
International Intelligence

Israel's Barak in U.S. To Push Iran, Syria Wars

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak was in Washington in mid-December to organize for war against Syria and Iran, according to U.S. sources and contacts close to Israeli opposition circles.

Barak is meeting with President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, and a number of other unnamed "military and intelligence officials." The number one purpose of the trip is to try to destroy the U.S. military and other institutional resistance to military action against Iran and Syria. Before he left Israel, Barak told Israel's Army radio that "a host of issues on the agenda will be discussed. Iran's [nuclear program] will obviously take center stage." And the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported that high-level Israel officials have stated that "Barak's frequent trips to Washington are more than likely meant to coordinate efforts to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions with the Americans."

On Dec. 14, Barak spoke at the liberal Union of Reform Judaism in North America's biennial conference, and met with liberal groups. At one event, Barak announced that Syria's Bashar al-Assad "will be out of power by Passover," in April 2012.

President Hu Lauds China's Achievements in Space

At a rally held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing Dec. 16 to celebrate the successful docking of the Tiangong-1 module with the Shenzhou-8 space station, President Hu Jintao underlined the need for Chinese scientists and engineers to "master the creative capability" to resolve the numerous technical and scientific problems facing the nation. The speech was not unlike the remarks he had made to the Navy following President

Obama's Asia jaunt, calling for rapid modernization and creative thinking in developing strategy. He underlined that the period facing the nation was one of grave threat and that people must have "a sense of crisis and urgency."

While he praised the great achievements that China had made in its space program, he also noted that China was still far from the highest level of scientific achievement in the world. Chinese scientists and engineers, therefore, had to work at achieving "breakthroughs" and "making scientific leaps" to advance the nation's capability, so that China could make a major contribution to the advancement of mankind; maintain a high level of security in an uncertain world; and most importantly, to assure the well-being of China's expanding population.

Hu concluded his speech with a paean to space exploration, calling on international cooperation in that exploration. "The vast limits of space represent the common riches of mankind," Hu said.

Adams Denounces EU Treaty Plan; Demands Referendum

Ireland's Sinn Féin leader and Member of Parliament Gerry Adams defended Ireland's sovereignty on Dec. 15, for the second time in two days, in the face of the government's selling out the nation's interest to the European Union. Speaking in the Dail (Parliament), Adams challenged Prime Minister Enda Kenny, for his failure to defend the interests of the state during the negotiations in Brussels.

Adams warned that the EU Dec. 9 deal will "not solve the Eurozone crisis.... [I]t will make matters worse.... It seeks to impose right-wing austerity policies in perpetuity," and "seeks to undermine member states' democracy."

He pointed out that the agreement calls for the new austerity rule to be included "in national law, at constitutional or equivalent level," which would require

that a referendum be held.

"In his statement today," Adams continued, the Taoiseach [prime minister] said he is examining how this requirement dovetails with the Fiscal Responsibility Bill which is now being prepared. That baffles me.... Did he not know what it involved? Is he now saying that primary legislation may have equivalent status to constitutional law?... It is anti-republican and anti-democratic."

Afghans on Afghan Drugs: It's a Global Problem

An editorial in the Afghan newspaper *The Daily Outlook* Dec. 13 makes clear that the "opium produced in villages of this country continues to take its toll on the streets of Europe, Russia, and Iran," and is an "international problem." The daily added that "the menace of drug production and trade has been a major hurdle in the way of state-building in the country and strengthening the rule of law and writ of the government."

The editorial said: "It is such an irony that at the peak of the recent global financial crisis, when the large banks and financial institutions in the Western countries stopped lending and liquid credit dried up, according to a high-ranking official at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC chief Antonio Mario Costa—ed.], it has been Afghan drug money, coupled with Colombian cocaine proceeds, that came to the rescue of these banks and financial institutions. This has been so since hundreds of billions of dollars from the retail sale of drugs is largely liquid, and these proceeds, when deposited at these banks, were their only tradable, liquid assets at the height of the crisis."

The editorial notes that "the Western military forces have been reluctant in eradicating the production in southern areas, as they fear a public backlash that, in their thinking, might endanger them and compromise their mission of defeating the Taliban in those areas."