

# International Intelligence

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## ***Bulgarian premier resigns amid economic chaos***

Bulgarian Prime Minister Zhan Videnov resigned at the Socialist Party (BSP) congress on Dec. 21, following criticism of his handling of the country's severe economic crisis. Videnov said he would not seek re-election as premier or party leader. The two-day congress was extended into a third day, while the party tried to fill the posts in a new cabinet. The BSP is desperate to avoid new elections, because its popularity has plummeted. Delegates said one prominent candidate to replace Videnov was U.S.-born Georgi Pirinski, who had resigned as foreign minister in November, because, he said, the government lacked public support.

On Dec. 19, the deputy head of parliament's commission on corruption, Edvin Sugarev, wrote to Bulgaria's chief prosecutor asking him to investigate Videnov's links to the Orion firm and its bank, the Bulgarian Agricultural and Industrial Bank. In 1995, Orion was at the center of a political storm, after Bulgaria exported large quantities of grain at high world prices, creating domestic shortages. Former Prime Minister Andrei Lukanov was shot outside his home on Oct. 2, as he was about to reveal high-level government corruption, according to his party colleagues.

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## ***Future Hongkong governor chosen***

Hongkong shipping magnate Tung Cheehwa, chief executive-designate of Hongkong, met with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng, and other senior officials in Beijing on Dec. 18, as China was preparing to take over from the British colonial administration. Jiang pledged support and assured Tung that Beijing would stand by the terms of the Basic Law, which grants Hongkong a high degree of autonomy after it becomes a Special Administrative Region of China on July 1, 1997.

While China has promised to leave Hongkong's capitalist system intact, it has made clear that Tung's authority will have

limits. As Tung plans to put together his advisory cabinet, China has declared that his senior officials will be appointed by the central government. Meanwhile, elected members of Hongkong's current Legislative Council met to protest China's plan to supplant the Council with its appointees. A committee handpicked from Hongkong's business and political elite cast votes in the city hall of Shenzhen, on the mainland, on Dec. 22, to select the 60 people who will make up the territory's legislature after July 1.

Beijing had vowed to scrap the legislature elected in 1995 since Britain's colonial Governor Chris Patten introduced a series of political reforms enlarging the franchise in 1992. China's Xinhua news agency hailed the creation of the new body as an "important guarantee for the smooth transition of Hongkong."

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## ***Wall St. Journal howls for breakup of Zaire***

Speaking on behalf of British intelligence and the likes of Sir George Bush, the *Wall Street Journal* opined in its lead editorial on Dec. 26, that their brand of "democracy" were better served by having Zaire break apart than to have a "Mobutu-like regime." The *Journal* applauded Zaire's near-disintegration in the wake of foreign invasions, saying that "even now, large parts of the country have already stopped reporting to the capital. The mineral-rich provinces of Shaba and East and West Kasai are virtually autonomous. North and South Kivu are in rebel [sic] hands."

The *Journal* continued: "Mr. Mobutu's western allies—France, Belgium, and the U.S.—have long put up with the excesses of the autocratic ruler for strategic reasons and because he was considered to hold the country together. But western interest has dwindled after the Cold War. . . . Zaire is crumbling and it may collapse completely, and it may have been pre-ordained, given that all these internal pressures were present at its colonial birth when, not unlike most African countries, its borders were arbitrarily drawn. . . . Mr. Mobutu, an African Tito, has kept

Zaire together through force for three decades. But for many Zaireans, there is little reason to preserve what has turned into an unhappy union. And a breakup may be the best chance Zaireans have at democracy and development—especially if the price of unity is the re-establishment of a Mobutu-like regime."

Democratic pretenses aside, the *Journal* editorial coheres with the imperial aims of the British Foreign Office to recolonize Africa, epitomized by the November articles by Conor Cruise O'Brien in the *Times* of London.

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## ***Financial Times lies, 'sun has set' on Empire***

In a year-end retrospective, the London *Financial Times* Dec. 31 editorial, headlined "The Sun Sets on Empire," waxes mendacious, writing that, 50 years after "granting" independence to the Indian subcontinent, the "transfer" of Hongkong to China in 1997 "will see the sun finally set on the British Empire." In fact, the Empire lives on in a reorganized form (see *EIR*, May 24, 1996, "The Sun Never Sets on the New British Empire").

Britain, the editorial avers, has a "credible record of disengagement." Some boundaries may have been drawn in "wrong places"; some may "question again the wisdom of partition"; and there have been "disappointments" in Africa. But mostly, "Britain has extricated itself skillfully, without bloodshed and with good intent." Not to worry: The Commonwealth "still represents a valuable network. . . . Few former imperial powers have managed to remain on such good terms with their erstwhile possessions." The *Times* leaves out that the Queen of England is also the Sovereign of many of these "erstwhile possessions," including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Belize.

Still, admonishes the *Times*, Britain must make a "much-needed reappraisal" of its place in the world: "Such an exercise need not be gloomy. . . . Its language, its culture, its inventiveness and the historical ties of empire all have a valuable contribution to make to the international community."

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## ***Sinn Fein leaders face death threats, psywar***

On Dec. 28, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) found the second booby-trap bomb in less than ten days, on the car of a Sinn Fein party leader. The bomb was found under the car of Sinn Fein director of elections in Londonderry, Liam Duffy. Only hours later, the RUC warned Belfast City Council member and Sinn Fein activist Alex Maskey that his life was in "imminent danger." Police had earlier in the month given warnings to Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and peace negotiator Martin McGuinness of threats to them.

Psychological warfare, typical of British MI-5 operations, were directed at Sinn Fein leaders throughout December, including an admittedly false "sex scandal" aired against negotiator Gerry Kelly. Then, on Dec. 29, the *Sunday Times* charged that McGuinness and Adams had been appointed to the IRA's Army Council command, which they have both denied. Sinn Fein spokesman Richard McAuley told the Press Association that this story "is two months old," asking, "Who are they setting up and what are they setting them up for? If some of these people were killed next week, who would be to blame for it? The *Sunday Times* treats them as if they are dead. . . . It will probably lead to further attacks on Sinn Fein members."

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## ***Ministers, relatives of Benazir Bhutto arrested***

Hakim Ali Zardari, the father-in-law of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was arrested on Jan. 1 at his home in the southern port city of Karachi. Police in the Punjab capital of Lahore also arrested her former science and technology minister, Nawaz Khokhar. Wire reports gave no immediate information about the charges against the two men, but police sources told the press they would be interrogated by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) police.

The two-month-old caretaker government of Prime Minister Meraj Khalid, which has only a month of its tenure left, has come

under increasing criticism for allegedly failing to bring forward any concrete proof of the corruption charges that President Farooq Leghari had cited for dismissing Bhutto's three-year-old government on Nov. 5. *The News* newspaper said on Jan. 2 that the FIA was planning to raid the houses of some more politicians and arrest some high government officials. Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari, who was investment minister in her cabinet, has been under arrest since Bhutto's sacking.

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## ***Israeli deal on Hebron pullout fading rapidly***

In the wake of the Dec. 31 shootings in a Hebron market by deranged Israeli soldier Noam Friedman, an arrangement for Israeli security forces to finally withdraw from Hebron is becoming increasingly elusive. After meetings on Jan. 2-3 with U.S. mediator Dennis Ross, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat blamed the breakdown in the talks on the intransigence of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. According to the Oslo II agreements' timetable, the Hebron pullout was to have occurred in March 1996. Beginning in September 1996, Israel was to have begun a three-phase withdrawal from much of the West Bank, to be completed by September 1997.

Reportedly, seven cabinet members, including Ariel Sharon and Benny Begin, will vote against the Hebron pullout. Now, two other ministers known to be close to Netanyahu, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegby and Communications Minister Limor Livnat, say they are wavering. Two other ministers, members of the religious Shas Party, say they will oppose the pullout, as well. If ten cabinet members vote against any deal Netanyahu makes, this could lead to a government reorganization, with the Labor Party being brought in to form another national unity government. Uri Dan, the Hollinger Corp.'s *New York Post* correspondent in Israel, has reported that Ariel Sharon and Shimon Peres have been secretly negotiating for weeks about terms of a national unity regime.

# Briefly

**BRITAIN** will expand its psychological warfare operations department "after years of neglect," reported the *Times* of London on Dec. 23. "Part of the reason for Britain's reluctance to concentrate resources on psyops has been the publicity surrounding the former Army information officer in Northern Ireland, Colin Wallace, and allegations of a disinformation campaign. But Bosnia and the Gulf War have reminded the British of the vital role that psyops can play," wrote the *Times*.

**POPE JOHN PAUL II** will travel to Cuba in January 1998. The announcement of the trip was made by Cuban Cardinal Jaime Ortega in Havana, just prior to a mass attended by the president of the Italian Catholic Bishops Conference, Cardinal Camillo Ruini. Fidel Castro and the pope met last November in Rome, where it was agreed the pontiff would visit Cuba.

**CROATIA INDICTED** three top officials of George Soros's Open Society Institute in that country: director Karmen Basic, executive director Srđjan Dvornik and accountant Ivanka Marton. The prosecutor charged on Jan. 2 that the three had been paid double salaries, in Croatian currency and in U.S. dollars, and had not paid taxes on the latter.

**BELGIAN** judicial authorities are investigating ties between Satanic cults and the pedophile ring run by Marc Dutroux. The groups included the Belgian Church of Satan, the Luciferian Initiation Order and Abraxas. Reportedly five victim-witnesses have testified to police that Dutroux's ring was supplying victims for human sacrifices.

**ISRAELI PRESIDENT** Ezer Weizman began a seven-day visit to India on Dec. 29. Weizman was to meet with government officials and Jewish community leaders. Israel has attempted to increase its relations with India over recent years, based on shared hostility toward Pakistan.