

# International Intelligence

---

## **India's BJP attempts to form government**

The Bharatiya Janata Party, which won a plurality in India's elections for Lok Sabha (parliament) last month, elected Atal Behari Vajpayee as its leader on March 6, in preparation for his assumption of office as Prime Minister. In his acceptance speech, Vajpayee noted that although the BJP had not been able to get a majority in the new Lok Sabha, its support has increased.

Negotiations with other parliamentary parties are continuing, to form a new government, and it is expected that the BJP will soon present President Narayanan with a list of the parliamentarians who would support the BJP national government. The list will show that the BJP does have the support of at least 273 parliamentarians (of the 534 in the Lok Sabha) belonging to a basketful of small and medium-sized political parties. At least eight of these parties aligned with the BJP prior to the Feb. 16-20 elections.

---

## **Head of Russian atomic energy ministry ousted**

On March 3, the head of the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom), Viktor Mikhailov, announced his resignation, just before Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's trip to Washington for the meeting of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, which includes the Minatom director. Mikhailov has consistently refused to compromise on his ministry's cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy with Iran. He reiterated his policy in a press conference in Moscow on Feb. 18. He has also worked closely with the United States, overseeing the nuclear weapons dismantling program, and opened up Russian nuclear weapons laboratories to Western scientists.

At the same time that Mikhailov announced his resignation, Israeli Minister for Industry and Trade Natan Sharansky was in Moscow to convince the Russians to end nuclear cooperation and trade with Iran.

Meantime, on March 4, an editorial in the *Jerusalem Post* (owned by British intelli-

gence's Hollinger Corp.) tried to whip up a confrontation between the United States and Russia over the latter's nuclear energy collaboration with Iran. Writing on the March 9 Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission meeting, the *Post* ranted: "After going to the brink of war with Iraq . . . it is somewhat bizarre that the U.S. seems reluctant to use economic tools to accomplish the same goal in Iran. The only explanation is that the U.S. is concerned that financial pressure will harm its relations with Russia, and perhaps even the stability of the Russian government. This attitude, however, is backward and demeaning to the United States. Since Russia is directly threatening U.S. security interests by aiding Iran, Russia should fear damage to its relations with the U.S., not vice versa."

---

## **Dumas now officially under investigation**

French former Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, currently president of the Constitutional Court, has been subpoenaed by the two instructing magistrates responsible for the investigation into the Elf-Aquitaine case, and was scheduled to appear on March 18, according to the March 8 issue of *Le Monde*. As a counter, Dumas's lawyers are attempting to have the case moved into the Court of Justice and out of the hands of the two instructing judges. On March 9, he gave an interview to *Le Figaro*, under the headline, "Through Me, There Is an Attempt To Destroy the Mitterrand Heritage," probably one of the few truthful statements Dumas ever made. (Dumas served under the late President François Mitterrand.) After protesting his innocence, Dumas indicated that he knew where enough skeletons were buried to make things uncomfortable for others, if an investigation leads to indictment.

Dumas insisted that he will only resign from the Constitutional Court if he is actually convicted. Does he expect to resign? he was asked. "Certainly not. I repeat to you that the President of the Republic, after consultation, believes that the president of the Constitutional Council, like any other citizen, has the right to the presumption of innocence. Even in the case of somebody being

under investigation, does not mean automatically that he is guilty." Dumas met with President Jacques Chirac on March 6, and by March 10, Chirac's office officially confirmed that it wishes "the presumption of innocence to be preserved."

Throughout Paris, official reactions are similarly muted, with politicians from all parties rushing to proclaim the preservation of the "presumption of innocence," fearful that the spread of the scandals could go out of control.

---

## **Italy's Dini favors U.S.-Iran rapprochement**

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini met on March 7 with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Rome. Along with the crisis in Kosova, where Italy is playing an active diplomatic role, Dini was to report to Mrs. Albright on his recent meeting with Iranian President Mohammed Sayyed Khatami.

Anticipating his meeting with Albright, Dini told Alan Friedman in the March 7 issue of the *International Herald Tribune*: "President Khatami . . . agreed with me that it is only through dialogue and tolerance that we can find solutions to conflict. I told him that I had found in his recent CNN interview elements and intentions that, if translated into concrete acts, offer a good prospect for collaboration between Iran and the rest of the world. I also said that Iran could contribute to increased international stability by being a moral force in the Islamic world, by using the instrument of dialogue and by helping to take a more positive attitude in the Middle East peace process, and by repeating in words and deeds a condemnation of terrorism, and by taking a stand against proliferation. He reacted immediately in a favorable way and told me Iran is condemning and not participating in terrorism, and that Iran does not intend to export fundamentalism. This is a key departure from the past."

When Friedman asked whether Khatami had given him a message for the United States, Dini responded: "I think our entire conversation in Teheran was not intended only for my own consumption." Dini added

**SOLIDARITY** and Progress, the French party that backed LaRouche associate Jacques Cheminade for President of France in April 1995, is running several slates for local elections in departments and cantons throughout France.

**THE BRITISH** Independent Television Commission has officially warned the London satellite TV station run by the terrorist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), that it is "considering revoking the station's license" for "inciting violence." The warning, expected to lead to a shutdown, was delivered in early March, and follows the diplomatic crisis between Britain and Turkey, caused by Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's accusations against Britain for sponsoring Kurdish separatism.

**RUSSIA'S** Prosecutor General's Office has closed a criminal case against three Japanese citizens who are members of the sect Aum Shinri Kyo. The leader of the sect's Moscow branch was arrested in July 1995, and two other members were detained in early 1997. The case was closed because of "changes in the situation" surrounding the investigation into the sect in Japan and in Russia, according to an official with the prosecutor's office, who noted, however, that Aum Shinri Kyo remains banned in Russia.

**INDONESIAN** forest fires have spread to Aceh and Sumatra. In East Kalimantan, estimates are that the fires have caused \$6.8 million in damages since January, and have destroyed 20,158 hectares. Fires from April-December 1997 destroyed 30,000 hectares, costing \$9.4 million.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S** opposition has denounced "anti-corruption" bills being proposed in Parliament as "undemocratic, immoral, and illegal." The bills, which have the approval of Prince Philip's Transparency International, would give the Prime Minister a five-year term, and guarantee that Parliament cannot pass a no-confidence motion against him.

that "President Clinton's reaction to President Khatami's recent opening to the American people during an interview with CNN was seen as positive and was appreciated in Iran."

## ***JINSA promotes Ethiopia, Eritrea against Sudan***

The United States and Israel should support Eritrea and Ethiopia as a bulwark against so-called Sudanese fundamentalism, according to the quarterly published by the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs. A commentary in the September-December 1997 issue of *JINSA Security Affairs*, by Gil Kapen, claims, "They are front-line states against Sudan and Islamic fundamentalism, and they seek closer ties with both the U.S. and Israel."

As *EIR* has documented, Israel, on behalf of British Empire geopolitical strategy, has three military bases in Eritrea, including a covert naval base inside a "nature preserve" set up by the African Wildlife Fund on the Dahlak Islands. It has similarly courted Ethiopia.

Kapen retails the litany of lies about Sudan as "a leading Islamic fundamentalist theocracy," which has been seeking to undermine its two neighbors, and that Sudan had tried to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995 outside the Addis Ababa airport in Ethiopia. Claiming that Islamic fundamentalism has replaced "communism as the number-one threat to Israel, America and the civilized world," Kapen calls for greater U.S. and Israeli support for Ethiopia and Eritrea.

## ***Swedish critics pan film on Palme murder***

A film meant to dramatize the events surrounding the Feb. 28, 1986 murder of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, titled "The Last Contract," has received bad reviews in the national press. Producer Kjell Sundvall based his screenplay on the book *The Contract*, but departs from the book long enough to dredge up the slanders against Lyndon

LaRouche and his co-thinkers in the European Labor Party (EAP) as responsible for the still-unsolved murder. Such slanders originated with the East German communist secret service, the Stasi.

The Social Democratic daily *Aftonbladet* writes that the film is on the level of a fairy tale, and other media were similarly unenthusiastic.

Meanwhile, an annual conference of 170 individuals who are privately investigating the Palme murder unanimously denounced the efforts to again bring patsy Christer Pettersson to trial, charging that the effort is aimed at closing down scrutiny of all serious leads for the murder. Speakers at the conference included Gösta Söderström, the first police officer to arrive at the murder scene, who was interviewed for *EIR*'s Aug. 15, 1997 issue. Söderström insisted the murder definitely had an international foundation in the circles dealing with weapons, drugs, and money laundering, an analysis elaborated on by other speakers.

## ***Russia's Duma told of growing drug plague***

The Russian State Duma (parliament) on March 2 heard reports on the growing problems related to drug use in the country. Nikolai Gerasimenko, the chairman of the Duma's Health Committee, said that there are now more than 2 million regular drug users in Russia; 4 million people have experimented with narcotics, while some 400,000 are addicts. Gerasimenko said he expects those figures to double by the year 2000.

Deputy Interior Minister Vladimir Kolesnikov, the deputy chairman of the government commission on drug abuse and sales, said there were 185,000 drug-related crimes in Russia last year, a 91% increase over 1996. The largest increases were among young adults, minors, and women. Gennadii Onishchenko, the chief state sanitary physician, said the growth in the use of drugs is contributing to an increase in HIV cases. He noted that of the 4,300 people registered as HIV positive, over 90% are drug addicts.