

# International Intelligence

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## ***'Times of India' urges broad diplomatic policy***

India should practice "multipolar" diplomacy, with delegations to China, Russia, the Persian Gulf, and other regions, said a commentary in the Dec. 1 issue of the *Times of India*. New Delhi has concentrated too much on dialogue with the United States, it said. Rather, the government needs to fly Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's special adviser, Jaswant Singh, to Beijing as well as Berlin, Paris, and Tokyo, and to send other envoys to the Gulf states, Pretoria, and Moscow. The *Times* nominated President K.R. Narayanan for the special job of China diplomacy, since he had a successful and long post as ambassador to Beijing.

The daily also asserted that economic diplomacy needs to be fused to the political. A step-up in contacts with countries that show a better appreciation of India's strategic dilemma will generate pressures elsewhere for a reappraisal of hard-line strategies toward New Delhi. In this, France and the Gulf states play a role: Paris is the only major Western capital to have actively expressed its sympathy with some elements of India's defense doctrine; and, the Gulf states, including Iran, need to be the focus of sustained efforts at setting up joint ventures, especially in petrochemicals.

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## ***Long isolation for Cambodia nearing its end***

With the successful confirmation of Hun Sen as sole Prime Minister of Cambodia on Nov. 30, and the convening of the National Assembly under Prince Norodom Ranariddh's leadership, Cambodia hopes to reclaim its seat at the United Nations, kept vacant since September 1997. On Dec. 4, the UN credentials committee drafted a memo accepting Cambodia's claim. Cambodia also has strong support from Vietnam, Japan, and Malaysia to assume membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, during the Hanoi heads of state meeting on Dec. 15-16. Further, Vietnam has invited Hun Sen to Hanoi for a state visit on Dec. 13-14, during which a meeting has been arranged between him and Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao.

Domestically, eight top Khmer Rouge commanders and about 5,000 men surrendered to the Phnom Penh government in a ceremony broadcast nationally on Dec. 5. Khem Nuon, who negotiated on behalf of the Khmer Rouge soldiers, read a statement, asking for his men to be reintegrated into the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. Not included in the deal are the three remaining senior Khmer Rouge leaders, Ta Mok, Khieu Samphan, and Nuon Chea, who are still at large and who would be the main target of any genocide tribunal. Khem Nuon commented that the rank and file have broken with them and they are now "retired." A facilitator in this latest surrender is the ubiquitous *Far Eastern Economic Review* correspondent Nate Thayer, whose life ambition seems to be to profit from the Khmer Rouge.

Earlier in the week, the two top royalist collaborators of Ta Mok and company, Funcinpec (Prince Ranariddh's party) Generals Nhiek Bunh Chhay and Serey Kosal, also surrendered, and were given royal amnesties. Gen. Nhiek Bunh Chhay and Gen. Serey Kosal both joined forces with the Khmer Rouge in O'Smach after their aborted July 1997 coup against Hun Sen.

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## ***Indonesia sets general, Presidential elections***

Indonesia has set general elections for June 7, 1999 and the Presidential election for Aug. 29. Parliament speaker Harmoko told reporters on Dec. 3. Student demonstrators, meanwhile, continued with protests near the Presidential palace and offices on Dec. 2-3, demanding a corruption probe of former President Suharto. On Dec. 3, after 1,500 students converged on the Presidential offices, a delegation was invited to meet with President B.J. Habibie's military secretary, Vice Air Marshal Budi Santoso, and Presidential aide Erman Rajagujuk.

On Dec. 1, the Forestry Minister issued the results of his investigation, saying that the Suharto family has laid claim to at least 9 million hectares of forestry areas, larger than the island of Java.

In other developments, former Suharto government members—Vice President Gen. Try Sutrisno, Defense Minister Edi Sudradjat, Environment Minister Sarwono Ku-

sumaatmaja, and Youth and Sports Minister Hayono Isman—announced on Dec. 3 that they will resign from the Golkar party, and create a new party on Dec. 15, allegedly because of the failure of Golkar to apologize for its errors in allowing Suharto to centralize power.

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## ***Eritrea boots out London's Sudanese 'democrats'***

Newspapers in Sudan are reporting that Eritrea has asked the London-hatched National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to leave the capital, Asmara. Under the auspices of Qatar, Eritrea and Sudan have made progress in restoring relations between them. In December 1995, Eritrea summarily broke relations with Sudan, and then, under the direction of Baroness Caroline Cox, hosted a conference of the northern opposition groups to the Khartoum government, which groups founded the coalition of the National Democratic Alliance.

The Eritrean government, whose leader, Isaias Afwerki, is among what London has called the "new breed" of African leaders, then handed the Sudan embassy in Asmara over to the NDA. Now, however, Afwerki wants to ease pressures on his western border in order to concentrate on the war against Ethiopia, and has withdrawn support from the NDA.

In a speech on Nov. 21, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir had praised the Qatar mediation efforts, noting that "this step frightened the [NDA] opposition," adding that "Ethiopia had shut the door in their face following the restoration of good relations with Sudan."

The NDA is now appealing to the UN to intervene and end the 15-year civil war. The letter has been endorsed by Sadig el-Mahdi, now in Cairo. Although the letter slanders the Khartoum government as "terrorist" and "criminal," the NDA—which had earlier vowed to take Khartoum through an uprising, and then militarily from Eritrea and Ethiopia—has apparently decided that the military option is a failure. The letter likely reflects pressures on the NDA from Egypt, and from the fact that Sudan has mended fences with the regimes in Ethiopia and Eritrea.