

# International Intelligence

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## ***China's Hu Jintao Seeks Peaceful Reunification***

Chinese President Hu Jintao called for peaceful reunification with Taiwan, but stressed that China will never allow secession, Xinhua reported on March 7. He was speaking on March 4 at the annual meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing.

"Tremendous and complicated changes have taken place on the Taiwan island in recent years, and the intensified activities of the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces have posed a grave impact on the peaceful and stable development of across-Straits relations," Hu said. These changes include efforts by the Taiwan authorities to pursue a "creeping independence." He warned that "Taiwan independence" could "pose a severe threat to China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

However, there are "new and positive factors." These include the direct charter flights set up during the New Year Spring Festival holiday, giving "certain signs of relaxation" to cross-Straits relations, Hu said.

Hu announced his four-point guidelines for relations: "adherence to the one-China principle serves as the cornerstone" of relations; never giving up "efforts to seek peaceful reunification"; depending upon the Taiwan people to support peaceful reunification; and that the Chinese people will "never compromise in opposing the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist activities."

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## ***Afghanistan's Opium Harvest Breaks Records***

A U.S. State Department released on March 4, says that Afghanistan harvested a record 4,950 tons of opium in 2004. This is 17 times the amount of the second largest opium producer, Myanmar—a target of Washington's wrath.

Earlier reports, issued by Washington prior to the Presidential election in Afghanistan last Fall, had suggested that a part of the

opium crop was destroyed by drought. As a result, the total opium harvest would have been at least 400 tons less than the 4,600 tons produced during the Taliban reign in 2000.

Three years after the ousting of the Taliban, the drug trade now accounts for between 40 and 60% of the country's economy.

President Hamid Karzai, after his election in October, pledged to wage a "holy war" on the drug trade. But the State Department reports points out that this has not worked, because Kabul "does not have sufficient power throughout the national territory to suppress it."

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## ***Abu Mazen Says Hamas Should Be in Parliament***

Palestinian President Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) told *Time* magazine that the militant Hamas movement should be represented in Parliament, and that "the wall and the Israelis" were responsible for the Feb. 25 Tel Aviv bombing, *time.com* reported on March 6. He said that Hamas, and all the militant groups, "even those in Damascus," were abiding by the ceasefire, and that the Tel Aviv bombing was carried out "by individuals."

In his first interview to an English-language publication, he said that the Palestinian Authority has already arrested five people for the bombing, adding, "If you ask me who is responsible, the Israelis are responsible. The bombers came from the Tel Aviv suburb of Tulkarem, crossing the wall. So who is responsible? The wall and the Israelis."

He underlined that democracy in Palestinian elections is *not* something that came from President Bush—the Palestinian Authority followed its own plans, and held a democratic election, as it has done before. He also said that Bush "doesn't have the right to . . . make commitments on behalf of the Palestinian people" about the final status agreements with Israel, such as the right of return.

Abu Mazen shrugged off the suggestion that "Israelis and Americans are shocked"

that Hamas might win seats in the Parliament. "Why not?" he said. "They should be in the Parliament; they will share responsibility. Israel has more than 33 political parties from right to left and in between."

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## ***British Lords Reject Blair's Anti-Terror Bill***

The House of Lords on March 10 sustained its previous big majorities against Prime Minister Tony Blair's anti-terror bill, because of its violation of basic civil liberties. As a leading British military historian noted to *EIR*, the House of Lords is no longer a collection of landed aristocrats: Those who sit there are senior political leaders of all parties, along with non-partisan senior figures from the legal and other professions, called "crossbenchers" because they do not vote on party lines. This body is roundly defying the Blair government's desperate efforts to ram its Prevention of Terror Bill through Parliament.

Existing anti-terror provisions expire on March 14. Britain is already holding a group of suspects in Belmarsh Prison. Home Secretary Charles Clarke wants to extend the current law if the new bill fails, but it is possible that will not work, since it was been condemned as unlawful by the Law Lords.

Now, the bill could go back and forth between the two Houses of Parliament (the House of Commons has voted to support Blair), possibly provoking the first big constitutional crisis since New Labor came to power in 1997.

The Lords again voted up three amendments to the bill, including a "sunset clause" requiring the bill to go back to Parliament after 12 months, by a majority of 250 to 100. They backed the Liberal Democrat amendment to give the courts the power to decide the extent of the control order imposed on a suspect, 214-125. Finally, they backed the Tory amendment to create a Privy Council committee to review how the Act works, by 225-126.

Blair said on March 9 that he would take the issue to the voters in the upcoming elections, if it did not get through Parliament.