

International Intelligence

Bhutto offers powers to separatist chief

Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said that her government would be willing, if necessary, to offer the post of Chief Minister of the Sind province to the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), led by Altaf Husain, who lives in voluntary exile in London. Fighting between the separatist MQM and other parties in Karachi, the Sind capital, has taken hundreds of lives in the last few months.

According to the prime minister, who was visiting Karachi, the post of Chief Minister could be offered to the Mohajirs on the condition of service to the nation and not on the basis of ethnicity. Mohajirs are Urdu-speaking Muslim migrants from India.

In making her offer, Bhutto reportedly said: "No power on the earth will be allowed to further dismember the country, and those thinking on such lines are living in a fool's paradise."

Silajdzic hits Europe's appeasement of Serbs

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said on Dec. 31 that Europe had acted wrongly in appeasing what he termed "Serbian fascism based on ethnic, biological distinctions," while imposing an arms embargo on Bosnia's sovereign government.

"They committed a cosmic mistake by tying the hands of the victim and we are seeing the consequences of that now," the prime minister said, referring to the siege of Sarajevo which reached its 1,000th day on Dec. 31. "Had we been able to acquire arms, there would have been a peace a long time ago. They neither wanted to intervene nor allow us to defend ourselves. If you start from the wrong premise, the results must be wrong," he emphasized.

Silajdzic blasted the "mediators" who have been meeting with the same Serb military and political leaders who plotted the war against Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which 250,000 people are believed dead and another 2 million made homeless.

"Those who are the perpetrators, the killers, are not called to the courts of justice, but are called to the courts of negotiation in Geneva, New York, London, and Paris," Silajdzic said. Referring to Sarajevo, which hosted the winter Olympics in 1984, he continued: "This Olympic town, this civilized town, this jewel of Europe, is now in ruins just because the establishment, especially in Europe, thought they could appease the perpetrators. You cannot contain the virus of chaos."

Aide to Philip: U.N.'s Cairo conference failed

The U.N.'s International Conference on Population and Development, which met in Cairo in September 1994, backfired against its organizers and led to an "increasing rapprochement between the Vatican and the Islamic world" that will have profound consequences in the coming years, according to an adviser to Britain's Prince Philip. The promoters of the Cairo conference, including the circles around Britain's Royal Consort, had wanted the conference to adopt a policy linking economic aid to the malthusian goal of curbing population growth, especially in the so-called Third World.

The source stated: "Cairo . . . strengthened the hand of those in the Vatican and in the Muslim world who want to club together, in an increasing rapprochement. Look at the fact that the pope sent his top cardinal, [Nigeria's Francis] Arinze, to that interfaith charade, that so-called dialogue in Khartoum, Sudan, some months back. They are talking about a new world interfaith body. King Hussein of Jordan is talking about an 'Islamic Vatican' to control fundamentalism."

The source and his collaborators are countering by, among other operations, renewing efforts to build up the "religion and ecology" movement that Prince Philip began with a conference of his World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Assisi, Italy in 1986. Prince Philip will host a conference on "Religion and Ecology" at Windsor Castle in May, in a valedictory act as president of WWF-International, before he steps down in June.

Armenian President bans opposition party

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian announced on Dec. 28 in a television interview, that the largest opposition party, Dashnak, has been banned. He alleged that the party is involved in drug trafficking and terrorism, and is responsible for opening the drug route from Beirut to Moscow, through Armenia's capital Yerevan. Ter-Petrossian stated that his action was taken in coordination with the Russian secret services.

The offices of Dashnak were seized on Dec. 29, and 16 of its members were arrested. Members of the Union of Constitutional Rights, whose office is in the same building, were not allowed to enter the premises. In the view of UCR members, the truth is that Ter-Petrossian and the Russian secret services are involved in a nasty operation. The President used the holiday period and the media concentration on the war in Chechnya, to smash the strongest opposition party, shortly before scheduled elections in May.

British Labour Party would trim monarchy

Trimming the British monarchy is one of the chief commitments of the British Labour Party, party leader Tony Blair told British media in a year-end interview. But many leading British establishment figures regard a Labour regime as a necessary "damage control" measure, to slow down the process of institutional disintegration around the monarchy and other institutions as support for the current Conservative Party government plummets.

The Italian press reported on Dec. 31 that media magnate Rupert Murdoch has editorially thrown his backing behind Blair for next British prime minister. And the Dec. 30 *Daily Mail* likened the rise of Blair to that of Labourite Harold Wilson, who replaced the scandal-ridden Conservative Harold Macmillan as British prime minister in 1964.

Blair's other planks include "devolu-

tion" (i.e., granting the Scots their own parliament and the Welsh their own assembly) and reforming the House of Lords. Prime Minister John Major labelled Blair's program "one of the most dangerous propositions ever put before the British nation," and charged Blair with giving "no thought whatsoever to the future unity of the United Kingdom." Labour foreign affairs spokesman George Foulkes retorted that Major has "gone completely off his rocker."

Khmer Rouge on rampage in Cambodian province

According to wire stories, between Dec. 6 and 16, Khmer Rouge guerrillas torched 100 homes in Ek Phnom district, 10 miles from the capital of the western province of Battambang, forcing more than 200 families in four villages to flee. They also barred 200 boats from returning to the area and from fishing in Tonle Sap lake.

A provincial official reported that since Dec. 27, the Khmer Rouge guerrillas have also torched 4,500 acres of rice fields. So far, provincial troops have failed to stop the destruction.

Floods and drought also have damaged 100,000 acres in the province. A Battambang official said, "We expect 50% of the 100,000 family provincial population will be facing rice shortages in 1995." Natural disasters are expected to result in a 300,000-ton shortfall in rice.

A U.N. official said on Dec. 31, "There's a lot of fear and psychological warfare. It's very clear that it's a destabilization strategy. I think we're looking at 1973 tactics all over again."

Aristide supporters want President-for-life

Some 3,000 supporters of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who are members of the jacobin Lavalas movement, marched through the streets of Port-au-Prince, the capital, on Dec. 28, demanding that Aristide abolish the Army and remain in power for life, Reuters reported on Dec. 28. Marchers

shouted, "Aristide for life! No elections!" and "Smash the Army."

The Haitian Constitution prohibits an incumbent President from being reelected after serving a five-year term, but Lavalas member Gary Bastien said, "We the people are the constitution. If we want something, it should be done." Upon his reinstatement as President last October, Aristide vowed that he would finish out his current term, and not seek reelection.

On Dec. 29, leaders of two-dozen "grassroots" organizations also demanded that the government abolish the Army, saying that Aristide's plan to reduce that institution to 1,500 members doesn't go far enough.

Tensions inside Haiti are growing. On Dec. 27, a group of 50 dissident soldiers stormed Army headquarters and opened fire to protest reports that the government would withhold December pay from some soldiers. Three of the dissident soldiers died and six others were wounded when Haitian and U.S. troops returned fire. There was also one reported confrontation last week between Haitian and U.S. soldiers, in which the latter confiscated 500 weapons, including grenade launchers and M-16 rifles.

Vatican offers regrets to Sri Lankan buddhists

On Dec. 22, the Catholic Church expressed regret that Sri Lanka's Buddhists were hurt by comments on their religion by Pope John Paul II and said the pontiff will make a gesture of reconciliation when he visits the island in January.

"We accept that Buddhist prelates and the public have been hurt" by the pope's comments, said Bishop Malcolm Ranjith, chairman of the committee organizing the pope's visit to Sri Lanka. "The church is very sorry and we express our regrets to the [prelates] and the public."

Ranjith said Nicholas Marcus Fernando, the Archbishop of Colombo, had written to Buddhist prelates to clarify the pope's remarks and that the church hopes to meet leading Buddhist priests to persuade them not to boycott the pope's visit.

Briefly

● **BRAZILIAN** President Fernando Henrique Cardoso was scheduled to hold a private meeting with Paraguayan President Juan Carlos Wasmosy, to get a briefing on coup threats in Paraguay, according to the Jan. 2 issue of *Jornal do Brasil*. Wasmosy reportedly requested the meeting while attending Cardoso's Jan. 1 inauguration.

● **PAKISTAN** has launched a new diplomatic initiative to bring the warring Afghan groups together in a bid to restore peace. Pakistani Foreign Minister Assef Ali held talks with a key Afghan leader, Gen. Abdul Rashid Rashi Dostum, at the end of December. There are rumors that another Afghan leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, was in Pakistan at the same time.

● **ISRAELI PREMIER** Yitzhak Rabin halted the expansion of a West Bank settlement that had been the object of protests by both Palestinians and Israelis in the Peace Now movement. However, he said, an alternative building nearer the settlement would be permitted. The Palestine Liberation Organization had called the expansion of the settlement a "threat to peace" and a violation of the Israeli-PLO peace agreement.

● **EIGHT EGYPTIAN** policemen and three civilians were shot and killed in four separate incidents on Jan. 2 by terrorists disguised as policemen. The attacks took place within one hour of each other near the Nile Valley town of Mallawi, 160 miles south of Cairo. The gunmen are suspected to be members of Egypt's largest militant organization, the Gama'a al-Islamiya (Islamic Group).

● **MONIKA GRIEFAHN**, the former head of Germany's Greenpeace organization and currently environment minister for the state of Lower Saxony, said she would rather be a whale than a politician, in an interview with *Berliner Morgenpost*. If she cannot be a whale, she continued, she would like to be like aging rock star Tina Turner.