

# International Intelligence

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## ***Patriotic former Colombia Defense Minister dies***

Former Defense Minister Lloreda Caicedo, a highly respected member of Colombia's political elite, died on Jan. 13 from cancer, at age 57. Lloreda, an owner of the daily *El País* and a leader of the Conservative Party for years, had been appointed civilian defense minister by the new government of President Andrés Pastrana in 1998, but resigned his post in May 1999, in a public protest over Pastrana's appeasement policy toward the FARC/ELN narco-terrorists, who now control nearly half the country. More than a dozen of Colombia's top generals and 150 other ranking officers had planned to resign with Lloreda, but Pastrana managed to avert such a crisis at the last minute.

In a press conference at the time of his resignation, Lloreda said that 70% of the Colombian population opposed the demilitarized zone under FARC control, which he dubbed "almost a handover of territory." He added, "There are principles which cannot be negotiated."

Lloreda had been fighting cancer for two years and, according to his surviving seven children, had fought fiercely to live, because he was convinced that he had a mission to carry out for his country, which he had not yet completed. According to *El País* general editor Diego Martínez, Lloreda had made a video shortly before his death, in which he expressed his vision for the country as a legacy for his fellow Colombians. Said Martínez, "Even in dying, he was concerned for the country he loved so much. He insisted that we should love Colombia, that we must stay here and never abandon it."

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## ***Australian hails FDR as century's greatest person***

The president of the Australian Labor Party, Barry Jones, has "reluctantly" declared Franklin D. Roosevelt to be the greatest person of the 20th century, citing as the primary fact, that thanks to FDR, the 20th century became the "American Century." Jones,

writing in the Melbourne daily *The Age* on Dec. 23, weighed into the debate after an article by Gerard Henderson declaring Winston Churchill as the man of the 20th century, and ridiculing President Clinton's nomination of FDR. Jones countered that "nobody . . . has called it the 'British Century.'" He asserted: "Our world, like it or not, is largely Roosevelt's creation. He took a central role in . . . great issues. If he had faltered . . . outcomes could have been catastrophic."

Citing former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating's assertion that the United States had produced three leaders "who were unquestionably great—George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt," while Australia had produced none, Jones concluded: "Since the 18th century, the U.S. has been a great locomotive nation, operating on a global stage. It has passed through three climactic events, defining struggles—the American War of Independence, the U.S. Civil War, and a combination of the Great Depression and World War II—which changed not only national, but world history. In each of the three events, a major figure emerged who influenced and may have changed the outcome. That is the acid test of greatness."

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## ***'Soros socialist' is Chile's new President***

Ricardo Lagos, hailed as a "new" kind of socialist, won the Jan. 16 Presidential election with 51.3% of the vote, against 49% for right-wing opponent Joaquín Lavín. Thus, another free-market "leftist" takes power in South America, following last November's win in Argentina by the São Paulo Forum's Alianza candidate, Fernando de la Rúa. Lagos, who has dined with mega-speculator George Soros and had gone out of his way to assure foreign investors that they will find the "right climate" in Chile, favors more privatization (including of the state-run copper giant Codelco), arguing that the state should stay out of production.

Like his neighbor, de la Rúa, Lagos promises to resolve Chile's high unemployment and poverty, and spend more on health,

education, and social programs—none of which is likely to happen. Chile's "miracle" economy is in deep recession, as a result of global financial disintegration, and now, foreign creditors want more austerity. Lagos has announced that his economic team will include New York University Prof. Andrés Velasco, and Nicolás Eyzaguirre, now an executive director at the International Monetary Fund.

The previous week's finding by British doctors that former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet is too ill to travel to Spain for trial on human rights violations, and may be going home to Chile, is said to have been a factor in Lagos's slim victory. Lagos has promised that, should Pinochet return—the decision is now in the hands of U.K. Home Secretary Jack Straw—Lagos will let justice run its course, and he will guarantee Pinochet a fair trial.

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## ***Blair government-backed study for legal drugs***

The London *Economist*, in mid-January, hailed the conclusions of a British government-backed study calling for "Dutch style" legalization of stupefying drugs. The study was compiled by a committee of the Police Foundation, "an independent research body partly funded by the Home Office." The committee, "set up with the tacit encouragement of the government," is, "the most far-reaching inquiry into drugs legislation for a quarter of a century."

The report demands the "decriminalization" of cannabis (marijuana and hashish) use. This, if implemented, "would inevitably be viewed as moving Britain towards the more liberal Dutch approach." Under its guidelines, the police would treat the sale of cannabis as they now treat brothels, which are allowed to "function under the guise of massage parlors."

The study calls for a revision in the legal definition of "hard" and "soft" drugs. The *Economist* reports: "At present Ecstasy, a derivative of amphetamine, is grouped with heroin among the most dangerous Class A drugs, subject to the heaviest penalties for misuse. But 500,000 people are widely esti-

**BENJAMIN NETANYAHU**, the former Israeli Prime Minister, is getting support from some Likud Central Committee members, who have organized an "Israeli Forum for Benjamin Netanyahu," to have him run for premier in the next elections, according to the Jan. 13 issue of the daily *Ha'aretz*. Netanyahu is being investigated for corruption during his 1996-99 term, and may be indicted.

**TERRORISTS** attacked the Swiss resort at Davos with fireworks on Jan. 16, where the World Economic Forum will hold its annual summit on Jan. 27-Feb. 1. The summit will host 40 heads of state, 300 other political figures, and international executives. Police suspect the same terrorists who attacked the World Trade Organization headquarters in Geneva in September, cutting its communications with the WTO summit in Seattle.

**UGANDA** released 72 Sudanese prisoners of war in mid-January, in accordance with the December agreement between President Yoweri Museveni and Sudan's President Gen. Omar Hasan al-Bashir. The agreement foresees the reestablishment of diplomatic ties, including the exchange of ambassadors by April.

**ALGERIAN REBELS**, mostly from the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), surrendered their weapons to the government of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika on Jan. 15, and renounced further violence. Bouteflika had offered partial amnesty for all rebels, except those who had committed rape, murder, or bombings.

**'ARKAN,'** who headed a Serbian paramilitary outfit that carried out war crimes in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, was assassinated in the lobby of a downtown Belgrade hotel on Jan. 15. Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic allegedly had ties to organized crime, and was wanted for bank robberies in western Europe in the 1970s and '80s. He became wealthy after the 1991 breakup of Yugoslavia, by working the black markets, trading currency, oil, and weapons.

mated to use Ecstasy each weekend in clubs. The report recommends that it should be downgraded and treated like cannabis as a soft, relatively harmless drug."

## *Iraq's Aziz on official visit to Malaysia*

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and six associates spent three days in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on an official visit, according to the *New Straits Times* of Jan. 15. The two countries' representatives discussed working to achieve the lifting of UN sanctions against Iraq, as well as to improve bilateral trade and economic cooperation. During a 90-minute meeting with Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi on Jan. 13, Aziz said that Iraq is still apprehensive about accepting the new UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, not least because there are no indications that sanctions would eventually be lifted.

However, Aziz told Badawi that "if whatever is implemented does not adversely affect sovereignty and security, it [Iraq] has no problem in cooperating." Nonetheless, Iraq believes that the so-called inspection issue fails to fully consider Iraq's interests.

Badawi said at the end of the meeting that the Malaysia-Iraq Joint Commission will meet in Baghdad later this year, and he further pointed out that Malaysia is the third-largest provider of foodstuffs under the UN's Oil for Food program for Iraq, assistance which includes \$45 million in credits for purchases of palm oil for cooking.

## *Former Bahrain security chief accused of crimes*

The Secretary General of the opposition Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain issued a statement on Jan. 12, calling on Britain to arrest former Bahrain security chief, British citizen Ian Henderson, for crimes against humanity committed during his more than three decades in office. Sheikh Muhammed Ali Mahfudh accused Henderson of sending into exile "more than 400

families and imprisoning more than 30,000 citizens." In London, Home Secretary Jack Straw said an investigation into the allegations against the 71-year-old former Army colonel is being conducted by the Organized Crime Group of the Metropolitan Police. Henderson told Britain's Channel 4 that the charges were "laughable." Although retired, he is still an adviser to Bahrain's Interior Ministry.

The Islamic Front, according to this report, was founded in Iran in 1976; the movement's leader, Hadi al-Mudarrasi, was deported to Iran in 1982, after 73 members were sentenced to prison for plotting against the Bahraini government.

## *Sudan preparing peace talks with SPLA*

The Sudanese government started preparations for peace talks with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), in meetings over the weekend of Jan. 15 in Nairobi, Kenya. A technical committee mediated by the Kenyans was to meet to discuss dates and other technicalities to restart talks with the rebel group, headed by John Garang, that continues to carry on a deadly civil war in the south. One major feature of the overall process has been the acceptance of the Egyptian-Libyan initiative, as part and parcel of the initiative by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Garang, however, continues to maneuver: The SPLA leader went to South Africa on Jan. 10, and met with President Thabo Mbeki, to ask him to become involved. Garang said that the SPLA wanted to combine the IGAD and Egyptian-Libyan initiative, and specified, "We are trying to create a mechanism whereby the IGAD initiative remains the primary initiative, and we bring the South African, the Nigerian, and the Egyptian initiatives together to assist the IGAD peace process." Garang said that it would be important to have South Africa actively involved, claiming the situation in Sudan is "a double system of apartheid based on race and based on religion," meaning "Arabism and Islamism to the exclusion of others."