

International Intelligence

Separatists attack Lagos governor in Nigeria

Lagos State Gov. Bola Ahmed Tinubu barely escaped injury or death on Dec. 12, when his convoy was ambushed and his official car was riddled with bullets at 12:30 a.m., a short distance from his official residence. The attackers, from the Yoruba tribal separatist group Oodua People's Congress (OPC), had barricaded the route of the governor's convoy with five buses.

The attack was launched less than 24 hours after Shomolu Council Vice Chairman Aderemi Badejo and his son were shot dead by unidentified assailants. After Badejo's murder, Governor Tinubu was reportedly "shaken." He had summoned a security meeting on Dec. 12 to discuss the renewed threat from heightened activities of militant groups.

A recent interview with an OPC leader reveals that it is an offshoot of the "Campaign for Democracy" and the National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco), intertwining organizations known to get their financing from London.

Since the election of President Olusegun Obasanjo, himself a Yoruba, there has been a rise in ethnic militant clashes in both Lagos State and the Niger Delta.

Pope forced to postpone Jubilee visit to Iraq

The Vatican announced on Dec. 11 that Pope John Paul II has been forced to postpone, but not cancel, his visit to Iraq, according to the Italian Catholic daily *Avvenire*. In making the announcement, Dr. Joaquín Navarro-Valls, head of the Holy See Press Office, explained that "Iraqi authorities informed us that the abnormal conditions in which the country finds itself because of the embargo and the no-fly zone, as well as the situation in the region, do not allow the adequate organization for a visit of the Holy Father to Ur of the Chaldeans, in Iraq," which was initially intended as the first stop of the Pope's Jubilee Year tour to Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Israel, and Greece.

Avvenire emphasized that "the first op-

position voices" culminated "with the Aug. 27 statement of U.S. State Department spokesman James Foley, who expressed Washington's concerns over possible 'political manipulations' of the Pope's trip by the Iraqi government." Later, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright tried to blame the postponement on the Iraqis, because of a "manifesto" from a group of Muslim intellectuals.

Speaking from Baghdad on Dec. 12, Chaldean Church Patriarch Raphael Bidawid, who had earlier confirmed the visit and the creation of a UN air corridor within the no-fly zone, told Fifes news agency: "We are very saddened by this latest delay in the visit, but, here in Iraq, conditions change every day. Despite of this, the Holy Father's visit is only postponed; the Jubilee Year is long and we are just at the beginning of the millennium."

Avvenire also reported on "new U.S. and British fighter raids in southern Iraq in early December, which . . . also struck civilian targets," and said that the "ten-year war against Iraq" had increased "infant mortality to Third World levels."

Miklosko book devotes chapter to LaRouche

On Dec. 12, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the fall of communism in former Czechoslovakia, Jozef Miklosko, who was the Deputy Prime Minister in the country's first free government, presented his book *Ako Sme Boli Slobodni (Since We Became Free)*. At the book's presentation in Bratislava, Slovakia, attended by 500 guests, Miklosko was introduced by Slovakian Justice Minister and chairman of the Christian Democratic Party Jan Carnogursky, and by Petr Miller, who had been Social Affairs Minister in the first post-1989 Czechoslovakia. The audience included other former Cabinet ministers, leaders of scientific and cultural academies and foundations, and a delegation from the Schiller Institute in Germany. Miklosko is president of the Schiller Foundation in Slovakia.

Within the 684-page book, Miklosko devotes a 100-page chapter entitled "The American Sakharov," to Lyndon LaRouche, whom he visited in prison in 1993, as well

as to LaRouche's imprisoned co-thinkers Michael Billington, Paul and Anita Gallagher, Laurence Hecht, and Donald Phau (the latter two are free on parole). The book contains much detail of Miklosko's wide-ranging discussions with LaRouche, and his wife, Schiller Institute Chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

The author expands on the Schiller Foundation's activities within Slovakia, as well as on the institute's other international activities in which he took part, including the efforts to stop the British plans for genocide in the Balkans, and his visit to the Philippines.

Tory maverick blasts NATO war in Balkans

British Conservative maverick Lord Robert Skidelsky wrote a stinging commentary on "NATO's Deadly Legacy from Kosovo," in the Dec. 14 issue of the London *Financial Times*. Skidelsky emphasized from the start, that NATO's war in Kosovo convinced the Russians to seek a military solution in Chechnya. He then cited the recent report released by the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), entitled "Human Rights in Kosovo." Lord Skidelsky continued: "The report establishes that it was only after OSCE observers left Kosovo on March 20, four days before the bombing started, that general and systematic violation of human rights began to occur."

The OSCE had reported: "Summary and arbitrary killing became a generalized phenomenon throughout Kosovo with the beginning of the NATO air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the night of March 24-25." Skidelsky said that the failure of the West to use diplomacy, with the purpose of expanding the role of the OSCE monitors or other measures, and its decision to choose war, has "made the world a much more dangerous place. . . . The damage to the postwar system can already be seen in the start of global rearmament, and the new strategic doctrines of Russia, India, and China. The 'cold peace' predicted by Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, has already arrived."

He said that NATO should admit its error

FRANJO TUDJMAN, Croatia's longtime President, died on Dec. 10, after a long battle with cancer. His death opens the way for a struggle for power inside his ruling Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) party, and for control of the country. Elections are mandated within 60 days, although parliamentary elections had already been scheduled for Jan. 3.

WTO HEADQUARTERS in Geneva had its electricity cut by saboteurs on Dec. 3, severing the headquarters link with the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle, where well-organized rioters, led by the eco-terrorist Earth First! attempted to sabotage serious opposition by labor and others to the free-trade/globalization fest.

TONY BLAIR has intervened to prevent the return to Greece of the Parthenon sculptures, known as the "Elgin Marbles" (after their thief, Lord Elgin), according to the Dec. 13 London *Guardian*. Athens had hoped to have them returned in time for the Olympic games, which will be held in Greece in 2004. The Greek government is building a new museum where they would be exhibited.

A DUTCH highschool student shot and wounded three fellow students and a teacher at a school in the southern city of Veghel, according to wire services on Dec. 7. Only 24 hours earlier, a similar school shooting occurred in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma.

JAPAN plans to deploy 96,000 troops on New Year's Day to handle incidents related to Y2K problems, including special units to tackle possible nuclear accidents, a Defense Agency spokesman told Agence France Presse on Dec. 7. The units will remain deployed until Jan. 4, when firms return to normal business routine. In addition, the Defense Agency would put on stand-by 7 destroyers and 130 fighters and other warplanes "in order to collect information," he stated.

as the "essential ingredient of reconciliation" in the region. He also called for "restitution for damage over the Balkan area," and for a "Marshall Plan aid package." Skidelsky concluded: "Unless we are willing to come clean on Kosovo, Russia will not listen to us on Chechnya, or anything much else."

Chávez's 'Constitution' will destroy Venezuela

On the eve of the Dec. 15 referendum on President Hugo Chávez's proposed Constitution, Venezuela is so sharply polarized, that the preconditions for class warfare are being laid. Early returns showed the referendum winning with a heavy majority, but voter turnout of only 45%. The proposed Constitution, drafted by a National Assembly of Jacobin *enragés*, has frightened and angered a large percentage of the middle class, including Catholic Church leaders, professionals, and simply, thinking people who had thrown their support to Chávez's Presidential campaign under the delusion that he would bring about needed change.

These forces have now rallied around the campaign for a "No!" vote, some denouncing the Constitution as an attempt to set up a dictatorship.

Chávez has proclaimed that if Christ were alive, he would vote "Yes!" On Dec. 12, he raved: "God is with the 'Yes' vote, because the voice of the People is the voice of God, and the People are with the 'Yes.'"

Co-thinkers of Lyndon LaRouche, the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA), have taken a leading role in the opposition, with a statement "No to the Disintegration of Venezuela!" published in the Dec. 14 issue of *El Globo*. The statement cuts through the misconceptions that this fight is between "neo-liberals" and "communists"—after all, George Soros and David Rockefeller back Chávez. The MSIA reminds readers that Venezuela's crisis is part of the global financial crisis, and that Chávez is the financial oligarchy's instrument to destroy Venezuela. The analysis of LaRouche, who is identified as a U.S. Democratic Party Presidential pre-candidate, and his organizing for a New Bretton Woods system, are detailed.

Strong opposition also comes from the head of the Catholic Bishops Conference, Msgr. Balthasar Porras. Speaking to Televen on Dec. 10, he said: "No one, much less a politician, can become a sort of ayatollah, a Grand Inquisitor, who has the last word in all things, human and divine, and in all situations." Chávez's language has created "fear in large parts of the population, including even among those who are with the President himself. People are afraid. Why? Because there is a confrontational climate." Porras warned that the country could split apart. The government is creating "hatreds, and a fissure. . . . How do they expect to come back after Dec. 15, and say: 'Well, and now we are all united?'"

Gen. Oviedo back in hiding in Paraguay

Gen. Lino Oviedo, a Paraguayan patriot, escaped his security guards in Argentina, and is now back in Paraguay in hiding. Oviedo was granted asylum in Argentina last March, following the assassination of Vice President Luis María Argana. The current Paraguayan government demanded that he be extradited and tried for Argana's murder, but Argentina's then-President Carlos Menem refused. It was known, however, that the new President, Fernando de la Rúa, who was sworn in on Dec. 10, intended to kick Oviedo out. On Dec. 9, Paraguayan Judge Jorge Bogarian issued an international arrest warrant for Oviedo, charging him with the murder of Argana. Paraguay's Army has been placed on alert, in anticipation of Oviedo's capture.

However, Oviedo gave an interview to the U.S. CBS network on Dec. 11, from "somewhere in Paraguay," and announced his plans to run for President. Oviedo said he planned to "peacefully claim the Presidency," to fight corruption and drug trafficking, and to make sure that "national elections are held." He added, "I am in national territory, with my dear compatriots, my brother peasants, with those who have been marginalized. . . . I will be working with them." Authorities and security forces in the capital, Asunción, have reportedly been thrown into a state of confusion over Oviedo's public emergence.