
International Intelligence

Russia May Help NATO Get Supplies to Afghanistan

According to diplomats at Russia's NATO mission, for the first time Russia may allow non-military supplies from Russia through former Soviet republics such as Uzbekistan and Kazakstan to go to NATO troops in Afghanistan, the *Financial Times* of London reported on March 7.

Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's new ambassador to NATO, had signalled his interest in forging an agreement in this area at a recent NATO-Russia Council in Brussels. Outgoing President Vladimir Putin, as his last major diplomatic mission, has agreed to attend the April 2-4 NATO summit in Bucharest, as a guest. This would be the first time that Putin has accepted the invitation for this annual NATO summit.

It is evident, however, that Russia is not prepared to give NATO a blank check. On March 3, Russian Ambassador to Kabul Zamir Kabulov told the BBC's Persian service that the United States and NATO must use their presence in Afghanistan only to fight terrorism, and not for regional political or economic purposes. "We see the military presence of armed forces of the United States and NATO ... in Afghanistan just in the framework of our common campaign against terrorism," Kabulov said.

Attack on Yeshiva Could Ignite Messianic Struggle

The attack on the Mercaz Harav seminary (yeshiva) in Jerusalem by a Palestinian man on March 6, which left eight students dead, could escalate the conflict in the region. This is the number one Zionist-nationalist yeshiva, founded in 1924 by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, and later operated by his son, Ravvi Zvi Yehuda Kook. Many of the most extreme messianic Zionist rabbis came from this yeshiva, and the radical settlement movement Gush Emunim has its roots there. *EIR* published a profile of the Merkas Harav yeshiva in its Special

Report of December 2000, *Who Is Sparking a Religious War in the Middle East?* documenting that the "Kook" operation was run from the start by British oligarchical networks.

According to Ynet, there are now fears that radical settlers will take revenge that could lead to even more violence. The Jerusalem attack took place just at the time when Egypt was trying to mediate a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians; in fact representatives of Hamas and Islamic Jihad were meeting in Egypt at the time.

The head of the yeshiva, Rabbi Ya'akov Shapira, speaking at the funeral attended by thousands, declared the attack "a continuation of the 1929 massacres" and said, "The time has come for all of us to understand that an external struggle is raging, and an internal struggle, and everyone believes that hour has come ... for us to have a stronger leadership, a more believing leadership. ..."

People at the funeral chanted "death to the Arabs."

Will Blackwater Enter Pakistan's Tribal Areas?

Speaking to the Italian news agency AKI international in Karachi on March 5, Pakistan's former chief of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and one of the mentors of the Afghan Taliban movement, Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, said: "Seven hundred and fifty American commandos will participate in upcoming military operations in the Pakistani tribal areas. ... I confirm this to you on the basis of my information that those American commandoes will be sent through private contracting firms like Blackwater, and they will supervise the whole operation." Blackwater is the private security firm that has been at the center of controversy over the brutality of private contractors in Iraq.

Gul revealed this on the same day that a suicide attack on a government office guarded by Afghan and NATO troops in eastern Afghanistan left two alliance soldiers dead and four more wounded, a U.S. military spokesman said.

Although the arrival of the U.S. commandos in Pakistan was reported earlier, it was not clear that the decision had been reached to move into the tribal areas, despite opposition by the local population and the PML(N) political party (led by Nawaz Sharif, the party was the second-largest vote-getter in Pakistan's Feb. 18 elections). The PML(N) calls the U.S. intervention a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

It is evident that the decision to send the U.S. commandos was decided earlier, and that the U.S. Centcom chief, Adm. Mike Mullen, who was in Islamabad, holding talks with President Pervez Musharraf and Army Chief Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, was there to inform the Pakistanis. Mullen "is here to continue developing the relationship military-to-military and to discuss a range of bilateral issues of mutual concern, including regional security," U.S. Embassy spokeswoman Elizabeth Colton told AFP.

President Hu Addresses Importance of Taiwan

Chinese President Hu Jintao on March 4 addressed the first day of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, an advisory body which meets a few days prior to the National People's Congress, which opens on March 5. Hu used most of his speech to address the importance of the Taiwan issue, calling the drive for independence the "greatest menace" to China's national sovereignty. While repeating China's determination never to accept Taiwan's independence, he reiterated the government's commitment to continue to deal with the issue by peaceful means. He stressed, however, that any issues touching on Chinese sovereignty would have to be decided by citizens on *both* sides of the Strait—i.e., that any referendum in Taiwan is insufficient for any change.

Hu said that China was going to increase the exchange in people, products, and culture across the Taiwan Strait, and reiterated his pledge to meet with any of the Taiwan parties as long as they accepted the principle of "one China."