

# International Intelligence

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## ***Brazil Bucks U.S. Pressure To Intervene in Cuba***

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Tom Shannon told Brazilian journalists on Aug. 15, that Fidel Castro's illness posed a unique opportunity for Brazil to demonstrate its "democratic solidarity with the Cuban people." Speaking by videoconference to reporters gathered in São Paulo, Shannon promised that "consultations would continue to guarantee that the U.S. and Brazil act in a complementary fashion, and reflect our political values and common agenda."

Common agenda? Hard-core synarchist and former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso applauded the idea, stating that hooking up with the Bush Administration could restore to Brazil "the important regional leadership that it has traditionally exercised."

Foreign Minister Celso Amorim set him straight. "There is no post-Fidel Castro plan," he said, "because as far as we can see, Fidel Castro is alive, and were anyone to make a plan, it would be the Cubans, not the Americans, not the Brazilians." Brazil is always willing to cooperate through dialogue, Amorim added, but not to devise a plan on what the Cuban government should look like. That's a matter for the Cubans.

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## ***Scottish Leader: Get Rid of Bush and Blair***

Sir Menzies Campbell, the Scottish leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, and Member of the British Parliament, wrote in the *Observer* on Aug. 20 that it is time to "rebalance" the U.S.-British relationship, and to start by getting rid of both Bush and Blair. In a commentary titled "Our Foreign Policy Is Just Plain Wrong," he urged that the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute has to be based on UN Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for Israel to return to its pre-June 1967 borders.

"If it redefines our relationship with the United States, so be it," he wrote.

Campbell says that the "relationship between Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair has done untold damage both at home and abroad." He skewers Blair for delaying a call for a ceasefire in the Lebanon War. "A ceasefire was not just the right thing to do—it was the only sensible thing to do." But Blair suffered from a "major misjudgement," as he did in the Iraq War, and "it springs from the Prime Minister's evangelical view of foreign policy."

Bush and Blair "share the same view of the world," says Campbell, and therefore the "rebalancing cannot happen until after Bush and Blair have gone." One cannot imagine that Blair, who he calls "a neo-con" will "recant," but since Bush is already in the "last quarter" of his term, members of all the British parties who reject the "good vs. evil" Bush-Blair view of politics, should join together to assert themselves *now*, on the root problem of the Middle East—the Israel-Palestine issue.

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## ***France's Védrine Calls U.S. Policies a 'Fiasco'***

Former French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, interviewed by the daily *Le Figaro* of Aug. 17, denounced American policies in the Middle East as a "fiasco." He served during Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's government in the 1990s.

Asked who won the war in Lebanon, he replied: No one; Hezbollah developed a strong support in the region and showed how limited the Israeli military approach can be.

On whether Israel got anything from its military operation, he said that Israel just reacted, but was also up against the fact that it can't solve the problem of terrorism militarily or alone.

As for U.S. actions, he complained, "We're bystanders in the 'Great Middle East' fiasco, sought for by Bush after 2001. All this is largely caused by the denial of the 'Palestinian issue.'"

He regretted that France let Europe align itself with the United States and Israel on boycotting the Hamas government, but said that it did a good job on the Lebanon issue, from the humanitarian and diplomatic stand-

point. "To recover an influential role in the region, it is impossible to avoid Syria, or any other force that counts."

In conclusion, he called for continuing negotiation with the Iranians on the nuclear issue; for a serious application of UN Resolution 1701 to Lebanon; for Israeli evacuation of the Palestinian territories and the creation of a Palestinian state. "We must reconsider the Hamas boycott, which silenced our democratic appeal, we must talk with the Hamas government, reestablish international aid. This is the best 'coup' we could give to the Syrian and Iranian governments, as well as to Islamists. The Bush Administration is doomed to fail in the Middle East and, by refusing to understand that, is exposing us."

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## ***UN Raises Alarm About Fighting in Sudan***

With the international focus on Lebanon and Israel, the situation in Sudan has "silently" been growing more dangerous in recent months.

At the beginning of August, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wrote a letter to the UN Security Council expressing alarm over the deteriorating situation in Darfur, the impoverished and strife-torn region of western Sudan. At the core of the conflict is the lack of economic development in the region.

Annan stated in his letter that as many as 1.6 million people in need of help are inaccessible due to increased fighting. The last couple of months have seen escalating attacks against humanitarian workers—in July alone, 36 reported incidents, with 9 deaths.

In May, the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed, to end a three-year conflict, which has cost thousands of lives and forced more than 2 million people to flee. The combination of the imperialist drive to split Sudan and the failure to deal with the economic devastation has kept the conflict alive.

UN Deputy Secretary General Mark Malloch Brown warned reporters in New York on Aug. 18 that "something very ugly is brewing" in Darfur.