

International Intelligence

Russia Stages Strategic Military Exercises

Parallel to meetings of the Russia-NATO Council in Moscow on May 13, and meetings of Russian officials with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell over the following two days, a number of Russian military exercises took place, which are said to be the largest in 12 years.

Combined naval exercises were held in the Indian Ocean, involving the largest deployment of naval units outside Russia since 1991, with units from both the Black Sea Fleet and the Pacific Fleet joining in.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta and *Pravda* leaked on May 14, that Russia would carry out the largest exercises in recent years, with strategic bombers and submarine missile carriers. The May 17-18 exercise reportedly was scheduled to involve nuclear strikes against targets in the United States and United Kingdom, and especially against the U.S. Navy's aircraft carrier groups.

"During the exercises, the Russian troops will work on a complex of training missions aimed at disabling of main objects of the U.S. orbital group of space satellites. This is important to break the stable functioning of the NAVSTAR global positioning system, the opto-electronic prospecting satellites Keyhole, and the radar reconnaissance satellites LaCross," according to *Pravda's* English-language website. This implies that "under conditions of war, these actions may blind the Pentagon and interfere with its usage of high-precision weapons against Russia's armed forces."

El-Baradei Warns of Iraq Nuclear Contamination

Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei, the director general of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, issued a statement on May 19 warning that a nuclear contamination emergency may be developing in Iraq. He called on the United States and Britain to allow IAEA experts back into the country, to address the possible emergency. "I am deeply

concerned by the almost daily reports of looting and destruction at nuclear sites," he said, "and about the potential radiological safety and security implications of nuclear and radiological materials that may no longer be under control."

The IAEA has received reports describing uranium being emptied onto the ground from containers then taken for household use, and radioactive sources being stolen and removed from their shielding. "We have a moral responsibility to establish the facts without delay and take urgent remedial action," El-Baradei said.

The IAEA noted that on April 10, Dr. El-Baradei wrote to the U.S. government, bringing its attention to the need to secure nuclear material, and providing Washington with information about where the nuclear material and waste is found in Iraq. Verbal assurances were given that the material was secured, but following new reports of looting at nuclear sites, he wrote again on April 29. The IAEA has yet to receive a response, the May 19 statement reports.

According to press accounts, there are reports of radiation sickness among children and others who played with, or ate from, containers that held radioactive materials.

Malaysia Orients Toward France, Germany, Russia

In a statement in Kuala Lumpur on May 19, Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad hinted that Malaysia would look for allies among the major opponents to the U.S. war in Iraq. Malaysians, he said, should be prepared to be punished by the United States, for example economically, for the nation's opposition to the Iraq War. "There is a possibility that those who have helped [the U.S.] will be given special treatment, whereas those that did not will be punished, including France, Germany, Russia, and others. We are also included in this group, but I don't know what they will do. We have to watch." But whatever measures the United States might take, "we have to find ways to counter," Mahathir said.

His office announced that following the

visit of German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder the week before, Mahathir also expects French President Jacques Chirac and Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit Malaysia, in the coming months. Mahathir will meet Chirac at the Group of Eight summit in Evian, France, on June 1-3.

Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov arrived in Malaysia, for the first-ever such visit by a Russian Defense Minister, Agence France Presse reported. His visit was a followup to Dr. Mahathir's trip to Russia earlier this year, during which Malaysia negotiated the purchase of 18 Sukhoi Su-30MK jetfighters, in a deal estimated to be worth \$900 million, Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak announced at a joint press conference with Ivanov; he added that the original Su-30MK fighters would be "modified in terms of technical applications to meet Malaysia's own requirements," hence, renamed Su-30MKM.

Ivanov also spoke to the press, saying, "I believe what matters is not the value of the contract, but that it shows that Malaysia and Russia are for military cooperation in the long term. With the upcoming closure of the deal, this shows that Russia is ready for serious cooperation with Malaysia and will supply Malaysia with military technology and know-how."

Congo Seen on Verge of Rwanda-Style Genocide

African leaders, Pope John Paul II, and some UN officials are warning that the eastern Congo could be on the verge of the kind of genocide witnessed in Rwanda in 1994. South Africa's Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad, for example, said on May 16 that the world must act to prevent a massacre in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.). "We are fearful that if the international community does not act quickly another massacre will happen," he warned.

The South African daily *The Star* reported on May 14 that the African Union (AU) was ready to deploy peacekeeping troops to the area centered on the town of

HELMUT KOHL, the former German Chancellor and an opposition Christian Democrat, said at a symposium in Moscow in mid-May, that the unipolar world pushed by the United States won't work. The world will function only if other power centers like Russia, China, and the European Union work with the United States as partners, he said, adding that Germans should not be afraid to speak frankly to the United States.

AFRICAN DEFENSE experts from 48 of the 53 African Union member countries met on May 12-14 in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, to plan a continental rapid-reaction peace-keeping force. Formation of the African Standby Force was "encouraged by the international community outside Africa, which, for various reasons ranging from cost to politics, has been unable to intervene in Africa's myriad conflicts," according to a Sapa-DPA wire on May 13.

WILLIAM PFAFF, columnist for the *International Herald Tribune*, wrote on May 15 about "The Long Reach of Leo Strauss." Naming the many Straussians in and around the Bush Administration, he identified Strauss's view that society should be run by a secret elite, and the rest of the population fed "consoling lies." Pfaff called this "a bleak and anti-utopian philosophy that goes against practically everything Americans want to believe."

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad warned on May 17, after terror bombings in Morocco, that if the United States is trying to "out-terrorize the terrorists," this will only result in it being made the target of attacks in many other places.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Gerhard Schröder laid a wreath at the tomb of Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi on May 15. This was the fourth stop on his Asian tour. In a speech at the Technical University of Hanoi, he said: "There is only one system of international law, and that is the Charter of the United Nations."

Bunia, where hundreds of people were killed in the previous week in fighting between the Lundu and Hema ethnic groups. Tens of thousands more have fled and desperately need assistance. South Africa pledged to send 1,200 troops, and France will send about 700, if they are part of an international team with the mandate to use force.

The UN is still debating a request by South African President Thabo Mbeki, the AU's chairman, to change the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force there, from monitoring to peace enforcement. There are currently only 600 UN soldiers in Bunia, who are hopelessly outnumbered by some 25,000 militiamen.

After meeting the five militia groups in Tanzania, President Joseph Kabila signed an agreement on May 17, binding all signatories to cease hostilities, demilitarize Bunia, and allow the deployment of an international intervention force. The accord also pledged not to allow any more foreign involvement in the fighting in Bunia in the Ituri region.

Congo Foreign Minister She Okitundu noted that an "invisible hand" is operating, as in the past, to aggravate the situation. "The Hema and Lundu communities are being manipulated, there is an invisible hand. It is Rwanda and Uganda who are fighting on D.R.C. territory to perpetuate the occupation and the plundering of our resources." Rwanda and Uganda have occupied parts of the Congo for many years. He added that the arms that had been found in the district did not belong to the D.R.C., but had come from Rwanda and Uganda.

had occurred mainly due to rising raw-materials prices for its exports, but that Russia had not properly taken advantage of those high prices for its long-term economic growth.

Part of the problem he attributed to the so-called natural monopolies' siphoning off of profits which should have been invested in other industries; part to the continuing need for shrinking of bureaucracy, legal limits on bureaucratic power, and delimitation of roles of the different levels of government.

Russia's unconditional first priority for foreign policy is relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States, he said. The second is integration with greater Europe, toward a common economic space.

European Defense Chiefs Want 'Out' of Maastricht

Defense ministers of France, Germany, and Italy agreed at a meeting in Brussels on May 20, to call for exempting military budgets from the European Union's Maastricht Pact criteria, which disallow national budget deficits in excess of 3% of GDP. The three ministers agreed that improving military capabilities in Europe was too important to allow its being strangled by Maastricht any longer.

French Defense Minister Michel Alliot Marie stated that "budget problems" are raised every time there is an attempt to develop an autonomous European defense capability. "A certain number of ministers have said that there is a block, an impediment coming from the Pact and that they wished this impediment would be lifted," she stated at a press conference. "We must create the conditions, in which military expenses can escape, at least partially, the Pact."

Ministers from Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Britain also took that view, according to French press reports.

"At different moments, Paris has tried in the recent period, to launch that debate, reported *Libération* on May 20. Vainly until now."

Putin Calls for Doubling Russia's GDP in 10 Years

In his State of the Union address on May 16, President Vladimir Putin called on Russians to at least double the Gross Domestic Product within a decade, as part of a complex of improvements intended to secure Russia a place among strong, economically developed, and influential countries in the very near future. Full convertibility of the ruble is an accompanying goal. He noted that the recent years' economic growth of Russia