

International News

Portugal wants U.N. trusteeship in Angola

More than 1,000 people have been killed in battles between UNITA rebels and government forces around the Angolan coastal city of Benguela, state radio reported on Jan. 6. The broadcast, monitored by Reuters, quoted a UNITA spokesman calling the situation "catastrophic."

Fighting was reported in three provinces around the city of Huambo, UNITA's headquarters. Diplomats say that the ruling MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) is trying to crush UNITA in major cities.

Portuguese Foreign Minister José Manuel Durão Barroso, one of the architects of the failed U.N. peace accord, insisted on Jan. 6 that the United Nations must add to the peacekeeping forces in the country. The U.N. has recently threatened not to renew the mandate of its forces in Angola as of the end of January, unless the fighting stops. "It would be a signal of lack of interest by the international community; a signal that the United Nations was abandoning Angola," he said.

As in other African countries, the idea of a U.N. trusteeship is a transition back to colonial rule. That Angola has significant oil reserves, is not being overlooked.

Phnom Penh warns of Khmer Rouge genocide

Warning of a second Khmer Rouge genocide, the government in Phnom Penh, Cambodia insisted on Jan. 5 that the Khmer Rouge must either be forced to join the peace process or face expulsion as outlaws. The government statement asks "the co-chairman of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia and the U.N. secretary general to closely watch this dangerous situation and to take appropriate and necessary actions before it is too late."

Prime Minister Hun Sen accused the U.N. Transitional Authority of "lacking courage." He told a news conference: "The

fact that one Khmer Rouge soldier with one rifle could stop the Special Representative (Yasushi Akashi) and the commander in chief (Lieutenant General John Sanderson) from going into the Khmer Rouge zone had a very strong psychological impact on the implementation of the agreement."

Thai Army leaders are fearful that Cambodian fighting will spill over into their country, the Bangkok daily *The Nation* reported the first week in January. Thai intelligence sources say that the current battles between Phnom Penh and the Khmer Rouge are still limited to the northern and north-eastern areas, but that if the fighting intensifies, it could reach the Thai border.

The sources said the Khmer Rouge now control almost all of the western strip of Cambodia, and have penetrated deeper into other zones previously controlled by the Hun Sen government.

A western military observer quoted by *The Nation* conceded that, despite the presence of the U.N. peacekeepers, the Khmer Rouge had gained considerable ground. Thai army officials say the Army has drawn up contingency plans for evacuation of Thais working under U.N. flag in Cambodia.

Schiller Institute holds Moscow seminar

Twenty young scientists, students, and representatives of various democratic movements took part in a Schiller Institute seminar in Moscow Jan. 2-3.

Dr. Victor Petrenko spoke on "the significance of Dmitri Mendeleev for reform in Russia today." He dealt chiefly with the great 19th-century chemist's contributions to education and to the industrial development of Russia.

Michael Liebig of the Schiller Institute in Germany contrasted the worldview of Adam Smith with the philosophy of Gottfried Leibniz and Lyndon LaRouche: man as *imago viva Dei*, or God's helper in the continuing process of creation.

Karl-Michael Vitt, also of the German

Schiller Institute, spoke on "classical music as science."

Birgit Vitt discussed Friedrich Schiller's *The Legislation of Lycurgus and Solon*, and it emerged why precisely this essay is missing from a Stalin-era edition of the collected works of Schiller.

Gabriele Liebig, editor-in-chief of the German newspaper *Neue Solidarität*, spoke on "the power of ideas, or the practical application of Platonic ideas to the economic and social reform of Russian society."

Finally, Vasyl Kolomatsky gave a brief outline of Russian literature.

Helmut Schmidt takes television to task

Television is largely to blame for the conceptual paralysis and lack of vision of politicians these days, former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said in an interview published in the Jan. 12 French daily *Le Monde*.

After complaining that the Group of Seven annual summits have been perverted into media extravaganzas, although they were originally intended by himself and former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing to be serious moments of deliberation by seven world leaders, Schmidt pointed to the "importance assumed by television" as one factor for why politicians can no longer think. "America is ahead of Europe in this regard, but Europe is following the U.S. People watch television more than three hours per day, on average, and are reading less and less. We have moved from a society of reading to a society of spectating. The move from books and newspapers to television leads to giving primary importance to the presentation of events at the expense of analyzing them, and to the short-term at the expense of the long-term."

Said Schmidt: "I could cite to you long lists of politicians of all countries for whom the entire thought-process is summed up in 90 seconds, the time to be able to put it forward in front of the cameras, and for whom politics limits itself to a series of regu-

Briefly

lar appearances on the screens. The danger is that of the primacy of appearance in everything, which the demagogues of all types can take advantage of."

Guatemalan President blasts U.S. betrayal

Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano Elias charged in an interview published in the Mexican magazine *Este País* the first week in January, that the Bush administration's policy toward Guatemala had been a disaster. "We would have wanted the U.S. to give us their support and understanding," he said. Instead, Washington dug up human rights cases dating from before Serrano's administration and "used them to push its agenda."

"Thirty days before I was sworn in as President," he said, "they punished Guatemala by suspending all military assistance and setting up a confrontation, when they didn't even know what my intentions were." U.S. officials said the sanctions were intended to help him. "If this is the way they help, I would rather they forget me."

Although the URNG guerrillas have been largely ineffective militarily, the international sanctions and propaganda against the Guatemalan government, which now includes Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú, are forcing the government to accept their terms at the U.N.-mediated negotiations in Mexico. "The ball is in the court of the insurgents, and they haven't returned a single one," said Serrano. "They are waiting for some extraordinary event to break off talks. That's why they have attempted to assassinate me and . . . carried out a number of atrocities . . . to force the government to break off the talks." But Serrano said he will sign an accord whenever the URNG accepts the U.N.'s proposals.

Slavic Orthodox bloc seen emerging in Europe

The Balkan wars could split Europe along the lines of pro-Moscow Orthodox Christianity against northern and central Europe-

an Catholicism and Protestantism, the *Daily Telegraph* of London commented on Jan. 6. The article said that a "Moscow-led Orthodox bloc in southeastern Europe" is now a distinct possibility.

The London *Times* on the same day profiled the "developing relationship" between the two Orthodox Slavic countries of Russia and Serbia. This article noted that in Serbia, while the Orthodox Church hierarchy has tended to ally itself with the opposition to communist dictator Slobodan Milosevic, the local-level clergy have been enthusiastic backers of the war.

From Russia, there are reports that two volunteer brigades are in training outside Moscow, being prepared for the conflict in Bosnia. Russian nationalist parliamentarian Yuri Belyayev told Russian Radio that what motivates his support for Serbia, is less the pan-Slavic ties of the two countries, and more the bonds of Orthodoxy.

The *Times* commented that such trends are reminiscent of the 19th-century relationship between Russia and Serbia.

Sudanese opposition regroups in London

A new anti-Sudanese government alliance will be formed this month in London, the *Jordan Times* reports. It will be comprised of the Umma Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, and the Communist Party.

Al Sherif Sein Al Abideen Al Hindy, a deputy prime minister and foreign minister in the government of Sdek Al Mahdi until its overthrow in 1989, is quoted as saying, "We have united hands and come together to change the government and replace it by a popular uprising, and we hope friendly nationalists in the Army will join us." Hindy claims that the front has members operating in Sudan, Egypt, and London.

The timing of this announcement coincides with the U.S. military intervention in Somalia and the targeting of the Sudanese and Egyptian governments by the United States. Egypt has doubled (to 20) the number of its border posts along its disputed border with Sudan.

● **AN ALGERIAN** military tribunal has sentenced 19 Islamic fundamentalists to death for "crimes against state security." The verdict followed a mass trial of 79 men, most of them said to be military officers. Four were given life sentences and 46 given sentences ranging from 10 months to 10 years. Ten were released. The move is part of a crack-down on the banned Islamic Salvation Front.

● **GEORGIAN** President Eduard Shevardnadze will visit Iran on Jan. 19 at the invitation of Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Shevardnadze will be leading a delegation that will sign an agreement on mutual economic cooperation and friendship.

● **BORIS YELTSIN** and Aleksandr Rutskoy attended Orthodox Christmas prayers offered by Patriarch Aleksii II, at the Moscow Church of the Epiphany on Jan. 7. Aleksii warned against "temptations" posed to the Russian people by western values. All over Russia, the churches were reportedly filled with people, indicating the increasing role of the Orthodox religion in Russian society.

● **BRITISH** Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd made a point of reiterating British claims to the Malvinas Islands, and set a number of conditions for Argentina to accept, before any visit to London by Argentine President Carlos Menem could be contemplated. Hurd was speaking in Argentina, the first visit by a high-level British official since the 1982 Malvinas War.

● **RUSSIAN** chauvinists are establishing close ties with the European "New Right" around French gnostic Alain de Benoist, the monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique* reveals. Their publications, such as the new journal *Elementy*, are promoting a "Russian imperial" assertion; support for Serbia; the emergence of a "Third Rome"; denial of the Hitler holocaust; and rationalization of fascist ideologies.