

World News Briefs

U.S. To Join Moscow Meeting on Afghanistan

March 13—The United States is sending a high-level delegation to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's conference on Afghanistan, to be held in Moscow on March 27, U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Beyrle said in an interview with Voice of Russia radio March 12. Beyrle said that the United States will take an active part in the Moscow conference.

There will also be a U.S.-organized United Nations conference on Afghanistan, held in The Hague on March 31, to which U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton invited Iran. Iranian government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham responded that "Afghanistan's progress is our progress and Afghanistan's stability is ours." Subsequently, government statements indicated that Tehran has decided to attend. Indian senior diplomat M.K. Bhadrakumar wrote in *Asia Times* March 11, that there has been what he termed a "trade-off" between Washington and Moscow, to make sure that the two conferences do not work at cross-purposes.

In Moscow, the SCO will focus on the "threats of drugs and terrorists originating in Afghanistan," while the UN Conference will have the broader agenda of stabilizing Afghanistan.

In effect, the Moscow conference will represent the first step toward a Four-Power collaboration, including Russia, China, India, and the United States, as Lyndon LaRouche has called for in the context of the world economic breakdown crisis.

Yesterday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hassan Qashqavi said Iran will attend this conference, the semi-official Fars news agency reported. Russia, which is now chairing the SCO, has invited India and Turkey to attend the conference. It has also been confirmed that NATO Secretary General Jaap de

Hoop Scheffer will attend, Itar-Tass reported on March 5. SCO members are Russia, China, Kazakstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, while Mongolia, India, Iran, and Pakistan all have observer status.

Brits Belly-Ache Over Expected Summit Failure

March 15—The finance ministers of the Group of 20 nations met in Great Britain on March 14, to prepare the groundwork for the April 2 summit of the G20 heads of state, which will purportedly address the global financial crisis. But the British are having real trouble getting their way, and they are already stomping their feet in anger.

They can't get everybody to agree that the G20 summit matters very much—let alone agree on the content of what should be done there. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has insisted that the London summit is *the* meeting which will come up with *the* global solution to the crisis, but U.S. President Barack Obama doesn't seem to agree. Lyndon LaRouche has stated, from the outset, that no good whatsoever can come from a G20 gathering, so long as the British are included, and that the proper venue to initiate a serious global financial reorganization is an alliance of four powers: the U.S.A., Russia, China, and India.

An editorial in the *Sunday Times* of London today, headlined, "A summit that must learn from the 1930s," bemoaned the fact that it is going to be hard to "salvage even a modestly positive outcome from next month's one-day summit," and warned that it could turn into a real fiasco, comparing it to the London Economic Conference in June 1933, which President Franklin Roosevelt intentionally torpedoed by not attending. At the very least, the *Sunday Times* urged, the upcoming summit should "act as a convincing bulwark

against protectionism," which is the phrase the British have been using with a rising pitch of hysteria in recent weeks, to refer to the American System economic policies adopted by FDR, and advocated today by LaRouche. "The London summit," the *Times* concluded anxiously, "should stand up for free trade and mean it."

Former U.S. Officials Advise: Meet with Hamas

March 14—Former senior officials and one current advisor met over the March 14-15 weekend to decide when to release a report which proposes bringing Hamas into the Middle East peace process, according to Henry Siegman, president of the U.S./Middle East Project, according to the *Boston Globe*.

Former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker gave a bipartisan letter, on behalf of the advisors, to President Obama before he took office, and they have been promised a meeting with him about it soon. The content of the letter will be released after they have had a chance to discuss it with the President. The advisors suggest that the administration explore the possibility that Hamas might be willing to become a purely political party and join with Fatah in governing the Palestinian National Authority.

One of the signers, Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor to George H.W. Bush, said, "The main gist is that you need to push hard on the Palestinian peace process, don't move it to the end of your agenda and say you have too much to do. And the U.S. needs to have a position, not just hold their coats while they sit down."

In addition to Volcker, Siegman, and Scowcroft, the letter was signed by: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Lee Hamilton, Thomas Pickering, James Wolfensohn, Carla Hills, Theodore Sorenson, Chuck Hagel, and Nancy Kassebaum Baker.

The Palestinian Unity talks in Cairo are reaching a crucial point and would undoubtedly be moved along by the senior officials' support. The British, by making yet-unfulfilled promises to talk with Hamas and Hezbollah in the last week, are trying to cement an anti-U.S., pro-British sentiment in the Middle East.

Financiers To Fight Return of Glass Steagall

March 10—A specter more terrifying than Karl Marx's Communism is haunting Wall Street, according to the latest article, on March 10, in a series in Bloomberg News called "Glass-Steagall Specter Returns to Haunt Wall Street (Update 2)." (Bloomberg was founded by New York Mayor and shameless anglophile Michael Bloomberg.) The article, focusing on a March 6 conference at New York University's Stern School of Business, says, "A decade after Wall Street killed off the Glass-Steagall Act ... its ghost has returned to haunt the financial industry..." It says that former Fed chairman Paul Volcker, now a top economic advisor to Obama, pushed for a return of Glass-Steagall at the NYU conference, and that FDIC chief Sheila Bair signalled the same intent in a March 8 interview.

Even more ominous to London, Obama might agree with them. Look at his Cooper Union speech on March 27, 2008, where then-candidate Obama said that the 1930s regulatory legislation "needed to change.... But by the time the Glass-Steagall Act was repealed in 1999, the \$300 million lobbying effort that drove deregulation was more about facilitating mergers than creating an efficient regulatory framework."

If there is any attempt to bring back Glass-Steagall, there will be "opposition from the same people who fought so hard for the death of Glass-Steagall,"

warned "Ace" Greenberg, the former CEO of Bear Stearns, in an interview with Bloomberg.

London *Financial Times* reporter John Gapper, who also spoke at the conference, sounded the same warning, with a more direct swipe at Volcker. Gapper wrote, "Paul Volcker has his sights on Goldman Sachs," and warned that Volcker proposes "two tier banking" that would strictly separate banks with depositors from investment firms that can speculate. Gapper quoted Volcker saying, "'Goldman Sachs would have to be split up if you separated these functions.' It will be very interesting to see Goldman's reaction if Mr. Obama takes up Mr. Volcker's suggestion."

London 'Times' Asks: What Special Relationship?

March 15—"I'm starting divorce proceedings in this special relationship," London *Sunday Times* columnist Jeremy Clarkson wrote, citing Gordon Brown's cool reception in Washington recently, to suggest that there is no such thing as the so-called U.K.-U.S. special relationship. Like earlier British coverage, Clarkson is peeved at the fact that President Obama gave Brown only some DVDs as a gift.

"I spoke over dinner the other day with the boss of a large British engineering company about the benefits of the special relationship when you are doing business in America," Clarkson writes. "He snorted so explosively that large chunks of lamb and mashed potato shot out of his nose. 'Special relationship!' he chortled. 'There isn't one.'"

"On a personal note," Clarkson concludes, "I find no evidence of a special relationship when I go to America. I believe it's time we stopped deluding ourselves about our relationship with America, which since the late 1940s has produced virtually nothing."

Briefly

DENNIS BLAIR, U.S. Director of National Intelligence, is the next on the right-wing Israeli lobby hit list, after that crowd—and the London forces behind it—forced former Ambassador Chas Freeman out of the running to head the National Intelligence Council.

GIULIO TREMONTI, Italy's Economics Minister, is currently in a pitched battle against Bank of Italy head Mario Draghi, also known as "Mr. Britannia," for his role in selling out his nation at a meeting on the royal yacht *Britannia* in 1992. Tremonti is demanding deployment of state officials as "credit watchdogs" over state monies to the banks.

THE OBAMA Administration has put state-to-state collaboration with Mexico on the front burner, as indicated by the diplomatic schedule recently announced, as well as the President's own statements. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will visit Mexico on March 25-26. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Attorney General Eric Holder will soon follow.

THE BELARUSIAN DAILY *Narodnya Gazeta*, an official publication of the national Parliament, on March published two articles calling for early re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Washington. One article was by *EIR*'s senior editor Jeffrey Steinberg; the other, by a staffer for Belarus President Alexander Lukashenka.

CHINA'S VICE-MINISTER of Agriculture Wei Chao'an, at a recent press conference in Beijing, reported that the agricultural population of China, some 800 million people, are facing an "unusually complicated and severe" economic situation due to the world crisis.