

# International Intelligence

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## ***Central Asia Leaders Confer on Security***

Four Central Asian Presidents and the head of Russia's Security Council met in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Aug. 21 to confer on their mutual security problems, especially the "Islamic" insurgencies which are being encouraged by the ruling Taliban movement in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan President Askar Akayev hosted the meeting, which included Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov, Tajikistan President Emomali Rakhmonov, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, and, representing Russia, Sergei Ivanov.

The group called for strengthening the Tajik-Afghan border, and asked Russia to sign an agreement reached in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in April aimed at eliminating international terrorism and security threats. "While there is war in Afghanistan, we can't guarantee security just in Central Asia. The source of conflict and rebel groups are people in Afghanistan," said President Karimov.

The Central Asian leaders, however, decided against launching preventive air strikes on suspected rebel training camps in Tajikistan. "There will be no strikes on foreign land, and we are not prepared to do that," Karimov told reporters.

One day earlier, President Akayev had reconnoitered Batken in the south, where the "bandits" (as the Islamic rebels are commonly called) had infiltrated over the border from Tajikistan.

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## ***Blair's Britain Blasted for 'Thuggish Behavior'***

A British journalist based in Hong Kong wrote of his impressions after returning home for a visit, in the Aug. 21 issue of the *International Herald Tribune*, with a very unflattering portrait of life under Prime Minister Tony Blair. The kind of "thuggish attitudes and behavior" in Britain "that in Germany or Austria would be condemned as signs of incipient fascism," wrote Philip Bowring, "are here regarded as mere boorishness."

"There has been a marked increase in viciousness in British, or at least English, public life," Bowring wrote. The recent "anti-pedophile" riots in Portsmouth, were "some of the worst mob violence and intimidation seen in recent years in western Europe," he said. "This mob action followed directly on an [anti-pedophile] campaign launched by a new editor of the *News of the World*," one of Rupert Murdoch's worst "sex and murder" publications.

The Blair government's response, to treat the paper's sensationalism as the *vox populi*, was "typical of an administration that more than any in living memory lacks principle or ideology, and is thus driven by perceptions of what it thinks is popular. . . . Tony Blair's presidential pretensions [sic], lack of principle, and petulant obsession with his image will eventually be his undoing at the hands of the electorate or even of his own party." The "pseudo radicals of the Blair era find it 'elitist'" to cover serious international events rather than murders, movie stars, or minor royals, Bowring wrote.

"The Portsmouth anti-pedophile riots have highlighted the erosion of the quality of institutions, including the media, Parliament, and the police, which made for a civilized society. Too easily, breakdown of public confidence in institutions leads to the creation of populist bogeymen and demands for simplistic, mob-approved, remedies. Elsewhere," concluded Bowring, "they call that fascism."

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## ***Mahathir and Chissano Host African Dialogue***

Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad co-sponsored the Southern African International Dialogue in Maputo, Mozambique on Aug. 20-22 to address how African nations can improve their economies and overcome poverty, by borrowing from the Malaysian concept of "smart partnership." Dr. Mahathir was the only non-African leader at the conference. Among the 400 participants were South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Sam Nu-

joma of Namibia, Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi of Mozambique, Vice President Justin Malewezi of Malawi, Prime Minister Barnabas Dhlamini of Swaziland, and Pakilitha Mosisili of Lesotho.

Mahathir, polemical as ever, told the Dialogue to junk the old globalization and liberalism paradigm of the Group of Eight ("a very exclusive club . . . we cannot even give our opinion"). Instead, he urged that national sovereignty, as a basis for self-determination, has been more relevant. Nation-building is not only the least costly way to confront national economic problems, he said, but it is equally about social justice and a conducive environment for the development of human dignity.

By contrast, he said, "From one international forum to another, the proponents of unbridled, supposedly 'unstoppable' forces of globalization and trade liberalization continue to sing their song of 'the ticket to a better life for everyone.' . . . I continue to look long and hard for evidence that this may in fact, be true. But all around, the arrows point in the opposite direction."

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## ***Russian Minister Flies To Iraq, Breaks Blockade***

A delegation of high-ranking Russians flew into Baghdad's Saddam International Airport on Aug. 19, the first foreign officials to set foot on the tarmac since 1991. The airport, closed for ten years, re-opened to international flights on Aug. 17. The delegation was led by Deputy Minister for Emergency Situations Ruslan Tsalikov. The event marks an important challenge to the UN sanctions regime against Iraq. Although nothing explicitly forbids civilian passenger flights to Baghdad, the UN Sanctions Committee has imposed the arbitrary practice of forcing any such flights to be authorized by the committee, as cargo flights are. But, the Russian plane did not ask permission to land from the UN Sanctions Committee. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, who had just returned from Moscow, said, "This flight reflects the higher level of relations between the two countries."

A group of French humanitarian aid or-

**JAPANESE** Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori arrived in Islamabad on Aug. 21, for talks with Pakistan's Chief Executive Gen. Pervez Musharraf about economic sanctions, nuclear non-proliferation, and Kashmir. International terrorism and the civil war in neighboring Afghanistan are also on the agenda. Mori was on a two-day visit to Pakistan following a day's stopover in Bangladesh. He continued on to India on Aug. 22.

**CROATIA'S** highest Catholic official, Archbishop of Zagreb Josip Bozanic, went on an ecumenical visit to Yugoslavia on Aug. 4-8. In Belgrade, he met Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Belgrade Catholic Archbishop France Perko, and the Apostolic Nuncio.

**CRACK COCAINE** has now invaded South Africa, according to the Aug. 13 *Washington Post*. The Sunday issue of the paper noted that, with an unemployment rate of more than 30% and one of the world's highest rates of HIV infection, the growing epidemic of crack cocaine addiction can be a powerful accelerator of the spread of AIDS.

**MORGAN TSVANGIRAI**, the defeated opposition Presidential candidate in Zimbabwe, got his recount . . . and lost more votes in his home district, than he was originally credited with. His Movement for Democratic Change had demanded a recount of 37 districts where it lost. Tsvangirai's district makes the second in which the MDC vote total has dropped after the recount.

**THE TAMIL TIGERS**, Sri Lanka's separatist terrorists, are threatening to wreck the Oct. 10 elections. Their objective, is to unseat President Chandrika Kumaratunga's People's Alliance party. During the 1999 election campaign, the Tamil Tigers made an attempt on her life. Violence from the Tigers will also keep voter turnout low in the Tamil-majority areas of the island-nation. In 1994, only 2.94% of the voters in these areas cast their ballots.

ganizations will now go ahead with its planned passenger flight into Saddam International, in late September. Coming on the heels of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's visit with President Saddam Hussein, and preceding that of Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, the Russian and French initiatives signal a possible shift on Iraq policy, since both are among the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council, with veto rights.

In Baghdad on Aug. 20, Tsalikov signed a memorandum of understanding between the Russian Ministry for Emergencies and Iraq's Interior Ministry on civil defense and prevention of disasters. The document envisages in particular, the establishment of a humanitarian mine-clearing center.

According to official Iraqi data, Iraq has about 450,000 unexploded American and British pieces of ordnance — mostly missiles and bombs — in its territory. Russian ministry specialists will assist the Iraqis in rendering them harmless.

## ***Muslim, Christian Youths Celebrate in Maluku***

One thousand Muslim and Christian students joined together to celebrate the 55th anniversary of Indonesia's independence on Aug. 17. The province has been wracked by sectarian violence between Christians and Muslims for years. The youths, ranging from elementary to high school age, held a two-hour dress rehearsal on Aug. 16, accompanied by the local Pattimura Military Command's marching band, during which they sang patriotic songs and songs of reconciliation. During the Aug. 17 ceremony, 34 students, both Muslim and Christian, led a prayer session, and the red and white national flag, emblazoned "Unity in Diversity," was raised.

The *Jakarta Post* reported that many people wept as they listened to the children sing; one observer remarked, "There is no parade, no carnival . . . only the remains of violence. We have lost our homes and our relatives, and yet this still continues." The independence celebration was held in Merdeka (Freedom) Park, in the provincial capital of Ambon. The park, which includes

a statue of national hero Thomas Matulesy (known as "Captain Pattimura"), is neutral territory between the warring camps, and is ringed by military compounds.

In 1999, no celebrations were held because of the fighting. Current estimates are that 3-4,000 people have died in fighting since January 1999, with tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, displaced.

## ***Indonesia's President Greets Arafat, Peres***

Indonesia's President Abdurrahman Wahid held separate meetings with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Minister for Regional Development Shimon Peres in an attempt to "break the ice and to begin a new negotiation" for peace between them. Wahid met Peres for breakfast in Jakarta on Aug. 14, but told a press conference at his office that he could not divulge the content of the meeting, only that he expected to meet with Arafat, who was arriving from Beijing later in the day. It turned out that Arafat did not arrive until Aug. 16, after stops in Japan and Malaysia.

Wahid commented on the failed Camp David talks in late July, that they had collapsed because "only one kind of sovereignty" was discussed between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Regarding Jerusalem, over which the talks had foundered, he said, "So, in my view, we would differentiate between administrative sovereignty, which will be in the hands of the Israelis, and political sovereignty, which will be decided by a committee of seven states," Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the UN, and the Palestinians.

Peres, the architect of the Oslo Peace Accords and former Prime Minister, proceeded on to visit China for two days. "I feel China is a very friendly country with a very profound understanding of events in the Middle East," he said in Beijing on Aug. 18. Referring to President Jiang Zemin's meeting a few days earlier with Arafat, Peres added, "I have great respect for President Jiang Zemin's call for patience." Jiang had advised Arafat to hold off on declaring a Palestinian state on the set date of Sept. 13.