

International Intelligence

Hu Jintao meets with Indian Congress Party

China's Vice President Hu Jintao called for the restoration and promotion of the "sound development" of Sino-Indian relations, during talks with a delegation from the All Indian National Congress in Beijing on April 7. The Congress Party delegation was led by national committee member Natwar Singh. Hu said that Sino-Indian relations have remained on the development track during the past decade due to concerted efforts by the people and the leaders of both countries, but the process has been affected by unnecessary disturbances. "A historic and long-term perspective should be adopted," Hu said, according to *China Daily*.

Natwar Singh said that his party attaches great importance to relations with the Communist Party of China and other Sino-Indian ties. He hopes India and China can build a framework for bilateral ties geared to the new century. He also expressed his hopes that China and India's joint efforts will contribute to the creation of a new international political and economic order.

Hu Jintao commended the Congress Party's efforts to maintain and promote bilateral ties. The Congress Party and Communist Party of China, which established ties in 1985, have conducted frequent high-level exchanges. The visits have contributed to the smooth development of bilateral ties, Hu said.

Iraqi National Congress 'leaderless group' meets

The meeting of the Iraqi National Congress executive council began in Windsor, southwest of London, on April 7. In attendance were the Kurdish Patriotic Union (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which control northern Iraq. The meeting was called to "discuss renewing and reinvigorating the struggle against Saddam Hussein's regime in preparation for the plenary session of the INC national assembly," the INC said, which also claimed to have the support of the British and U.S. governments.

Reportedly, the Supreme Council for the

Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the only group with any significant numbers did not attend. Moreover, the KDP still maintains good relations with Baghdad, while Talal Jabalani, head of the PUK, has refused to participate in the U.S. "Iraqi Contra" opposition plan. A wire from the Iranian news agency IRNA noted that the opposition groups have no common ground and recognize no common leadership.

The INC national assembly ended with a plea for arms to be delivered, under the U.S. Iraq Liberation Act (ILA). Reuters quoted an unnamed "U.S. official" on April 10 about various ways that Saddam Hussein's regime could end: "It could be a coup from inside . . . a lone assassin . . . [or it could] easily be a family feud; the family is at each others' throats now."

Meanwhile, Derek Fatchett, one of key British Foreign Office officials running the UNSCOM-sanctions-Iraqi opposition triangle, sent a letter to the INC telling them that Her Majesty's government could *never* support the overthrow of a head of state, as specified in the ILA. Fatchett's letter leaves the U.S. "Iraqi Contra" policy looking pretty stupid.

Russians on Mideast diplomatic offensive

Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov "is a master of Near East diplomacy," and is coordinating a Russian diplomatic offensive in the region, a leading Russian Orientalist told *EIR* on April 9. Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat was recently in Moscow, and in mid-April Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon will be in Moscow, for the third time in a month. The Russians believe that they can "strike a deal," whereby an "aggressive conservative" like Defense Minister Ariel Sharon would agree to some kind of "independent Palestinian state. . . . This would strengthen Arafat, and show we are doing something for the Muslims, at a time when our standing with the Muslims has gone down because of our support for Serbia," he said.

The Russian efforts are "especially important before the Israeli elections on May 17," he noted, adding that Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to "get closer to Russia," in order to curry the vote of Russian Israelis.

At the same time that Sharon was in Moscow, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad was scheduled for an official visit. Assad is also eager to secure Russian assistance in arranging the succession of his son, since the ailing President won't be able to rule much longer.

Fretilin leader ends cease-fire in E. Timor

Xanana Gusmao, the leader of the Timor National Liberation Front (Fretilin), on April 5 announced the end of the cease-fire and peace talks with the Indonesian government, and authorized the "guerrillas to undertake all necessary action in defense of the population against the unprovoked and murderous attacks of armed civilians. . . . I also authorize the population to undertake a general popular insurrection against the armed militia groups." Gusmao, who has been under house arrest in Jakarta, made the announcement through his attorney, Johnson Panjaitan, following a clash that same day between pro- and anti-independence groups in East Timor, in which several people were reportedly killed.

Panjaitan said that the call for a new insurrection would be revoked if the UN intervened, and if anti-independence militias with links to elements of the Indonesian military ended their attacks. President B.J. Habibie's senior foreign policy adviser, Dewi Fortuna Anwar, pointed out that the violence is coming from both sides.

Clashes have increased since the January announcement of a vote on expanded autonomy for the province. But this latest, most violent clash, came in the middle of talks sponsored by East Timor's two Catholic Bishops, held separately with the leaders of pro-integrationist and pro-independence groups. A major meeting of both sides was set for the end of April to lay the groundwork for the upcoming vote. The details on Jakarta's extended autonomy proposal for East Timor are also due to be finalized at the UN in April, in talks between the former colonial power Portugal and Indonesia.