse of foreign women servants by Kuwaitis which goes unpunished, almost a year after *EIR* had exposed such abuses.

According to the report, "A pervasive pattern of rape, assault, and mistreatment of Asian maids takes place largely with impunity. . . . Almost without exception, the women interviewed spoke of non-payment of salary, passport deprivation, and near-total confinement in their employers' home. . . . All abuses are illegal under Kuwaiti law, but have gone largely unattended to by the government."

Meanwhile, joint U.S.-Kuwaiti military exercises, which held their biggest maneuver near the Iraqi border on Aug. 11, "could have as much to do with instability inside the Kuwaiti royal family as with [Iraqi Presi-

dent] Saddam Hussein," a London source said. "In recent weeks, major scandals have suddenly erupted over the management of the Kuwaiti foreign investment holding KIO, controlled by the al-Sabah royal family. There are hints this might be part of a major internal power struggle aimed at the dictatorial grip of the al-Sabahs in Kuwait. Perhaps . . . Bush sent in U.S. troops to prop up the al-Sabah and with it likely a considerable flow of funds into Washington pet projects."

China takes political risk in opening Tibet

In keeping with forging a new "Silk Road" across Asia, China has reportedly decided to open Tibet completely to the outside world. The region's Communist Party committee and government decided on July 14 to turn "from a closed or semi-closed economy to active participation in domestic and internal commerce," the Aug. 3 *Tibet Daily* reported.

The government will offer foreign investment opportunities, direct air links with Beijing, Kathmandu, and Hong Kong, and go all-out in promoting tourism.

Tibetan exiles consider the move a cover for bringing even more Chinese into Tibet, AFP reported. A *Tibet Daily* editorial said that the move will be to "speed up Tibet's economic development, and . . . strengthen the unity of the nationalities"—meaning that if it can provide a faster-rising living standard to the population, it might weaken Tibet's Buddhist independence movement. The decision is a risky one.

Armenia seeks CIS aid in 'undeclared war'

Azerbaijan has launched an "undeclared war" against Armenia, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian charged on Aug. 9, in response to two reported attacks by Azerbaijani forces on Armenian territory. Armenia has appealed to the other nations of the Community of Independent States (CIS) to fulfill their "collective security responsibility" mandate and come to the aid of Armenia.

In one attack, the Azeris reportedly used

Briefly

Russian SU-25 bombers against the region of Goris in southeastern Armenia. The Azeri attacks follow the breakdown of multilateral peace talks on the Armenian-inhabited enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan that had been taking place in Rome.

Armenian chargé d'affaires in London Prof. Armin Sarkissian told BBC Aug. 10 that Azeri forces have "occupied territory in Armenia." Azerbaijan now controls 40 square kilometers of Armenian territory in northern Armenia.

The escalating crisis is producing dramatic political changes. The government of Nagorno-Karabakh resigned Aug. 12, with the outgoing regime recommending the introduction of martial law and the creation of a new defense council to rule, Radio Moscow reported. Also, high-level Russian-Armenian diplomatic contacts on increasing cooperation in a number of fields are reported. In Armenia, a new defense minister, the first who has combat experience, has been appointed.

Prisoners increasing in Russian gulags

Yelena Bonner, the widow of Andrei Sakharov and a well-known human rights activist, Amnesty International, and a political party called the Economic Freedom Party charged in a press conference in Moscow Aug. 12 that Russia's gulags are still there and the number of prisoners is increasing.

Gennady Zhavoronkov, editor of the newspaper *Moscow News*, who sponsored a fact-finding tour to the gulags, said that a conservative estimate would be that there are 40,000 prisoners in the gulags, but there are probably actually 100,000 or more. The prisoners work 12-16 hours a day cutting timber for domestic and foreign use. He said that three new camps have been opened up in the Moscow area.

Zhavoronkov stressed that many of the prisoners were in an Orwellian situation, i.e., the crimes for which they had been convicted under communism were no longer crimes in Russia, but that a general amnesty mainly for political prisoners had not been applied to them because they were considered "economic criminals."

One of the firms benefitting from this ongoing slave-labor operation is Palm International, which is based in Siberia and California. Palm's press releases have invited Americans to invest in a sure thing in the Soviet Union—the lumber industry, which Zhavoronkov stressed has always been primarily worked by slave labor.

Iraq: Egypt hurting Non-Aligned Movement

Iraq has accused Egypt of harming the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and of attempting to put the 104 member states and their resources at the mercy of the United States. The charges come as signs of a split in NAM are appearing.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa has suggested that NAM should become part of the Group of 77 developing countries, claiming NAM is no longer is needed.

"It is an American proposal, whose objective is to give it unrivaled control over . . . the potential and resources of the developing countries," *al-Thawra*, organ of Iraq's ruling Baath Party, said in early August. "It is a suspect proposal aimed at transforming NAM into a mere economic group of backward and poor countries who will be helpless in a world economic order which is characterized by economic disparity," it added. "Depriving the movement of its political nature would not only weaken the movement . . . but would also eliminate its historic role and divert it from its vital path." *Al-Thawra* praised Indonesia, which will host the NAM summit in Jakarta from Sept. 1-6, for "rejecting the Egyptian proposal" and urged other members to condemn "these subversive attempts."

The Balkan crisis is causing increasing problems for the NAM. The Malaysian government severed diplomatic links with Yugoslavia on Aug. 12. Indonesia has taken up much of the slack in recent months for directing NAM, which was supposed to fall to the former Yugoslavia.

On Aug. 12, Indian Foreign Affairs Minister Eduardo Faleiro said that Serbia and Croatia had applied for observer status at the summit and that he expected a similar application from Bosnia.

● **FOOD IMPORTS** to Iraq from Jordan, its main lifeline to the outside world, have been cut in half, Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh said Aug. 11. Saleh added that no trucks had reached northern Iraq from Turkey for 20 days because of a conflict between Iraqi Kurds and Turkish Kurds.

● **CHINESE** Prime Minister Li Peng met with Kazakhstan Foreign Minister T.S. Suleimenov in Beijing Aug. 8, *China Daily* reported. Li has been invited to visit Kazakhstan by President Nazarbayev, and Suleimenov said that there is potential for "much better relations" between the two countries. Li cited the recent opening of the Chinese-Kazakh rail line earlier this year for its positive role in bilateral relations.

● **'IS THE WEST** procrastinating, so that the hidden agenda of the Serbs can be achieved?" Bosnian representative in London Paul Trvtkovic asked in an interview with BBC Aug. 10. He questioned the purpose of military protection for humanitarian convoys, saying all this would do would be to "feed people in their abominable state."

● **A U.N. BAN** on the use, manufacture, and possession of chemical weaponry is ready for approval, German Ambassador Adolf von Wagner, the chairman of the negotiations, said Aug. 10. The treaty marks a new milestone in the effort to impose technological apartheid.

● **ABU ABBAS**, who organized the *Achille Lauro* hijacking and a failed Palestinian Liberation Front raid on Israeli beaches which led the United States to suspend dialogue with the PLO in June 1990, was detained by Iraq on Aug. 8, Reuters reported, based upon a statement from the PLF.

● **THE ISLAND** of Capri wants the British Museum to return the altar of Tiberius, which the British Army seized in 1806, Reuters reported Aug. 13. The altar was dedicated to the goddess Cybele.