

International Intelligence

Iraqi Opposition Has More Problems

Regime changers are having new problems finding sponsors. This is the conclusion to be drawn from the news that: a) a leading Iraqi opposition figure, Gen. Nizar Khazraji, slated to replace Saddam Hussein in a new government, was placed under house arrest in Denmark on Nov. 16, on charges of war crimes, violating the Geneva Convention, and human rights violations; and b) a conference of Iraqi opposition figures scheduled for Nov. 22 in Brussels, has been cancelled, due to "organizational problems." Besides raging disputes among the opposition faction, the Belgian authorities, who share Germany's opposition to any war against Iraq, decided not to grant visas to the participants.

This conference, with 200 Iraqis, was to plan out future political arrangements. According to a spokesman for Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel, the government decided to cancel the conference, because it believes that, since the UN inspections teams are going into Iraq, which could prevent a war, it would be intolerable to have a gathering in Brussels of people committed to regime change.

British Foreign Office officials, who met with representatives of six Iraqi exile groups on Nov. 20, to discuss moving the conference to London in mid-December, expressed the same concerns, according to Reuters: that it made no sense for Britain to sponsor an opposition conference while the international community was seeking a peaceful resolution with Saddam Hussein.

S. Korea President Hits Sanctions on North

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung said on Nov. 18 that new economic sanctions would not force North Korea to give up its nuclear program, but would force the North to restart the process creating plutonium to build nuclear bombs, and "lead to another

war on the Korean Peninsula," the *Korea Times* reported on Nov. 19. "In another scenario, the North Korean economy could simply collapse, not being able to bear the impact of economic sanctions," President Kim said. "This would trigger an exodus of millions of North Koreans to South Korea. Economic sanctions are not a cure-all."

"We are offering the North a way out of its current crisis, in return for a promise to abandon its nuclear program," Kim said, referring to North Korea's demand for a bilateral non-aggression treaty.

North Korea may experience severe energy shortages if the heavy oil shipments from the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) are stopped, experts on North Korea told Yonhap News on Nov. 18. The suspension of fuel oil will hit the energy supply in the North hard, since the country relies on thermoelectric power plants during wintertime, the experts added. Hydroelectric-power generation accounts for 60% of the North's total electric power production, but normal operations of such power plants will become impossible by the end of October, when temperatures drop below freezing, the experts said. The experts pointed out that the freeze lasts until March, before which there is a period of drought, reducing the effectiveness of hydroelectric plants. They estimated the North's electric power production will decrease to 2 million kilowatts from 7.39 million kilowatts, due both to outdated facilities mostly built between 1910-40, and a lack of parts.

Blix Speaks of Nuclear-Free Mideast

United Nations chief weapons inspector Hans Blix, upon arriving in Iraq on Nov. 18, spoke first of lifting the sanctions, and of creating a nuclear-free Mideast. Blix, for years, had headed the International Atomic Energy Agency, responsible for non-proliferation.

As the *Washington Post* reported on Nov. 19, "before mentioning the danger of war," Blix said the following: "Now there is

a new opportunity, and we hope that opportunity will be well utilized, so that we can get out of the sanctions, and in the long term have a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East." Iraq and others in the region have pointed to Israel's nuclear capacity as the more serious problem.

Blix talked to the London *Guardian* in Cyprus on his way to Baghdad, about the attacks on him from the utopian warhawks in the United States. "I don't see the point of criticizing inspections that have not taken place," he said. "It's not very meaningful, and certainly unhelpful." Asked by the *Guardian* if he thought these hawks were behind the smear campaign, referring to Richard Perle and others by name, Blix answered, "You can say there's some truth in that judgment."

An AP wire on Nov. 19 reported that, while "the Americans are pushing for early, intrusive inspections," the UN authorities are "speaking of building trust between the inspectors and the Iraqis." UN nuclear control agency spokesman Mark Gwozdecky said, "Let's cooperate fully, and if we do, it holds prospect for a lifting of sanctions on the Iraqi people and a peaceful resolution."

Lord Mayor Warns of U.K. Transit Emergencies

In an interview with the *Daily Telegraph* on Nov. 18, Gavyn Arthur, the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Britain's financial district, said that he was told by several corporate executives and financial trade bodies that they are thinking of moving their businesses to other countries, because the roads and trains in Britain were becoming unbearable. Arthur said, "There are danger signs, people's discomfort is becoming so great, the frustration is there, and it's being articulated. There is a substantial risk of us being financially quite badly affected. I can't quantify the risk, but it's big enough to be worried about, because if businesses move, hundreds of thousands of jobs will be lost."

The transport problems are bad enough in London as a whole, but they are even

BRITISH chief of the defense staff, Sir Michael Boyce, stunned the Blair government on Nov. 21, by calling into question the British armed forces' capacity to participate in a war against Iraq, under conditions where the armed forces must be used for domestic reasons, in the event of continuing firefighter strikes. The Boyce warning was given only 48 hours after the American Ambassador to Britain William Farish had delivered a formal American request for British participation in an Iraq war.

ZAMBIA announced on Oct. 29 that it would not allow the distribution of genetically modified (GM) maize to alleviate its famine. It had sent people to South Africa, Belgium, the U.K., and the United States to study whether GM maize is safe, and said the findings were "not conclusive." Three million people are suffering from famine in Zambia. The World Food Program says it will be hard to find enough non-GM food for the country.

CHURCH of England's head warned, on Nov. 15, about "Satanic" elements in Freemasonry. New Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said that, because of this, he will not appoint clergymen who are Freemasons to senior posts. A spokesman for the Archbishop told the *Independent*, that he is "worried about the ritual elements in Freemasonry—which some have seen as possibly Satanically inspired—and how that sits uneasily with Christian belief."

LONDON TIMES of Rupert Murdoch praised the Royal Academy, in an editorial Nov. 15, for a major "Aztec Culture" exhibit, in which it had the "courage" to promote human sacrifice. "The very strangeness of the culture makes it all the more mesmerizing. It has an atavistic power." The *Times* effused that "This was an empire built on the bones of the dead, watered with the blood that cascaded down pyramid steps. And the visitor's imagination is taken captive, leaving him spell-bound in the middle of a scary tale."

worse in other cities—it is a national transport crisis, Arthur said, adding that "this is beginning to affect the financial pre-eminence. . . . People are getting more and more frustrated, and the problems are getting worse and worse. It's got to be sorted out at once. Financial services account for £13 billion—that's enormous. The City [of London] is the engine-room of the country, and we must fight to protect it."

Caracas At Brink Of Armed Conflict

On Nov. 16, Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez ordered the 8,000-strong police force of the capital Caracas to be placed under direct control of the national government, and taken out of the hands of the city, whose Mayor, Alfredo Peña, is an outspoken leader of the opposition. To impose the order, Army and National Guards units were deployed in and around several police stations, some of which have refused to accept their new command. Opposition protesters surrounded the heavily armed troops who were, in turn, surrounding these police stations.

The city police force is now split, creating the live possibility of shooting between the divided security forces, in the context of the escalating clash between the popular forces supporting the Chávez regime, and those supporting the opposition. Two died and another 20 were wounded on Nov. 12, in clashes between "Chavista" mobs and police and National Guards troops protecting Mayor Peña's offices. Fire-bomb and grenade attacks were carried out Nov. 17-18 on the headquarters of the Globovision television station, and on union, business, and Church buildings associated with the opposition.

The opposition, backed by the Mayor of Caracas and Gov. Enrique Mendoza, of the adjoining state of Miranda, called for a mass march on the National Assembly for Nov. 19.

In a grim reminder of the underlying economic crisis, food sales in the nation were projected to fall 13% during 2002, according

to the Venezuelan Chamber of Food Industries. Food sales dropped by 6.2% in the first half of 2002. Food prices rose 34% from January to October 2002.

Colombia's Forces Freed Leading Bishop

The kidnapped head of the Latin American Bishops Council was freed from his captors in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) on Nov. 15 by the Colombian Army. In a joint operation involving 350 soldiers and police, Bishop Jorge Enrique Jiménez and Father Desiderio Orjuela were freed in broad daylight, four days after they were kidnapped by the FARC. Neither man was wounded. Two FARC fighters were killed and one captured in the operation, and Army units were still pursuing others involved.

The successful rescue has remoralized the country, and will strengthen the government. More than 10,000 people, waving Colombian flags and white handkerchiefs, took to the streets in Zipaquira, Bishop Jiménez's diocesan seat, when the rescue was announced. "It was do-able," and "Freedom lives!" were chanted. President Alvaro Uribe Vélez emphasized that the rescue shows that "Colombia is going to defeat terrorism and kidnapping." Lucy de Gecham, wife of Sen. Jorge Gecham who was kidnapped last February, and who is still being held by the FARC, told the media: "Why are they doing rescues now and not before? What has changed? The government."

Bishop Jiménez praised the heroism of the soldiers who freed him. "God has given me back my life so I can be of service to my country," he said upon his release, and later, speaking to the crowd that had gathered, he urged, "I invite you to support our country and its leaders."

The rescue set back the efforts by capitulationist political forces, including within the Catholic Church, who sought to use the kidnapping to force President Uribe to agree to release convicted and jailed FARC members in exchange for the FARC releasing some of its more prominent hostages.