

# International Intelligence

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## ***Thousands of Refugees Flee War in Guinea***

The UN High Command for Refugees began preparations on Jan. 2 for a new transit site in south-central Guinea for up to 60,000 refugees who have fled camps in the strife-ridden Gueckedou region. The border camps were inhabited by tens of thousands of refugees from neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone, but the region came under attack beginning in early December. Their fate is currently unknown, UNHCR claims. The agency earlier pulled out from this area after its office was burned.

However, on Jan. 3, in a major policy change, the UNHCR has decided to help Sierra Leonean refugees leave war-torn Guinea for their war-torn home in Sierra Leone.

The head of the UN peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone, Lt. Gen. Daniel Opande, flew to rebel-held areas, to urge them to withdraw from conflicts in Guinea and Liberia, and also discussed prospects for deploying peacekeepers in rebel-held areas of Sierra Leone, under the terms of the current cease-fire. One report quoted a UN spokesman as saying the terrorist Revolutionary United Front has agreed to open up three roads into its territory to help with the deployment.

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## ***Lockerbie Defense Puts Blame on Syria's PFLP-GC***

Closing statements were being made in mid-January, in the trial of two Libyans, charged with the Dec. 21, 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, which killed all 259 people on board the jet and 11 on the ground in Lockerbie, Scotland. The three-judge panel of Scottish judges is expected to rule late in the month. In his closing argument on Jan. 12, defense attorney William Taylor tore holes in the prosecution case, and presented an alternative account of the bombing, in which the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) carried out the bombing of the New York-bound flight, which originated in

Frankfurt, Germany.

Taylor presented evidence that a plane from Damascus had arrived at Frankfurt Airport at nearly the exact same moment that the Air Malta flight arrived, the latter allegedly carrying the Libyan bombers. German police, he continued, had broken up a PFLP-GC cell in the Frankfurt area, which possessed bomb-making equipment and details about Pan American flights. The manufacturer of the timers used in the Lockerbie bomb had testified that his company had sold the same timers to Libya and to the East German secret police, the Stasi, which had, in turn, provided weapons and bomb-making components to the PFLP-GC.

The "Libyan connection" to the Lockerbie bombing was suddenly discovered in the Summer of 1991, when Syria was the "prodigal son" in the so-called Gulf War alliance, cobbled together by President Sir George Bush and British Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher against Iraq. Should the Scottish judges rule that the Libyans are not guilty, it would make for quite a welcome to George W. Bush and the Bush-leaguers as they move into the White House on Jan. 20.

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## ***Are African AIDS and Cholera Epidemics Linked?***

The World Health Organization (WHO) will investigate whether there is a connection between the cholera epidemic raging in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal, where more than 17,000 people have become ill, and the HIV-AIDS epidemic devastating Africa. According to a Jan. 1 report from *News 24*, a WHO epidemiologist will spend the next six months in the province, investigating the links, among other things.

The cholera epidemic erupted in Empanjeni on the North Coast, and research has found that along the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast, about one-third of new mothers who visit post-natal clinics are testing HIV positive. WHO's regional chief, Dr. Welile Shasha, noted that cholera and AIDS are both diseases of poverty, after researcher Julia Frielinghaus mooted a connection between the outbreaks of the two diseases.

The cholera epidemic has now spread to

Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Mozambique, and Tanzania. In Malawi's capital Blantyre, City Medical Services Director Lycester Bandawe said on Jan. 8, "We are currently treating roughly 40 suspected cholera cases in the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, after flooding on the Shire River two weeks ago." Malawi's National Statistical Office warned that 22%, or 2 million of Malawi's 9 million people have no access to proper sanitation or sewerage systems.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the extent of cholera infection is so high, that rehydration centers are hard put to deal with the volume of people streaming in. In Mozambique at least 50 people have already died of cholera.

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## ***Bavaria's Stoiber Gets Red Carpet in France***

Bavarian Gov. Edmund Stoiber, the leading contender to run for German Chancellor on the Christian Democratic ticket, was welcomed in Paris on Jan. 11 by President Jacques Chirac, who, like Stoiber, is a conservative.

Stoiber discussed the future shape of the European Union with Chirac, and also with other French officials, Socialists in France's co-habitation government: Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, European Affairs Minister Pierre Moscovici, and Cultural Affairs Minister Jack Lang. Stoiber made the point, welcomed by his French hosts, that as the EU continues to integrate, the more important it will be, to strengthen the responsibilities of the nation-state. A clear division of labor between the supranational and the national levels will be urgent, Stoiber said. Any other approach would be counterproductive and cannot win the approval of the EU citizens, who are all citizens of nations.

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## ***Bush League Meddling In Israeli Elections***

Israeli Health Minister Roni Milo announced on Jan. 11 that he would resign from the government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak, because of Barak's policy on dividing Jerusalem and the Temple Mount

**LAURENT KABILA**, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was shot to death on Jan. 16, apparently by a bodyguard, during a meeting with his military staff. Coup rumors had abounded, prompting him to cancel his attendance at a meeting of African French-speaking countries, at which the Rwanda-Uganda war against Congo was to be discussed. Only a week earlier, Uganda and Rwanda had sponsored a powwow of Congolese “rebel” groups in Kampala, Uganda.

A “**NEW OPIUM WAR** against China,” was how the International Commission on Large Dams referred to the international campaign against China’s construction of the Three Gorges Dam. The ICOLD was established in 1928, and has now 80 member-nations. Its website includes a link to the Fall 2000 cover story of *21st Century Science & Technology*, “Three Gorges Dam: TVA on the Yangtze.”

**SUDAN’S** international isolation is breaking up as several important visitors have made their way to Khartoum. Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika visited for three days over the New Year, the first Algerian head of state to visit Sudan in 30 years. Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Jimm arrived on Jan. 9 for a two-day visit, and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa came on Jan. 8 carrying a message from President Hosni Mubarak.

**MYANMAR’S** government opened talks with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as the result of visits by UN special envoy Razali Ismail, of Malaysia. “There have been talks between Aung San Suu Kyi and the Myanmar government which started towards the end of last year,” he said.

**AUSTRALIA** is experiencing an explosion in gambling losses: In the state of Victoria alone, one in four people gambles heavily. In the past 15 months, Victorian gamblers have lost more than \$2.6 billion, compared to \$11 billion total lost since 1992.

with the Palestinians. It is not surprising that Milo resigned: He is a former member of the right-wing Likud who joined the Center Party, which is a mix of former Likud and Labor Party members. What is surprising, is that he made the announcement at a New York City press conference, flanked by Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani; Bush campaign funder Ron Lauder, the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and a major funder of the Likud campaigns of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and current candidate Ariel Sharon; Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert; Natan Sharansky, leader of the Yisrael B’aliya Party; and Uzi Landau, a Likud member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament).

The press conference had been called to announce that participants were signing a letter calling on President Bill Clinton to sign an Executive Order to have the U.S. Embassy moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The issue, a favorite hobby horse of the Bush league, would strip the United States of any credibility in peace negotiations.

Milo’s resignation puts pressure on other Center Party rightists in the cabinet to withdraw, including Dan Meridor, who is a leading political figure in Israel. The other members of the Center Party are firmly in the peace camp, such as Uri Savir, one of the framers of the Oslo Accords, and Tourism Minister Lipkan Shahak, who has been acting as a peace negotiator.

## ***Hun Sen: Khmer Rouge Trials Must Be Limited***

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, citing the case of Ieng Sary, insisted that, for the good of the country, trials of former Khmer Rouge leaders must be limited. In an interview with the Jan. 10 issue of the *Bangkok Post*, he said bluntly that “if Ieng Sary is brought to trial, there will be war again in Cambodia. This is a warning, Ieng Sary is the one who brought peace to our country.”

His statements were published one week after the National Assembly ratified the draft law, authorizing the creation of the “mixed tribunal,” which Cambodia has painstakingly

negotiated with the UN (see *EIR*, Dec. 24, 1999). The bill was to go to the Senate for approval the next week, and must be approved by the Constitutional Council and King Norodom Sihanouk. Hun Sen said the tribunal could convene this year. The agreement with the UN explicitly states that only “senior” Khmer Rouge officials will be prosecuted.

Ieng Sary, who was de facto Foreign Minister of the Khmer Rouge regime, from April 1975 to January 1979, led a mass defection of KR soldiers to the government in 1996, which began the disintegration of the Khmer Rouge.

## ***French Think-Tankers Praise ASEAN-Plus-3***

France’s International Institute for Strategic Studies (IFRI) held a seminar of 200 people in Paris on Jan. 11, to discuss “new” Asian perspectives. Speakers included Sinologist François Godémont (IFRI); Romain Bertrand from the Center for Analysis and Forecasting of the Foreign Ministry; former Economics and Finance Minister Christian Sautter, now teaching at the Higher School in Social Studies; IFRI’s President Thierry de Montbrial; and Vice President Pierre Jaquet.

A recurrent theme in the seminar was the success achieved by Malaysia’s Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad, whose nation was the only one to show real growth after the so-called “Asian crisis” of 1997-98, because Mahathir had bucked the International Monetary Fund’s free-market dictates, and had slapped on exchange controls.

Christian Sautter was especially emphatic that what became the ASEAN-Plus-3—the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus China, Japan, and South Korea—had originally been Mahathir’s idea, but was sabotaged by the United States.

Another speaker privately told this news service, that he thinks these reforms can only work if they lead to a reform of the global financial and monetary system. He agreed that such developments could provide leverage toward such a new system, which France and the European Union should support.