

International Intelligence

Hit attempt on Pakistan's Sharif traced to London

The bomb attack against Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Jan. 3—which blew up a bridge over which he was to cross—has been linked by investigators to dissidents based in London, according to Indian press reports cited by the *London Observer*. A report by Pakistan's civilian security service says the attack was instigated by some members of the Mohajir Qaum Movement (MQM), whose leader Altaf Hussain has been in exile in Britain since 1992, said the *Observer*.

The report comes amid growing concern over the number of organizations with terrorist links that are using London as a base, say the Indian press. The Yemeni extremists who kidnapped, then killed, killed several British and Australian tourists, are alleged to have strong connections with a London-based Islamist extremist. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria have accused London in the past of being a safe haven for Islamic extremists and for opposition members under arrest warrants or wanted by authorities in those countries, the Indian press add.

British Home Secretary Jack Straw has promised to use last year's anti-terrorist legislation to crack down on such groups.

Israel announces it will hold 'mock' nuclear tests

The Israeli Geophysical Institute announced that it will conduct "mock" underground nuclear blasts near the Dead Sea in April, according to the daily *Haaretz* on Jan. 13. It claims the tests will involve three charges of TNT, 500 kilograms, 2 tons, and 5 tons. The Geophysical Institute claims the test is part of a project on "improving monitoring of the application" of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty—which is strange since Israel is not a signatory to the treaty. It is not clear whether these "mock" nuclear tests will be observed by foreigners to verify whether they are truly "mock."

According to the same issue of *Haaretz*, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai un-

veiled a warroom simulator for a "missile vs. missile war." Developed under the Defense Ministry's "Strategic Defense Project" and built by Tadiran Systems, the simulator is expected to deal with "existential" threats that Israel will face in the next five to ten years, said Mordechai. He also said that the Arrow anti-missile missile system is not a sufficient deterrent. He said that Israel must develop an offensive capability against enemy launchers.

India, France expand defense cooperation

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes and three vice-chiefs of the Indian Armed Forces visited France from Jan. 11-14, in Fernandes's first trip abroad as defense chief. There, Fernandes made a point of praising France for being "very supportive of India's position in the nuclear field," unlike the other permanent members of the UN Security Council, all five of which are nuclear powers.

A joint statement issued on Jan. 14 by Fernandes and French Defense Minister Alain Richard announced that cooperation between the armed forces would be expanded to include joint exercises, training, and bilateral exchanges. They agreed that cooperation in defense was a "vital element" of overall bilateral relations, and that such cooperation should cover "strategic dialogue and defense research and production." It was reported that a second meeting of the newly created Indo-French High Committee on Defense Cooperation, the institutional hub of the new relationship, would be held in India later in 1999.

By contrast, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Einhorn dismissed India's express intent to adhere to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) on Jan. 12. Speaking to the seventh Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference in Washington, Einhorn, who is Clinton's key adviser on disarmament policy, said that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's pledge at the UN General Assembly was only an expression of intent to adhere to the treaty by autumn of this year, but does not

constitute a commitment. Einhorn emphasized that the United States "had no other assurances from India on the CTBT." He dismissed Vajpayee's speech as merely "the authoritative articulation of the Indian position."

Jiang Zemin says social stability is paramount

Chinese President Jiang Zemin said that social stability is the paramount task for China in 1999, during a speech at a national conference on China's legal and political situation given in Beijing on Dec. 24. The Jan. 13 issue of *China Daily* reported Jiang as saying that if certain social and economic problems are not tackled without delay, the overall stability of the country could be threatened. He listed the economic situation of a number of state-owned industries, the growing army of laid-off workers, the dwindling incomes of farmers in some rural areas, and a rising crime rate in some areas, as key problems.

Jiang said that 1999 will be an important year, as the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic.

Today's world is by no means peaceful, Jiang warned, with worldwide power politics looming large. The trend toward economic globalization is a grave challenge to China, he said, in protecting itself in terms of economic security.

Jiang called for political and ideological education of the population, to "enhance their awareness and capability to fight against the infiltration by both domestic and foreign hostile forces. Any factors that could jeopardize our stability must be annihilated in the early stages.

"This policy has been proved by our past experiences and is very important," Jiang Zemin said.

Sudan hosts OAU ministers meeting on refugees

Sudan hosted the ministerial level conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on Dec. 13-15, to address the vast problem of refugees, returnees, and dis-

'EUROLAND' European Commission members are under investigation for corruption and misuse of EC funds for personal purposes. Those Commissioners are Edith Cresson (France), Martin Bangemann (Germany), and EC President Jacques Santer (Luxembourg). A censure vote in the European Parliament in Strasbourg failed on Jan. 14.

MOSHE ARENS, a member of the Likud and former Israeli Defense and Foreign Minister, announced on Jan. 12 that he will challenge Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the party nomination as Prime Minister candidate in May's elections. Likud primaries were scheduled for Jan. 25, but Netanyahu (perhaps in keeping with his habit of trying to cancel the Oslo Accords) is trying to have the primaries cancelled.

INDONESIA'S military was targeted again for destabilization, after five more soldiers were arrested in connection with the Jan. 9 murder of alleged separatist rebels who were in military custody in Aceh, according to Lilawangra Military Commander Col. Johnny Wahab. The soldiers had raided Kandang village looking for separatist leader Ahmad Kandang. Wahab said his troops had committed an evil and savage act. Britain's Amnesty International said that the killings were "one more grim reminder" of the unchecked power of the military in Indonesia.

ROYAL ULSTER Constabulary chief Ronnie Flanagan, who was knighted last year, charged on Jan. 15 that "dissident" Irish groups are planning terrorist outrages throughout Northern Ireland. The "dissidents" are British-manipulated groups with more radical rhetoric than the Sinn Fein and the regular Irish Republican Army.

MALAYSIANS celebrated the end of Ramadan with an "open house" at the residence of Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad. Some 40,000 citizens lined up to express their support for Mahathir.

placed persons in Africa. Khartoum's decision to host the important meeting came "in light of Sudan's vast experiences on refugees as one of the first countries in Africa to receive and host large numbers of refugees since the early '60s," according to a press release from the government, recently received by *EIR*. It noted that there were currently "1.1 million refugees from some of its neighbors" inside Sudan, which "has a long history of hospitality toward any person who sought refuge in its territories."

The final declaration of the meeting, which was also attended by the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), expresses the gravest concern over the increase in displaced persons and refugees, and appeals to international bodies to "generously contribute" to alleviate the problem. It urges all member-states to guarantee the security of humanitarian personnel and to "request organizations and aid workers to abide by the national laws and regulations of the countries where they operate." Most importantly, conferees "urge Member States and all other actors, in consultation with the OAU and UNHCR, to separate armed elements from civilian refugee population to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements."

Peres asks for negotiated Palestinian state

Speaking before 20 members of the Palestinian legislature, former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres (Labor) called for the Palestinians to forge an independent state through negotiations. "It is our deep hope that the Palestinians will gain independence. It's in our common interest to see a Palestinian state in place as a result of negotiations—a state that lives democratically and flourishes economically." He received a standing ovation. U.S. Rep. Thomas Lantos (D-Calif.) also made a plea for the Palestinians not to unilaterally declare a state on May 4. "My plea to my Palestinian friends is just a simple plea. Don't do anything on May 4 because all

hell will break loose and your achievements will go down the drain."

Also present at Peres's speech were some board members of the Peres Center for Peace who were to attend a meeting in Tel Aviv of that organization's board. They include former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov, retired South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and former South African President F.W. de Klerk. Both Henry Kissinger and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa were also on hand at the center's event, held in Tel Aviv.

Red Cross staff leave Sierra Leone war zone

According to a Jan. 15 report by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the UN, the fragile security situation in Sierra Leone has broken down since Jan. 8, wreaking unspeakable havoc on the civilian population.

Troops from the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in December began to move from the north towards Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, in the west. In the first week of January, AFRC and RUF entered Freetown itself. Since then, there has been heavy fighting in the capital, as the forces of the Economic Community Military Observer Group (Ecomog), which is supporting the democratically elected government of President Tejan Kabbak, has tried to drive the rebels out.

Upon request from the government, which no longer could guarantee their safety, the staff of ICRC left Sierra Leone on Jan. 13. ICRC reports that since Jan. 4, there has been incessant fire from both light and heavy weapons from the ground and from the air into Freetown. Many parts of the city have been pillaged and most civilians have been trapped in their homes by the fighting, unable to get to food and water, to assist the wounded, or to bury the dead lying in the streets. On Jan. 8, the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity reiterated the OAU's support for President Tejan Kabbak and appealed "to the international community to give all assistance possible to the Sierra Leonean people."