

International Intelligence

Iraq Crisis Is Much Worse Than Reported

Despite Prime Minister Jawad al-Maliki's pledge to put together a cabinet within two weeks, Iraq is in the throes of civil war, said a Continental European military expert, in an April 24 discussion with *EIR*. Contrary to figures printed in the mass media, the number of attacks (bombings, killings, etc.) has risen to 120 *per day* in Baghdad alone. The Iraqi military and police are infiltrated by resistance forces. The saying goes: "In the daytime, the army, at night with the resistance."

There are 11 different militias involved in sectarian fighting: in addition to the well-known Badr Brigades of the SCIRI, Moqtadar al-Sadr's Mehdi Army, Chalabi's personal militia and the Kurdish Peshmerga, there are 7 other militias organized along ethnic/religious sectarian lines.

This expert's recommendation is that the United States cease providing all weapons supplies and training to the Iraqis, until a government comes in that is capable of exerting control over the armed forces. He said the UN should get a mandate, and send peacekeeping troops in from countries which the Iraqis would accept. The U.S. troops should redeploy to border areas to secure them.

Regarding foreign troop deployments, he said he thought the Poles would stay, because they will get F-16s in return. The Brits, if their engagement in Afghanistan is enhanced as planned, will have to cut back on troops in Iraq. Currently they have 8,000 there, plus 2,000 in Kuwait.

Kurdish Insurgents in Iraq Attack Iran and Turkey

The Turkish military has deployed an additional 40,000 troops into its southeast to reinforce the 250,000 troops already there, because of an increase in incursions by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). The incursions and infiltration of PKK terrorists, the Turks claim, are responsible for a rise in ter-

rorist attacks in the last several months, especially a series of bombings in Istanbul. "The PKK is trying to send half of its 4,900 militants based in northern Iraq here, and preparing for attacks in Turkey's cities," a Turkish official told the *Turkish Daily News* April 22.

Turkey is unhappy that Washington has done little to prevent the Kurdish attacks into its territory, or pressure the Iraqi Kurdish authorities who control the area. Meanwhile, the Bush Administration expresses frustration at the failure of Syria to patrol its border with Iraq.

Iranian Kurdish guerrillas also crossed into Iran from northern Iraq on April 21: "This morning Iranian Kurdish fighters infiltrated the border into the Iranian side and the Iranian army bombed the area and repelled them. The shelling hit the Iraqi land at Sidakan," said Saadi Pira, an official of the Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, according to Reuters on April 21.

U.S. and Israeli special forces, allied with the Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq, are operating in this area, especially against Iran, according to numerous intelligence sources.

Ibero-American Presidents Try To Calm Rifts

The Presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia met in various bilateral and trilateral combinations the last week of April in Brazil, both to further a number of integration initiatives and to try to get a handle on a growing number of regional conflicts—all of them triggered in one way or another by the international financial crisis—that endanger those integration efforts.

Most immediate is the threatened rupture of the nearly 40-year-old Andean Community of Nations, which includes Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez announced this week that he was pulling his country out of the pact, which he labelled "dead" because of "unilateral decisions" by both Colombia and Peru to sign bilateral Free Trade Agree-

ments with the United States. Chavez offered to stay within the pact if Colombia and Peru pulled out of the FTAs, which both governments refused. Bolivian President Evo Morales proposed an Andean presidential summit to address the crisis, which Uribe has so far enthusiastically endorsed. Before Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's meeting with Brazilian President Lula, his Foreign Minister Carolina Barco suggested they might ask Brazil's Lula to mediate in the Andean brawl.

The other major regional trade pact, Mercosur—which includes Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and its newest associate member, Venezuela—is also disrupted by the still-unresolved brawl between Argentina and Uruguay over the latter country's plans to build two pulp mills on the river bordering the two countries. Both Uruguay and Paraguay are reportedly seeking bilateral Free Trade Agreements with Washington, as well.

NASA To Discuss Space Cooperation in China

Testifying April 25 before the Science and Space Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Commerce, NASA Administrator Mike Griffin responded to Sen. Bill Nelson's query about cooperation with China by replying, "China is, as we are, a great nation." China has "offered an opportunity for me to visit with them," he continued, to discuss space cooperation. "I think the U.S. has always benefitted from discussions," he said, adding that President Bush "requested me to make this trip." Griffin added: "Who would have imagined 20 years ago that our best partner on the space station is Russia."

An official from China's National Space Agency extended the invitation to Griffin to visit China in September, when the official was in Washington in April. Space cooperation was also on the agenda when Chinese Premier Hu Jintao met with Bush April 20 at the White House.

This first positive response from the Administration on space cooperation with China follows concern on Capitol Hill that

SENIORITY breaks ranks, calling for troop withdrawal from Iraq. Michael Ancram, the Tory shadow Foreign Secretary, called for British troops to withdraw from Iraq, which Ancram said is now in “civil war,” before they become “part of the problem,” according to *The Guardian* April 21. Ancram added that his original decision to back the war in 2003 was a mistake.

THE VIETNAMESE National Coal and Mineral Industries (Vina-comin) held talks on April 26, in Quang Ninh province, with Japanese economic groups such as NEDO, JICA and JCOAL, about the construction of thermal power plants near coal mining areas, and about promoting the export of high-quality coal to major markets, particularly to Japan. In 2005, Vietnam produced 31.4 million tons of coal, of which 14.7 million were exported to Japan.

RUSSIA has delivered enriched uranium to India, according to the April 26 *India Daily*, for two General Electric-built boiling-water reactors based in Tarapur, near Mumbai. A “senior U.S. official,” who did not want to be identified, said “this kind of activity should not take place in our view,” and wanted to be assured that the fuel remains in storage, adding that “the United States has asked India to refrain from using the fuel. . . .”

PRIME MINISTER Ehud Olmert of Israel’s Kadima Party reached a coalition agreement with the Labor Party, to form the backbone of a new government. The Labor Party is to get seven cabinet posts, with its leader Amir Peretz becoming the Defense Minister. Peretz is the only prominent Israeli leader who stands in the tradition of the murdered Yitzhak Rabin, in the effort for peace with the Palestinians. The Pensioners Party of Rafi Eitan will also become part of the government, as well as the Shas Party and the Orthodox United Torah Judaism Party.

with China planning its first unmanned probe to the Moon for next year, and its announced three-phase lunar exploration program, including manned landings around 2017, American astronauts may not be alone when they arrive there at about the same time. The announced visit is also a response to the lobbying done by the bipartisan U.S.-China Working Group in the Congress, which recently visited Chinese space facilities, and has proposed that China’s Shenzhou spacecraft be modified to be able to dock with the International Space Station or other U.S. craft. Cooperation would likely start with the flight of American instruments on Chinese science satellites, or vice versa, similar to the flight of a U.S. instrument which will be on India’s lunar probe.

Russians Protest Jamestown Foundation

The month of April has witnessed a number of frosty official statements by Moscow and Washington, aimed at each other, in addition to Russia’s rejection of U.S. demands to clear out of Iran’s Bushehr nuclear project, according to *EIR* analysts. On April 18, U.S. Ambassador William Burns was called in by a Russian deputy foreign minister to receive an official protest against a conference on Chechnya, held by the neo-con think tank, the Jamestown Foundation, on April 14. Moscow charged that the event, titled, “A. Sadullayev’s Caucasus Front and the Prospects for a New Nalchik” (a reference to the October 2005 raid on that city in Kabardino-Balkaria), had “provided a tribune for calls to carry out new terrorist acts on Russian territory.” The occurrence of such meetings, said the statement, contradicts the U.S.A.’s international obligations to fight terrorism, and undermines the U.S.-Russia partnership in the anti-terrorism effort in other areas.

From the U.S. side, on April 19 Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns announced that the United States will seek to put on the agenda of the July Group of 8 summit in St. Petersburg, “issues pertaining to conflicts very close to Russia’s border,”

including events in Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia/Azerbaijan).

George W. Bush’s Rose Garden provocation that the use of nuclear weapons to attack Iran is not “off the table,” has received wide coverage in Russia.

German-Russian Summit Leads to Agreements

German-Russian talks in Tomsk April 26-27 led to numerous agreements signed between the ten cabinet ministries, according to press accounts. Three agreements in the economic-financial sphere are worth special mention:

1. Cooperation in the exploration of, and establishment of production at, the Yushno Russkoye natural gas field, by Russia’s Gazprom and Germany’s BASF-Wintershall firms. The gas field, said to be one of the world’s largest, is in the Yamal-nenets region of Siberia. The production capacity is to be 25 trillion cubic meters a year. The gas will be pumped into the new North European Gas Pipeline beginning in 2010.

This deal is not only the first in which a western company is granted access to a strategic resource field in Russia; it also involves an asset swap, which makes BASF’s Wintershall subsidiary a substantial shareholder in the venture, and makes Gazprom a substantial shareholder in BASF’s Wingas subsidiary, which operates gas pipeline grids in Germany, and through partnerships, also in other western European states.

2. Cooperation between German Railways and Russian Railways, through a joint venture for the promotion of cargo transit between Asia and Europe, via the Transsiberian Railroad.

3. Cooperation in the financing of development projects (public and private) inside Russia, notably in Siberia, between Russia’s Mezhecononbank, Roseksimbank, National Development Bank, and Germany’s KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) Bank. Deutsche Bank signed an agreement on cooperation with National Development Bank, as well.