

International Intelligence

'Chikung' cult grows in China

Wire service reports indicate a mass revival of the 2,000-year-old *chikung* cult in mainland China.

Chikung involves deep-breathing exercises to produce a "high," and claims to enable the initiate to exploit the powers of the mystical life-force called *chi*. Cult adepts claim to have x-ray vision, healing powers, and longevity.

Chikung masters also claim to be able to burn holes in metal, change the molecular structure of water, and illuminate light bulbs by concentrating their *chi*.

High Communist Party officials are said to be among the estimated 60 million adherents of *chikung*, according to Reuters, and Chinese military scientists are said to be researching the claims of *chi* practitioners.

Chikung experts are reported to be appearing before audiences numbering in the thousands in Peking. Mass hysteria was triggered at Peking *chikung* rallies this August.

Until recently, *chikung* was outlawed as witchcraft by communist authorities.

German expert calls for mass AIDS testing

A West German medical expert has called for mass testing of students, civil servants, and armed forces personnel in order to obtain a realistic overview on how many people are infected with AIDS. Prof. Zoellner, an expert in internal medicine at the Munich University Hospital, where he treats AIDS victims on a daily basis, called for the mass testing in an interview with the daily *Berliner Morgenpost* Nov. 1.

Zoellner attacked West German Health Minister Rita Süßmuth, saying that the present anonymous registration of AIDS-positive blood samples does not provide any picture of the actual epidemiological situation.

The mass testing he has proposed would reach an estimated 1 million people from all areas of life. Zoellner also called for mandatory registration of all AIDS-infected persons and for a change in the federal health law to permit quarantine of patients who knowingly continue to spread the virus.

Zoellner is an AIDS adviser to the Bavarian government and a member of the federal Parliament's AIDS Commission.

By contrast with the rest of West Germany, where the do-nothing policy prevails, Bavaria has adopted firm public health measures against the disease. Although State Secretary Gauweiler, who instituted the measures, was stripped of his authority on AIDS matters recently, the Bavarian Parliament outvoted the Social Democrats and the Green Party and ruled to keep the Gauweiler measures in place.

In addition, the Parliament called upon the state government to determine whether obligatory mass testing is necessary and possible and whether Bavaria has the capacity to quarantine and treat people who knowingly continue to spread the AIDS virus.

Süßmuth, for her part, announced on Nov. 1 that the doubling rate of AIDS cases has slowed down to 13 months, compared to a 6-month doubling rate three years ago. Süßmuth based her statement on the figures of 2,488 people sick with AIDS (as of the end of September), of whom 1,045 had died. Another 26,291 persons are known to be infected. Süßmuth sticks to her estimate that no more than 30,000 to 100,000 are infected—an estimate she made three years ago!

Locusts spread widely outside of Africa

Clouds of desert locusts originating in Africa moved across the Arabian Gulf from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait into the port of Bushehr in Iran, Reuters reported Nov. 1. The Iranian Agriculture Ministry said that planes would start spraying the same day, but that they expected more swarms to invade if the locust explosion on the Arab side

of the Gulf is not halted.

The locusts had invaded southern Kuwait on Oct. 30, devouring crops on several farms. Officials said that the number of locusts was small and could be stopped by ground spraying. The locusts, the first to invade Kuwait in 20 years, came from Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, African desert locusts carried thousands of miles on air currents had even reached Cornwall, Britain by Nov. 1, the first locust finding reported there for 34 years. British officials say that a sudden cold spell in the region would prevent the locusts from breeding, and that there would be no risk of a locust plague developing and devouring crops.

The latest *Locust Bulletin* of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization from Rome notes the extension of the plague into the Near East region, the continued breeding in West Africa, the appearance of second-generation swarms in Mali and Niger, and large-scale breeding in Sudan, particularly on the Red Sea coast. It termed the situation "very serious."

The *Bulletin* minimized the threat in the Caribbean, where locust swarms appeared in mid-October, swept across the Atlantic by winds. The report says, "In the Caribbean and adjacent areas of the South American coast, small-scale laying is likely to occur shortly, with hatching in early November, but it is considered unlikely that a viable population will persist."

Soviet deputies' 'no' vote wows Western media

Thirteen deputies of the Supreme Soviet, the rubber-stamp "parliament" of the Soviet empire, voted *Nyet* against two new police-state laws at the end of October, but that was enough to send most Western press trumpeting the praises of *glasnost*.

One of the new laws requires official permission for demonstrations, and the other gives broad new powers to internal troops.

But "Kremlinologists" said that, while there have been abstentions in the past, this