

# International Intelligence

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## ***Russian Officials Blast Foreign Destabilization***

During a two-hour report on May 12 to the Russian State Duma, given by himself and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) head Nikolai Patrushev attacked the International Republican Institute (IRI) as foremost among foreign non-governmental organizations involved in efforts against Russia and its neighbors. The IRI is the GOP arm of the National Endowment for Democracy, or "Project Democracy," and receives millions of U.S. Federal budget dollars for its operations. It is a hotbed of neo-conservative ideologues and has been promoting their agenda in post-Soviet Russia since 1991.

Patrushev said, "Our opponents are steadily and persistently trying to weaken Russian influence in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the international arena as a whole." He added that "in April of this year, there was a meeting in Bratislava of directors of the International Republican Institute, a U.S. NGO, which discussed the possibility of velvet revolutions in the post-Soviet space."

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## ***Arab League Ambassador: Give Up Pre-emptive War***

Hussein Hassouna, the Ambassador of the Arab League in the United States, told a forum at Georgetown University on April 26 that the U.S. must give up its pre-emptive war doctrine, if it genuinely wants to begin to repair the rift in U.S. Arab relations after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Hassouna opened the conference at the university's Center on Contemporary Arab Studies, titled "The Crisis in Arab-American Relations," by saying that all of the Arab world—including the Iraqi people—are against pre-emptive force as a doctrine. Accepting this means that if there is a perceived threat, then any country which is strong can use force against another when they feel threatened.

There must be no more talk of a "clash of cultures, or clash of civilizations," he concluded.

On the second panel, Abdel-Bari Atwan, editor of *al-Quds al-Arabi*, stressed the need for the economic development in the Arab world, rather than "cosmetic reforms."

In the question-and-answer period, *EIR's* reporter made clear that the solution to the crisis in Arab-American Relations was beginning at that very moment on Capitol Hill, as the Congress was rallying to save the U.S. Constitution's General Welfare clause. One of the deans of the Arab-American community, Dr. Clovis Maksoud, then added: "I am beginning to be less pessimistic, because last week and today we are seeing a fundamental reversal of the neo-con policies, and that is in the opposition to John Bolton's nomination. Every day the lies on WMD, which have thrown the world into chaos, are beginning to be exposed. The lies on Iraq are being exposed, and, very important for the future, the lies on Syrian WMD *can* be exposed. . . ."

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## ***Pope Benedict Opens To the Russian Church***

The Russian news agency Itar TASS on April 26 had warm words for the new Pope. "The Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches must develop cooperation, Pope Benedict XVI said on Monday during the talks with Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, who headed the Moscow Patriarchate delegation for the pope-enroning ceremony. The pope expressed confidence that the two Churches should together defend common Christian values in Europe's life at present.

"The importance of settling the problems in relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church was emphasized during the meeting. The pope also noted the importance of the theological and liturgical tradition of the Orthodox East and expressed his respect for the mission and pastoral service of the Russian Orthodox Church. . . . Metropolitan Kirill conveyed to

the pope congratulations and greetings from Patriarch Alexy of Moscow and All Russia."

These moves belie the "spin" in Western media reports immediately upon the nomination of Cardinal Josef Ratzinger as Pope, that he was a hardliner with particularly bad relations with the Orthodox Church, who would never seek improved relations with his Eastern brethren. Pope John Paul II had tried to overcome tensions between the two Churches, and had hoped to receive an invitation to visit Moscow.

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## ***African Union Expands Force in Darfur, Sudan***

The African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, meeting April 28 in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, approved an increase of its Darfur, Sudan, observer and civilian police force to 7,500, which it hopes to have in place by August. Its force on the ground in Darfur is currently at 2,200. Once the 7,500 level is achieved, an increase to 12,300 by Spring 2006 will be considered. This action was in response to an assessment by AU staff done in March.

The Council claims it did not consider expanding the mandate of the troops to use force (beyond the mandate it now has, to use force to protect itself). The Sudanese government does not accept a peacekeeping—as opposed to an observer—mandate. The March AU assessment had suggested an expanded mandate, and the International Crisis Group, in a proposal of April 26, called for it. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and UN Special Envoy to Sudan Jan Pronk are supporting it.

Serious violations of the ceasefire are continuing, most of them committed by the insurgents, Pronk said.

African Union Chairman Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria has proposed to NATO that it provide logistical support to the AU forces in Darfur. Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Othman Isma'il commented on April 28 in Khartoum that his government welcomes this idea, but will not accept any NATO troops in Darfur.