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This Week You Need To Know

BOOK REVIEW

Pope John Paul II, *Memory and Identity: Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium* ; New York: Rizzoli, 2005 (192 pages, hardcover, \$19.95)

IN DEFENSE OF CHRISTIANITY

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

April 2, 2005

About an hour ago, I received a terse report that Pope John Paul II had died. Some days ago, after I had begun the writing of a review of the English edition of the book *Memory and Identity*, I halted my completion of the review out of a saddening sense that these might prove to be the last days of his mortal life. In a manner of speaking, I paused to give this Pope the last word.

Nonetheless, I have changed nothing of what I had begun to write, except to situate that in an appropriate way as my personal expression of regard for my own mourning and others', for our common loss. Even then, as the present title I had already given to this review attests, when I had still hoped for some degree of his recovery to continue his work, the intent of my review was to have been a relevant reflection for today of what this Pope's ministry has meant for the continuity of the apostolic legacy of the Christian Church up through his ministry, to beyond his now-reported passing.

At this moment, as I feared already about the time this report was begun, it is time for me to speak frankly, from the vantage-point of both my special knowledge, and position in world affairs, of certain things concerning the role of the Church, things which have long occupied my innermost reflections. It is an aspect of such matters in which the nature and usefulness of my contribution is both of a unique form, and suitable for my particular personal contribution, as a public figure, to reflections made on this immediate occasion.

At this moment, there is still one earlier criticism of that book itself which I must make here, on even this present solemn occasion. I do this because my criticism pertains to the special continuity of the special legacy of a succession of the relevant three—John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II—of the recent four Popes for the troubled age of nuclear weaponry under whose threat we continue to live. My point, as one outside the formal body of the Church, but with close ties to it, is an ecumenical thesis respecting the living legacy of that Papacy's continuing, special role for all humanity today. I focus my attention here on certain common achievements of those three Popes' ministries. It is in that context that I point out the relevant problematic feature contained within the book I have just read for review.

In keeping with the solemnity of this occasion, I limit my report here to a principal subject of a special, but relevant character, on which my qualifications are unique, and of special relevance for speaking of the challenge for today

represented by that Pope and his immediate predecessors.

As you shall see below, the criticism which I make is on a certain topic within the book I have held in my hands, on the subject of what is called "The Enlightenment"; a view of that Enlightenment's character and performance which I know as being that of a virtual Satan of modern times, and the most important in influence of all of those principal forces arrayed against the intention embodied in the ministry of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

For all Christians, the Jews, and Muslims, most notably, the axiomatic feature of the Enlightenment dogma is equal to a categorical denial of the existence of man and woman as made equally in the image of the Creator. The consequence of that fraudulent axiomatic assumption of the Enlightenment, as launched by such followers of the empiricist Paolo Sarpi as Thomas Hobbes, Rene Descartes, John Locke, the circles of Voltaire, and of Kant, is the denial of the knowable existence of those creative powers, in the image of the Creator's, which set the human personality apart from, and above all the beasts.

That distinguishing quality of the human individual, is the foundation of the Socratic and Christian conception of the efficient immortality of the cognitive personality of the person in what some theologians term a "simultaneity of eternity." It is that certain sense of assured immortality, for better or for worse, which is lost to such tragic wretches as the Hamlet and legendary Denmark of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It is this immortality, which some call spirituality, which gave strength to the martyred Christians from the time of Nero through Diocletian, and which links the individuals in the body of Christianity as a force whose intention surpasses the bounds of mortality for the individual Christian. It is the quality which distinguishes the comic-opera, "fundamentalist" "Christian" of other-world fantasies, from that immortal soul on a mission of good within the domain of mere mortality.

It is what has given me the strength which I have often needed, to do what I have done, for the sake of that which is right, and to be able to carry it forward neither deterred by fear of disapproval, or by sense of the risk or other abuse which I have thus often incurred as the price of conscience.

The unfortunate fact, however, is that only a tiny fraction among even professed Christians has that kind of inner spiritual strength. In consequence of that shortfall in the progress of our fellow man and woman, on that account, the well-being of mankind, the hope for a good outcome of current history of nations and humanity is, generally, the task of those shepherds who are true leadership, such as that U.S. hero, the late Rev. Martin Luther King. The duty of such persons is to supply the knowledge which only such true sense of immortality can provide, as courage, to do that which needs to be done for the future of humanity.

This is as relevant to the internal affairs of the Christian Church as in all other matters in mortal life.

Most people are self-defined by their mental outlook and practice as "little people." They are fearfully bound to their sense of mortality, their sense of pleasure and pain within the bounds of what is for them a brief mortal existence. So, they had fled from the real world of the simultaneity of eternity, into the shadow-world against whose alluring deceptions the Apostle Paul's *I Corinthians 13* warns us. Thus, for such little people, the spiritual realm which is, in fact, the real source of power in and over the universe, is, for them, merely an ineffable "other world," a fantasy-world to which they imagine they might be transported at death. It is, for these poor fellows, a fantasy-world where pitiable creatures like themselves imagine that "God will provide the health care and pay the rent on their house." It is an imagined world of poor fools, a non-existent world concocted by their tortured, futile, imaginations, a world in which that pathetic littleness of their fantasy entraps their passions.

While we may yearn for some better times, where most of our fellow human beings are not such pathetic fools as that, today, in the real world beyond mere sense-perception, the welfare of mankind must be aimed at a future in which such

pitiable littleness of soul as theirs is no longer the prevalent reality. On that account, of such moral weakness in the majority of humanity, we require a certain quality of leadership in organized society. So, like the modern nation-state republic, Christianity, too, requires the form of a corporate body in which there is a leadership which has an efficient sense of immortality, a sense sufficient to lead mankind as safely as possible from one generation of folly to the next, hopefully to bring us all to a place in the scheme of things in which all men and women each have an efficient sense of their individual immortality.

In their own time and fashion, three Popes whose impact I have admired—of which John Paul II is most recent—have faced the awful implications of the age of thermonuclear weaponry, and have done so in ways necessary and sufficient to maintain the ministry given to them until now. For me, during the recent decades I have found myself in the role of a statesman, this is a fact which was often presented to me personally without much forewarning. I have known that these Popes have not run the world, nor should they; but without what they have done, it were more than merely plausible that civilization would not have survived until now. In that light, the emotion which should overtake us as we think of the impending Papal succession which must continue that mission, is awesome.

The greatest danger before us now, is the Classically tragic possibility that humanity might fail to make those choices of sweeping change from current policy, on which the continued existence of a civilized form of human existence depends, a terrible condition which might be continued for an undetermined passage of time yet to come.

Although resurgent fascism launched by powerful financier circles, is a leading menace on this planet, once again, today, the greatest single source of threat to modern humanity, was never fascism as such, nor communism. It was, and is still today, what is often praised as the pervasive influence of that morbid practice of malignant sophistry commonly called "The Enlightenment," that is typified by the denial, by such as the followers of Venice's Paolo Sarpi, of the existence of what the science of the Pythagoreans, Plato, the Fifteenth-Century Renaissance, Kepler, and Leibniz knew as what those ancients and others recognized as the specific form of power which is man's ability to discover, obey, and deploy efficient universal principles of a living Creator's universe. This denial, or agnostic evasion of the subject of the soul, as expressed, axiomatically, by what is called "The Enlightenment," is in fact the greatest source of evil active among the political and related powers of this world today.

The evil which the standpoint of the Enlightenment represents, often assumes the form of a pseudo-Christianity which by denying man's creativity, places man's worship outside the universe where God reigns, into a Gnostic's universe, such as that of the Mont Pelerin Society's Bernard Mandeville and his follower Adam Smith, where vice reigns over the conduct of the human individual.

However, although the Catholic Church has rightly warned against the Enlightenment repeatedly, there are those in religious bodies and related circles today, whose fear of the power represented by the pro-imperialist forces of "preventive nuclear warfare" expressed by the allied, financier-oligarchy-controlled circles of President George W. Bush and of Liberal Imperialist Prime Minister Tony Blair today, is greater than their conscience. Fearful people of these times, with their fear of poverty, their fear of persecution, would have the churches capitulate to the mightily feared authority of a corrupting evil of a "faith-based initiative," or that Liberal dogma which the pro-Satanic spirit of the Enlightenment represents today. This doctrine of capitulation, sometimes described, since 1989-1992 as a utopian "End of History," has made cowards of today's Hamlets in government, and churches, and elsewhere, throughout a great portion of the world today.

Evil will secure no victory for its own pleasure from such cowardly corruption as that. I have the proven expertise to show, that the present world system, on which foundation the power of today's monied evil chiefly depends, is now doomed for rather immediate extinction, in one way or another. We have entered a time when such forms of evil, would, at the least, also destroy themselves.

Therefore, the question before us is, what is the alternative to submission to such fears? There are practical remedies, even at the present, when a general breakdown crisis of the entire world's present monetary-financial system is already onrushing. There are practical solutions, of which I have excellent knowledge; but, the question is, is there the will to adopt those alternatives?

During much of the 1980s, I enjoyed a close collaboration with many circles around the world, including many notable Cardinals and other officials of the Catholic Church. Then, our shared hope was that the Soviet government might choose the wiser course, to have avoided its otherwise already imminent economic self-destruction. This evoked view, encouraged by President Ronald Reagan's March 23, 1983 presentation of a Strategic Defense Initiative, publicly, to the Soviet government, promoted optimism for a peaceful transformation in many leading Church and other circles, especially during the 1982-1985 interval, but also later. Later, the efforts of John Paul II on behalf of a peace among faiths, had a relatively weaker, but nonetheless crucial appeal.

In all these and kindred experiences of my lifetime, and from comparable lessons from earlier history, I know that it is not fear of evil which rescues mankind from a fresh great folly, but, rather, a clear and optimistic view of the relevant, hopeful, and real alternative. It is the duty of true leaders to present that remedy. On this account, the three recent Popes to whom I have referred, were crucial in their time. What, then, shall we do next, now that they, in succession, have been taken from among us?

These, as a great American once said, are times which try men's souls. I would suggest, that the first step is to know one has a soul. On this account, there is a crucial strategic conflict between those who merely have been taught to wish to believe that they might have a soul, and those who are on a knowing, first-name basis with their own soul. From among the latter, we find our capable leaders for times of grave crisis; unfortunately, they are too few, and even among them, few eligible are permitted to attain the posts from which their necessary leadership can be exerted. That fearful question was posed, again, by the saddening news from the Vatican today.

There is a power in the universe, which the creative powers of the individual human mind can know. I have devoted most of my life to discovering such powers, and that with at least sufficient success to prove the point. Those who have the courage to recognize that power, and employ its instruction, express thus the continuity of the worthy institutions which mortal men and women inhabit. To become such a person within society, is the nature of what Leibniz identified as "the pursuit of happiness," the principle upon which the U.S. republic was founded. When men and women devoted to the work of such leadership pass, the survivors mourn. That mourning of such great men and women of institutions can be, in itself, a creative act by those who must then mourn; let it be so now.

Latest From LaRouche

The Build-Up to the Great Crash:

DIRICHLET PRINCIPLE AS POTENTIAL

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

April 1, 2005

The panic-stricken effort to locate the explosion of the "Great World Financial Crash of 2005" in this or that particular feature of the landscape, such as oil prices, or housing bubbles, reflects the widespread ignorance of the reality, that a crash

of the currently onrushing type can be understood only from either "Dirichlet's Principle," or the approximation presented within Gauss's 1841 treatment of Earth's magnetism.

The crash occurs as an unleashing of a potential which is distributed among all definable points of the surface of the financial-economic system as a whole. If one point does not prompt the implosion, another, or several other points do. In this state of affairs, the more promptly and energetically the relevant parties seek to prevent doom by focussing on this or that point of local vulnerability, the more effectively they are accelerating and worsening the inevitable implosion.

The implosion as a whole is a reflection of the potential accumulated as the discrepancy between the changing rates of change among the relationship between economic and monetary-financial values throughout the system (e.g., meta-surface) as a whole. It represents an interesting problem in higher order Abelian domains, as Riemann defines the relevant general principles for such cases.

The end is not only nigh, but nearer than most are willing to think it might be.

InDepth Coverage

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[What Is Infrastructure?](#)

[by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.](#)

March 24, 2005

Perhaps the most dangerous kind of ignorance met today from among both today's leading U.S. policy-shapers and the breed of post-industrial businessmen, is their tendency to substitute the current, crudely mechanistic populist ideology of most of today's corporate financial accounting practice, for the practice of real, American System economics. *That mile of difference is the crooked sixpence in Wall Street's style today.*

International:

[LaRouche: Project Democracy Was 'Coup-Coup'd' in Kyrgyzstan](#)

[by Jeffrey Steinberg](#)

On March 28, Lyndon LaRouche issued his personal assessment of the ongoing events in the Central Asian, former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan, characterizing the political crisis that erupted there the week of March 21 as a Moscow-orchestrated 'coup-coup' against the Bush-Cheney Project Democracy apparatus that was deeply involved in the so-called 'rainbow revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine. The U.S.A.-centered Project Democracy apparatus includes the likes of George Shultz, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine Albright, and the entire neoconservative apparatus ensconced in the Pentagon civilian bureaucracy and the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney.

Will the Kissinger Legacy Again Kill Lebanon?

by Jeffrey Steinberg, Michele Steinberg, and Dean Andromidas

In response to the recent Bush Administration efforts to once again blow up the situation inside Lebanon and Syria, LaRouche has emphasized that no solution to the Lebanon crisis is possible, without a clear understanding of the events of the past 40 years. To fail to learn the lessons of that sorry chapter in Southwest Asian history is to be condemned to repeat them. Condoleezza Rice, the evil spiritual stepdaughter of Kissinger and his close ally George Pratt Shultz, is, in fact, running a replay of the U.S. actions that helped plunge Lebanon into a 15-year civil war, from which the country is still recovering. For now, the leaders of the various religious communities inside Lebanon are holding together, struggling to avoid a replay of their collective tragic past.

France:

Cheminade Says 'No' to European Constitution

A national referendum on the European Constitution is to take place in France on May 29, and no one dares predict, as yet, what the outcome will be. Although the leadership of the major political parties has called for a 'yes' vote, there is tremendous popular opposition to it. The former head of the Socialist Party, Henri Emmanuelli, created a sensation on March 2, by announcing that he would campaign against the Constitution, and he has since been joined by other leaders of the left wing of the Socialist Party. Since then, the 'no' vote has been consistently rising, and the latest polls show that 55% of the French intend to vote against the Constitution. It is well known, that if the European Constitution is rejected in France, it will have no future.

Interview: Col. Jürgen Hübschen

No Future for Europe or America Without Cooperation Between Them

EIR Editor Nancy Spannaus interviewed **Col. Jürgen Hübschen (ret.)** on March 21, while he was in the United States for meetings, including discussions with EIR (see transcript, above). He served as military attaché at the German Embassy in Baghdad, worked for many years for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and has long-term experience working alongside his NATO colleagues from the United States who were based in Germany.

- **Germany's Colonel Hübschen Proposes Urgent Change in Policy Toward Iraq**

...retired from Germany's Air Force, German defense attaché in Baghdad from 1986-89. He worked in Latvia for several years with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and served in the German Defense Ministry until March of last year. He gave this briefing on March 19 to EIR staff in Leesburg, Virginia. Editor Nancy Spannaus also interviewed him during his visit (see p. 24). An earlier interview with him was published in EIR, Aug. 6, 2004.

The Not-So-Hidden Protectors Of Italy's Alessandra Mussolini

by Claudio Celani

We have often warned, in these pages, that there is a plan to promote neofascist parties as major players in European politics. This plan has recently taken a leap forward in Italy, where the granddaughter of Benito Mussolini has received an enormous political boost on the eve of the regional elections. By the time this article is published, the reader will probably know the result of those elections, scheduled to take place April 3-4, but independent of that result, Alessandra Mussolini has already achieved her goal of being 'the real leader of the Rightwing in Italy,' as a well-informed observer put it to this reporter.

National:

LaRouche Intervenes in GM Crisis: Save U.S. Industry

by Marcia Merry Baker

At the time of a March 23 LaRouchePACTown Hall Meeting in Detroit, Lyndon LaRouche launched a drive for collaboration on a 'reconstruction agenda' for the United States, to save the nation's industrial capacity in the face of the breakdown impact of the threatened financial collapse of General Motors/GMAC, the world's largest automaker and a \$300 billion financing operation. LaRouche is calling for action, based on the conceptualization of the science of infrastructure for an economy, to start the re-industrialization of the United States, which will be of crucial benefit internationally as well.

Gen. Sanchez Memo: One More Link From Rumsfeld and Cambone, to Abu Ghraib

by Edward Spannaus

A newly-released memorandum on prisoner interrogation methods, written in 2003 by the top U.S. commander in Iraq, establishes yet another link from the policies set by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other top Pentagon civilians, directly to the abuse and torture of prisoners that occurred at Abu Ghraib and other detention centers in Iraq. The content of the memo also suggests that the commander, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, may have perjured himself in testimony before a U.S. Senate committee last year, when he flatly denied approving of the exact methods of interrogation which he listed and approved in the newly-disclosed document.

Government by Referendum

Schwarzenegger Chooses Demagogy To Impose Shultz's Fascist Agenda

by Harley Schlanger

On Sept. 18, 2003, as the campaign to recall Gov. Gray Davis was heating up, Arnold Schwarzenegger appeared at the California State Railway Museum, to establish his credentials as a 'reformer.' The site was chosen to make the link between Schwarzenegger and Hiram Johnson, who was elected governor as a reform candidate in 1910. Johnson won by campaigning against the leading special interest of his day, the Southern Pacific Company. It was under his guidance that the state Constitution was amended to allow voters to govern through 'direct democracy,' using the tools of: recall, to remove corrupt politicians; initiative, to pass legislation directly by yes or no vote; and referendum, to repeal legislation by direct vote.

- **Referendum: Hitler's 'Democratic' Weapon To Forge Dictatorship**

by Steve Douglas

Arnold Schwarzenegger's professed admiration for Adolf Hitler has assumed many manifestations since he became the 'Governator' of California. One such is his brutal bullying of the state legislature; he clearly has little or no more regard for it, as a body of representative government, than Hitler had for the German Reichstag (parliament). Another such expression is Schwarzenegger's use of the referendum, as a way of bypassing that uncooperative legislature (see accompanying article).

Catholics Start Drive To Stop Death Penalty

by Nina Ogden

On March 21, at the National Press Club, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington D.C., launched the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty. The Cardinal said, 'For us this is not about ideology, but respect for life. We cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing. We cannot defend life by taking life. In his encyclical 'The Gospel of Life,' the Holy Father challenges followers of Christ to be 'unconditionally pro-life.' He reminds us that 'the dignity of life cannot be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil.''

Economics:

Maastricht Anti-Growth Pact Castrated by European Leaders

by Rainer Apel

The March 22-23 summit in Brussels, of the European Union's 25 heads of state and government, endorsed the 'reform' of the EU supranational Maastricht 'Stability Pact,' as agreed to by the Eurozone Finance Ministers on March 20. The Pact, the key cause of the years-long depression of the European economies, should have been abolished, which would have restored national sovereignty in economic decision-making. But although not abolished, the Pact was softened up and diluted to such an extent that it has been castrated, even though it is not 'fully dead.'

Bird Flu: A Pandemic Waiting to Happen

by Colin Lowry

Faced with the looming threat of a new flu epidemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) called an unprecedented influenza summit meeting of health officials and vaccine companies in November 2004, to start work on preparing a vaccine and antiviral medicine production. Since then, the avian influenza virus has shown no signs of going away, as outbreaks in domestic chicken farms have recurred in Asia, and more cases of human infections continue. At present, the avian influenza, type H5N1, has infected 69 people in Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia, causing 46 deaths.

OECD Conference Backs Nuclear Energy

by Emmanuel Grenier

Seventy-four countries and ten international organizations came together in Paris on March 21-22, for an 'International Conference on Nuclear Energy for the 21st Century,' organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in collaboration with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its Nuclear Energy Agency.

The vast majority of the participants affirmed the desire to have nuclear energy, and also hydroelectric energy, make a major contribution to meeting energy needs and supporting world development. Because nuclear and hydroelectric energy sources would figure prominently in the international effort to reduce greenhouse gases, they were no longer the object of ideological exclusion, as has been the case up until now.

How the Pinochet Model Was Imposed On Peru's Social Security System

by Manuel Hidalgo

...[I]n 1990, the bankers' preferred candidate for President of Peru, Mario Vargas Llosa, brought Pinochet's former Labor Minister, José Piñera, and a slew of neo-conservatives, into Peru to promote the Chilean model of ultra-liberal shock treatment for the economy. When Vargas Llosa was defeated at the polls by Fujimori, who had campaigned in opposition to economic shock policies, the bankers maneuvered to ensure that their program would be enforced anyway.

Investigation:

Secret Warfare: From Operation Gladio to 9/11

An Interview With Dr. Daniele Ganser

Dr. Ganser is the author of *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

He is leading a research project at the Center for Security Studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich. He was interviewed on March 3 in Basel, Switzerland, by Michael Liebig and Claudio Celani. See EIR, Jan. 7, 2005 for a commentary on Ganser's book.

U.S. Economic/Financial News

Will AIG Be the Next Enron?

The American International Group insurance giant has been forced to acknowledge having dressed up its financial condition through transactions which "appear to have been structured for the sole purpose or primary purpose of accomplishing a desired accounting effect." As a result, AIG will lower its book value by \$1.7 billion. AIG also cited fraudulent accounting of its business with reinsurers that it controls in Bermuda and Barbados. Investigators are looking at a 2000 transaction between AIG and General Re, a unit of Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, that artificially inflated AIG's reserves by a handy \$500 million.

AIG's former chief executive and chairman, Maurice R. Greenberg, was forced to step down as chief executive on March 14, after regulators uncovered evidence that he had initiated the transaction with General Re. Greenberg is scheduled for an interview with investigators on April 12. Buffett is scheduled for an interview on April 11. AIG has fired a chief financial officer and vice president of reinsurance. Another senior executive has also been fired.

AIG also said that it would file its annual report with the SEC a month late, on April 30.

As a result of AIG's admissions, Standard and Poors stripped it of its triple-A rating. Fitch Ratings lowered its rating on AIG two weeks ago, and on March 28, Fitch put the company on negative credit.

AIG shares have lost 22% since Feb. 14 when the company disclosed it had received subpoenas from the SEC and from New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

Mineta Told: Dismantling Amtrak Is Not 'Reform'

The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) delivered a letter on March 26 to Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta challenging the Administration's "reform" of the Amtrak budget and agenda. "NARP welcomes an intelligent discussion aimed at developing an intercity rail network" for the nation," the letter stated. "If this Administration is truly serious about improving intercity passenger train service," it needs to reform "the environment in which Amtrak operates rather than dismantling [it]. It is not necessary to burn the village to save it. A modern rail passenger network will not emerge from the ashes of Amtrak."

The NARP pointedly wrote: "Without Amtrak, we lose the ability to operate over the nation's rail network.... We also risk losing infrastructure, rolling stock, equipment, facilities and a skilled workforce that will cost billions to replace—if it can be replaced at all." In fact, the national passenger rail network has already been stripped to the bone, leaving vast swaths of the country with no viable transport system except for highways. Rural America has been especially hard hit in this regard.

As with Social Security, the Bush Administration has not made its "reform" plan for Amtrak available, except to propose zero dollars, and state that bankruptcy is its way to "reform." An NARP official told *EIR* March 28 that Administration officials complained about NARP's criticism of "the plan," without having read it first. There's just one problem: The plan is nowhere published!

In 2003, the Bush Administration submitted a bill to Congress, which indicates that it is proposing a transfer of "all planning responsibilities to the states," despite the fact that "most travel crosses state lines and *interstate commerce is a constitutionally mandated Federal responsibility*, the NARP letter states (emphasis added).

NARP has detailed plans for what, how, and where to focus development of the nation's rail service, which *EIR* is reviewing.

Amtrak's Debt Rating Outlook Downgraded to Negative

In light of Bush's zero-funding budget proposal, and uncertainty of what Congress will do with the national rail service, Standard & Poors on March 29 downgraded Amtrak's debt rating from stable to negative—thereby undercutting the company's ability to borrow. S&P also now rates Amtrak's corporate credit at BBB, or two notches above junk.

Real Estate: 'A Piece of Dirt' Makes You Feel Good

"This is more exciting than a mutual fund. It feels safer, too. You buy a piece of dirt, you feel you'll always have a piece of dirt." With this as an introduction, the Sunday, March 27 *Los Angeles Times* ran a long feature on the insanity that has taken hold in the U.S. real estate market. "In the same way that the stock market's apparently limitless ascent in the late 1990s seduced investors into buying shares in untested dot-coms, relentlessly rising house and land prices are spurring people to do things that used to be considered unusual, if not irresponsible." They quote an analyst saying that "markets are ruled by either fear or greed," this one being greed. The article also notes that some real estate speculators are people who look at their retirement savings and are worried that they are not going to have enough.

The *Times* includes many figures indicating the speculative nature of the market today, where the "investment" purchases have jumped over 50% in the recent years, and now make up 25% of the market, according to the National Association of Realtors. Houses along the coast cost so much that no one could ever charge enough rent to cover the mortgage, so the fever has spread inland, into Reno, for example. In typical California style, the market has created its own submarket—you can now get an agent to find the right real estate agent for you.

The article ends with a cautionary tale, of how the market in Las Vegas peaked last year: Houses that sold for \$450,000, with expectations (emphasized by the realtor) of quickly going to \$550,000, suddenly dropped to \$335,000. With a mortgage of \$3,000 a month, it could only be rented for \$1,250.

World Economic News

Financial Predators Rampage Against Argentina's Kirchner

Unable to accept the reality that Argentina successfully concluded its operation to restructure \$82 billion in defaulted debt with 76% bondholder participation, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its allied financial predators are on a mad rampage against the government of President Nestor Kirchner. They cannot tolerate a President who dares say, as Kirchner did on March 15 to Fund Managing Director Rodrigo Rato, that "we are an independent nation which knows how to govern itself," and doesn't need IMF "tutelage."

Now up against the April 1 deadline on which Argentina is scheduled to officially start swapping its defaulted bonds for new ones, the financial predators have resorted to last-ditch legal maneuvers and crude threats in an attempt to force Kirchner into reopening the bond swap, or alternatively, to halt the process altogether.

On March 21, lawyers for NML Capital Ltd., an offshore branch of the notorious Elliott Associates vulture fund, went before New York Federal Judge Thomas Griesa to demand the freezing of \$7 billion in defaulted Argentine bonds deposited at the Bank of New York, the government's clearing agent in the restructuring. Even though the \$7 billion far exceeded Elliott's claim of \$300 million, Griesa granted the motion, raising Argentina's fears that he might freeze similar large amounts for other vulture funds that would make the April 1 swap impossible.

On March 29, Griesa lifted the freeze on the \$7 billion in bonds, but then stayed his own ruling so that Elliott could appeal it, thus ensuring a delay in the April 1 completion of the swap. The New York judge baldly asked Argentina's lawyers what kind of offer the government would make to those bondholders who had refused to participate in the restructuring. The same day, the IMF announced that it would review its policy of lending to Argentina, should Argentina not make concessions to those bondholders.

Mahathir on Dollar Collapse: Seek an Alternative

Addressing an international conference of 650 chief executives from 30 countries in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, former Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad said the U.S. dollar is facing an imminent collapse, and indicated a gold standard currency was the best alternative for international trade, the *Malaysia Star* reported March 30.

Dr. Mahathir told the conference that the only reason the dollar was retaining any value was because of fears of a global economic catastrophe were it rejected as the currency of trade.

His keynote address was titled: "Leadership in the Age of Uncertainties; the Effect of Global Events in Business." He warned: "The catastrophe will come one day, because even the most powerful country in the world cannot repay loans amounting to US\$7 trillion. The uncertainty is with the timing, not whether it will collapse."

Noting that the dollar had been devalued by as much as 50% against the yen, he said it was doubtful that the greenback could recover to its old strength; rather, it would continue to slide, as the present American administration under President George W. Bush did not consider deficits worth reducing.

Dr. Mahathir said that due to America's huge deficit, the U.S. currency had no backing, but continued to be in use because some people still accepted payments in dollars.

"Unless they [the Americans] change their President and have a more responsible President who will try to reduce the deficit, they will have serious trouble with the U.S. currency," he said.

On whether Malaysia should reject the use of the greenback for trade, Mahathir said it was up to the government to decide.

Decimated Zimbabwe Economy Beginning to Improve

Zimbabwe's economy is improving, Reuters reported March 22. "Things have improved and the economy is set to expand in 2005 after six years of recession, but it is still 30% smaller than it was in 1999." And two-thirds of the workforce is believed to have left the country over the last five years.

The collapse resulted from the virtual elimination of the European-run commercial farming sector during the process of land distribution, and also from the trade embargo imposed by the Anglo-American powers, in retaliation for the seizure of land in the hands of Europeans.

"[The government] says a revamped monetary policy has seen bigger inflows of foreign currency through legitimate channels, while improved fuel supplies have eased the plight of industry and motorists," according to Reuters. Annual inflation has subsided to 134%.

Whether this process will continue after the recently held parliamentary elections, is unclear.

World Bank to Finance Africa Electricity Project

The World Bank will finance a project to provide 500 megawatts of electricity from Inga Dam in D.R. Congo, to Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, consistent with the plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to modernize some infrastructure. The bank announced in Kinshasa March 25 its decision to support the project to refurbish the Inga Dam hydroelectric plant for this purpose, to the extent of \$177 million. Most of the generators of the plant are no longer functioning after many years of neglect. Inga 1 first came on line in 1972; Inga 2 in 1982.

There is already a power line that runs from Inga—which is downstream from Kinshasa on the Congo River—to Kinshasa, and thence 2,000 km to Kolwezi in Katanga Province in the far south, where power requirements for mining are great. The World Bank plan is to transmit power from there to Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya through the grid of adjoining Zambia. The connection to the Zambian grid is part of the \$177 million project.

The power will be used to take advantage of cheap labor, especially for textile manufacture for the world market.

United States News Digest

SPECIAL TO EIR ONLINE:

Former State Dept. Legal Advisor: DOJ Responsible for Prisoners Abuse

by Edward Spannaus

April 2 (EIRNS)—The abuse of prisoners at Guantanamo was a "predictable" consequence of the decision made by Justice Department lawyers in early 2002 that the Geneva Conventions would not apply to al-Qaeda personnel, the State Department Legal Advisor at the time has charged. This conclusion, reached by the Justice Department lawyers, "unhinged" those who were responsible for the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo, from the legal guidelines that had governed such treatment for decades, said William H. Taft IV, who was the Legal Advisor to Secretary of State Colin Powell during the Bush Administration's first term.

A number of legal specialists consulted by this news service say that Taft's March 24 statement—which has received no news media coverage—represents the first time that any current or former Administration official has acknowledged the connection between the decision to reject the application of the Geneva Conventions, to the abuse and torture of prisoners which later occurred. Taft made these statements while speaking on the record, at a conference on the Geneva Conventions at American University's Washington College of Law on March 24.

On Jan. 9, 2002, lawyers in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) had drafted a memo to the Pentagon, arguing that neither Taliban or al-Qaeda forces should be subject to the protections of the Geneva Conventions.

Taft and his staff immediately wrote to the OLC lawyers, telling them that their advice was "seriously flawed," and "incorrect as well as incomplete." They attached a 41-page memorandum, hurriedly pulled together, which tore apart the OLC arguments, and warned that a determination that the Geneva Conventions did not apply, could lead to conduct by U.S. personnel that would constitute a "grave breach" of the Conventions, raising "a risk of future criminal prosecution for the U.S. civilian and military leadership and their advisors."

Secretary of State Colin Powell sent a memo to White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice on Jan. 26, arguing strongly against a determination that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to the conflict in Afghanistan, warning that this "will reverse over a century of U.S. policy and practice in supporting the Geneva Conventions and undermine the protections of the law of war for our troops," and outlining a series of likely adverse consequences for the U.S. and the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

Powell's recommendations were ignored, as were the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other senior military officers.

'It Was Predictable'

In his March 24 remarks, Taft said that, if the U.S. were going to depart from the law of war, "there ought to have at least been some particular justification, or at least some practical benefit for departing from this guideline." But, he pointed out, neither the military nor the civilian leadership of the Pentagon saw any such justification or benefit from this, when they were considering the issue in January 2002.

"The original Rules of Engagement issued to the forces fighting in Afghanistan, had rather directed that the Geneva Conventions be complied with, in the treatment of persons taken into custody, regardless of whether they were, strictly speaking, entitled to this. In this respect, the rule followed the American practice in Vietnam, where the Vietcong were treated in accordance with the Conventions, even though it was understood that this was not required."

Taft continued:

"It has been a continuing source of amazement—and, I may add, considerable disappointment to me—that, notwithstanding the stated intention of the Pentagon's leadership, to comply with the requirements of the Conventions, without qualification—lawyers at the Department of Justice thought it was important to decide at that time, that the Conventions did not apply to al-Qaeda as a matter of law, and to qualify the commitment to apply them as a matter of policy to situations where this was 'appropriate' and 'consistent with military necessity.'

"This unsought conclusion unhinged those responsible for the treatment of the detainees in Guantanamo from legal guidelines for interrogation of detainees reflected in the Conventions, and embodied in the Army Field Manual for decades.

"Set adrift in uncharted waters, and under pressure from their leaders to develop information on the plans and practices of al-Qaeda, it was predictable that those managing the interrogation would eventually go too far, and news reports now indicate that, from time to time, that happened."

Top GOPer Cool Toward Bush's Social Security Plan

If President Bush was hoping for an endorsement of his scheme to privatize Social Security, from Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) when the two appeared at a Cedar Rapids town hall meeting March 30, he must have been mighty disappointed. Instead, Grassley, who is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, which is responsible for writing any bill to change Social Security, demurred: "We agree on a blueprint; that blueprint is that we need to do something to guarantee Social Security for our children, ... and doing nothing is not an option." So the Senator used the right buzz-words, but concluded his introduction of Bush by saying, "We've got to turn up the heat on Washington, D.C. to see this is an issue and get a bipartisan agreement to get something done." What the something is, was not specified.

A bit more telling were Grassley's remarks during an interview the day before: "I said I intend to bring this up even if the President is not successful. Now, have I said I'd fall on my sword? I haven't said that yet." Also with Bush was Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa) whose district was the site of the meeting. NPR radio reported that after 15 town meetings in his district, Leach says he hasn't found any support for the President's plan, and so he's still not endorsing it.

Meanwhile, in Minot, N.D., Democratic Sen. Byron Dorgan, an out-front opponent of Bush's Social Security heist, told North Dakotans that something needs to be done, "but there really isn't a crisis. The program is solvent until President Bush turns 106 years old.... There is, however, a real crisis with Medicare." Participants at the meeting also discussed saving Amtrak, energy policy, and tax codes, among other issues, the *Minot Daily News* reported March 30.

Republican Governors Reject Bush-Style Austerity

A number of Republican governors are raising taxes and blasting the Bush Administration for bankrupting the states, the *Washington Post* reported March 27. Colorado Gov. Bill Owens, who once championed the state constitutional limits on taxing and spending, is now working with Democrats to suspend the limits for five years, in order to spend \$3.1 billion over the mandated limit. Owens and other governors blame the Bush tax-cutting and cuts in entitlements for the financial disasters in their states. Attacked by a fellow Republican, House Minority Leader Joe Stengel, for breaking the "no-tax" orthodoxy, Owens responded: "When the next volume of *Profiles in Courage* is written, there won't be a chapter on Joe Stengel."

Sounding like the Europeans who are bucking the Maastricht restrictions on spending, Idaho's Gov. Dirk Kempthorne said: "I have done something that is absolutely not part of my fiber. But I'm not going to dismantle this state, and I'm not going to jeopardize our bond rating, and I'm not going to reduce my emphasis on education." Nevada's Gov. Kenny Guinn, on his tax hikes, said: "Some people say that makes me a bad Republican. Well, I would be a worse Republican and a worse

grandfather, and a worse citizen, if I didn't find enough money to educate our children and fund our Medicaid program and provide decent prenatal care." Georgia's Gov. Sonny Perdue and Ohio's Gov. Bob Taft are also named as Republicans dumping their no-tax pledges.

Diplomats Oppose Bolton Nomination to UN

Fifty-nine former diplomats have sent a letter to Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind) opposing the nomination of John Bolton to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. The letter, delivered March 29, said, "We urge you to reject that nomination," arguing that "his past activities and statements indicate conclusively that he is the wrong man for this position." Diplomats who signed the letter included those serving in Republican and Democratic administrations, going back to President Richard Nixon.

The list includes Arthur A. Hartman, Ambassador to France and the Soviet Union under Presidents Carter and Reagan, and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs under President Nixon; James F. Leonard, deputy Ambassador to the UN in the Ford and Carter Administrations; Princeton N. Lyman, Ambassador to South Africa and Nigeria under Presidents Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Clinton; Monteagle Stearns, Ambassador to Greece and Ivory Coast in the Ford, Carter, and Reagan Administrations; and Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr., Deputy Director of the Arms Control Agency in the Carter Administration.

The former diplomats chided Bolton for his "insistence that the UN is valuable only when it directly serves the United States."

Bush Adopts New Counterintelligence Strategy

The Bush Administration has released an unclassified, sanitized version of what it calls the "National Counterintelligence Strategy"—elements of which had previously been made public in a March 5 speech by the National Counterintelligence Executive, Michelle Van Cleve, and then in a March 6 *Washington Post* article.

The so-called strategy is based on a totally paranoid, Hobbesian view of the outside world, in which at least 90 countries are seen as trying to spy on the U.S. and gain access to its secrets, including technological secrets. In the fantasy-world of its authors, the United States is the world's technological leader, and U.S. defense strategy is based on "transformation"—the discredited notion peddled by Rumsfeld and others, that the wars of the future will be high-tech, computerized battles in which boots never have to hit the ground.

The hallmark of the new counterintelligence (CI) "strategy," as outlined in Van Cleve's March 5 speech, is that it will be *pre-emptive*—"a proactive strategy of prevention," or, as Van Cleve put it, "We will shift emphasis from a posture of reaction to a proactive strategy of seizing initiative."

Many nations are running "denial and deception" operations against the United States, in order to present a false picture of reality," Van Cleve warned, but the U.S. will now have a policy of "attacking foreign intelligence services systematically via strategic CI operations."

In true Cheneyac fashion, Van Cleve asserted that, in the past, "by waiting for intelligence threats to mature before taking action, we have ceded the initiative to the adversary. No longer will we wait until we have been harmed to act."

As we previously reported, Van Cleve worked for Doug Feith's law firm, Feith & Zell, during the years she was not in government, and her top deputy, Kenneth deGraffenreid, most recently worked in Doug Feith's shop in the Pentagon.

During the Reagan Administration, deGraffenreid was one of Lyndon LaRouche's most outspoken enemies in the National Security Council staff, according to court testimony.

Iraq, Afghanistan Vets Suffering Psychological Disorders

As many as one out of four veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars treated at Veterans Affairs Hospitals suffer from mental disorders, according to a report in the latest *New England Journal of Medicine*. The report covers the 16-month period between October 2003 and February 2005. Over a quarter of those veterans who sought treatment at VA hospitals, reportedly suffer from mental disorders ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder to anxiety disorder, to drug and alcohol abuse.

Ibero-American News Digest

Integration Is the New Name for Peace In South America

The neocon Cheneyacs' drive for "regime change" in Venezuela as a detonator for war in South America was delivered a major set-back with the historic March 29 summit in Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela, of the Heads of State Colombia (Alvaro Uribe), Venezuela (Hugo Chavez), Brazil (Lula da Silva), and Spain (Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero).

Only last January, relations between Venezuela and Colombia were nearly broken, and the two countries were headed down a path which could have led to war. Asked to identify the importance of the summit at the press conference given by the four at the conclusion of their talks, Colombia's Uribe—supposedly the "hardline right-winger" aligned with George W. Bush—summed it up as integration. "Integration of infrastructure, integration of the economies. Integration in cooperation. Integration to advance in the eradication of poverty," he said, and noted also sincere statements of support for Colombia's battle against terrorism and drugs.

Venezuela's Chavez told the press conference that his government has "told the Colombian guerrilla ... that the moment you step on Venezuelan territory, you will be considered enemies of Venezuela," and Venezuela is fully prepared to fight the drug trade and terrorism.

So, too, when pressed by journalists for Colombia's response to Spain's (and others') selling ships and planes to Venezuela, Uribe declared that these arms purchases are not a threat, but rather could help Colombia, because they will be used by Venezuela to fight the drug trade.

During the summit, Uribe gave a map-briefing of the region, pointing out the rivers which must be joined, and the highways that must be paved, so that Brazil and Venezuela can have an outlet to the Pacific Ocean, through Colombia. Trade with Asia will be crucial, he said, and he reported that he had asked Chavez to represent Colombia, also, when Chavez visited China in December.

Lula, for his part, said that what they all wish is "to consolidate an infrastructure policy to consolidate the integration of South America," and we need to find mechanisms to finance this. We need to convince the rich countries which have technology, to come help us build this integration. "Neither can the United States, nor any other country see this as a bad thing."

Brazil Challenges Bush Regime Change Policy for Venezuela

"Venezuela has the right to be a sovereign country, and make its own decisions," Brazilian President Lula da Silva stated during the March 29 four-party summit in Ciudad Guayana. Lula left no doubt that his remarks were a direct answer to Donald Rumsfeld's brazen threats against Venezuela during his trip to Ibero-America the week before. "We have people speaking ill of us all over the world. I want to say to President Chavez, that ... we don't accept slanders against our 'companeros'.... You can be sure of our solidarity," Lula said. "We, of South America, are capable of taking care of our own affairs."

Within three days, *Folha de Sao Paulo* reported that Secretary of State Condi Rice will go to Brazil at the end of April, apparently to offer the 'tit for tat' that if Brazil wants a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, it must join the Bush regime's drive against Venezuela. The trip has reportedly been in the works since January, but was set only now, with Venezuela and the reform of the UN Security Council the two items on the agenda.

Arab, South American Foreign Ministers Meet in Morocco

Thirty-four Foreign Ministers from South America and the Arab nations met in Morocco March 24-25, to finalize preparations for the first ever Arab-South American Summit, to be held in Brasilia from May 8-11. The summit is President Lula da Silva's initiative, and his Foreign Minister, Celso Amorim, told the Foreign Ministers meeting in Morocco that the summit, before it even has taken place, is already a success, because it has brought these two vast regions of the developing sector closer together.

Economic relations—trade and investments—have already increased, helping create the needed "new world economic and trade geography," but more than economic matters have been strengthened, Amorim said. We have started "a dialogue of the future." He pointed to the centuries of contributions to Western civilization by Arab science and culture. We have to understand each other, and this should be seen not as a problem, but as a source of solutions, of construction, of creativity, he said. "Imagine an historian of the future who analyzes this effort which we are making.... [This summit] is not an earthquake, but more like a small seismic movement which will be registered by historians."

In an address to the Arab League summit three days before, Amorim stressed that the Brasilia summit, coming at this important moment in the Middle East, "will serve the cause of peace." The agenda of the summit ranges from such intriguing topics as "the reform of international financial institutions," to cooperation on solving the problems of developing semi-arid lands. South America hopes to interest the Arab nations in financing infrastructure projects in South America, and Colombia's *El Tiempo* reported March 24 that diplomatic sources in Brasilia are hoping that the establishment of an Arab-Brazilian, or Arab-South American bank will be announced at the summit.

Arizona-Mexico Border: Flashpoint for 'Clash Of Civilizations' Scenarios

More than 1,000 U.S. vigilantes—including 30 pilots and their private planes—began patrolling part of Arizona's border with Mexico on April 1, as part of the so-called "Minuteman Project" launched by the same fascist anti-immigrant movement that spawned Proposition 200, passed in Arizona on Nov. 2, 2004, which forces government officials to identify and turn in "undocumented" who seek public benefits like health care or education for their children; those who refuse, face fines or jail themselves.

The Minutemen are linked to a nest of other vigilante operations proliferating in Arizona, and elsewhere, including to the Evangelical Christian military ministry, "Operation Freedom," of Col. Jim Ammerman. Ammerman's role in the treasonous U.S. militia movement overall was exposed by *EIR* in its Aug. 22, 1997 blockbuster package on "Britain's 'Invisible' Empire Unleashes the Dogs of War." (See, "Who Is Wagging Your Neighbor's Tongue? The Militias and Pentacostalism," by Anton Chaitkin.)

Lyndon LaRouche warned on March 28, that as the Cheney crowd finds its domestic and foreign projects stymied (case in point: Wall Street's privatization of Social Security), the potential for something really nasty, along the lines of the Samuel Huntington scenario for a major terrorist eruption, coming out of Ibero-America, probably across the Mexican border, could be activated. LaRouche traced this operation back to the World War II era, when the Nazis had their Synarchist apparatus in place to run sabotage missions against the United States, particularly along the West Coast. The Synarchist offspring of those wartime Nazi operations are now active, in precisely the same areas.

That same day, the neocon *Washington Times* of Rev. Sun Myung Moon began propagandizing about a conflict along the Arizona border, between the vigilante groups and the Mara Salvatrucha 13—the violent transnational gang wreaking havoc from Panama to Canada—which the Minutemen say has deployed people into Arizona to pick a fight.

Likudnik Neocons Turn Their Sights on Ibero-America

Just as Lyndon LaRouche reiterated his warning that the Huntington/Cheney crowd are likely to use a Hispanic cover for another "Reichstag Fire" attack on the U.S., the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), a virtual branch of the American Enterprise Institute, and an integral part of the neoconservative war party running the Bush Administration, sent out a bulletin (#479) on March 26, raving that "ideological killers are regrouping" in Central and South America, "with the aid of leftist governments and drug lords." JINSA not-so-subtly compares the region to "the original swamp of the terrorist swamp theory": the PLO terrorist training camps in Lebanon which "Israel put ... out of business" in 1982—by invading, they wrote. The U.S. is draining the Afghan swamp today, "but watch out for Central and South America." Among JINSA'S targets are the Brazilian, Uruguayan, and Venezuelan governments, "indigenous anti-American politicians," and the Chinese military, which has dared carry out state-to-state visits with Ibero-American nations. "All of which makes the region a swamp of potentially tragic proportions," they conclude.

Western European News Digest

German Neocons To Host Hitler-Lover Arnie

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a professed Hitler-admirer, plans to visit Germany, where he will meet with his new friends in the circle of German "neoconservatives." The date has not been announced, but there is talk about a time in late spring or early summer. Whether Arnie will meet his big fan Juergen Ruetters (CDU) in Northrhine-Westphalia is not yet certain, but he will definitely meet the CSU's Edmund Stoiber in Bavaria. Arnie already sent a message to Stoiber, praising the latter's alleged "successful budgeting policy," especially the target of reaching a "balanced budget" for the state of Bavaria by FY 2006. The right-wing Stoiber, as governor of Bavaria, is leading a campaign to rid Germany of immigrants.

Arnie also wants to visit Austria, where both he and Hitler were born, and other states as well, on his tour, which is described as "European."

Red-Green Coalition Still Leads CDU/CSU in Polls

The unpopularity of the neocon faction in the CDU has surpassed the unpopularity of the Social Democrats.

The latest opinion polls in Germany show a widening gap in popularity between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the German Socialist Party (SPD), with the SPD falling more than 10% behind. However, if voters are asked for preferences among leading politicians, the entire pack of CDU neocons falls visibly behind SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

On the other hand, a new poll by the FORSA institute shows that 77% of the German electorate believes the red-green (SPD/Green Party) coalition will be voted out in the next scheduled national elections, in September 2006. Although a majority of voters considers the red-green government as incapable of solving the economic and financial problems, 41% would still prefer Schroeder as Chancellor. Only 32% prefer the CDU's Angela Merkel.

Among CDU supporters and members, Merkel only has the backing of 32%, Edmund Stoiber 28%, and even Christian Wulff, the rising star in the CDU, only has 35% of backers in his own party.

The situation is not much better for Juergen Ruetters, the would-be rising star of Northrhine-Westphalia: although 52% of the voters in that state expect the red-green state coalition government to be voted out on May 22, 38% would still prefer incumbent SPD Governor Peer Steinbrueck as Governor to Ruetters, who is backed by only 32%.

European Commission Urges Overhaul of Myanmar Relations

An independent report commissioned by the European Union (EU) made available on March 28 urges the EU to overhaul its policies on Myanmar in favor of an approach that would boost Myanmar's economy and political situation. This flies in the face of the hostile US policy toward Myanmar.

The report says that: "Fifteen years of Western censure and sanctions have had no visible impact on the will or the capacity of the military rulers to maintain power. Whatever policies and attitudes the outside world adopts towards Burma/Myanmar, the military will remain in power for the foreseeable future. The failure to effectively understand and work with the government undermines the EU's strategic and humanitarian objectives."

The report calls for sweeping changes in the EU's ties to the country, outlining 12 proposals, including: recognizing Myanmar instead of Burma as the official name of the country; resuming regular high-level visits; revising the use of sanctions; and restoring some aid programs aimed at easing crushing poverty and improving basic education.

The report was written by Robert Taylor, who is a fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, and Morten Pederson, an analyst for the International Crisis Group.

Schroeder: Freedom Is More than Just Free Trade

In an interview with the German weekly *Die Zeit* March 31, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder made some interesting remarks on the notion of freedom, and on Russia. Schroeder said that for him, what is valid is not the "freedom of the market" so worshipped by the neoliberals. "Freedom is more than just the freedom of trade," he said, adding that real freedom includes a social dimension.

Asked about Russia and the wave of anti-authoritarian criticism against Russian President Vladimir Putin, Schroeder said that one should compare the Putin era to the "chaos in the Yeltsin era": "Everybody knows quite well that in the Yeltsin era, there was an exploitation of the national Russian property." Putin first had to restore security for the citizens and for investors, "which only could be done through restoring the authority of the state."

Russia and the CIS News Digest

LaRouche: Project Democracy Was 'Coup-Coup'd' in Kyrgyzstan

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On March 28, Lyndon LaRouche issued his personal assessment of the ongoing events in the Central Asian, former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan, characterizing the political crisis that erupted there last week as a Moscow-orchestrated "coup-coup" against the Bush-Cheney Project Democracy apparatus that was deeply involved in the so-called "rainbow revolutions" in Georgia and Ukraine.

The U.S.A.-centered Project Democracy apparatus includes the likes of George Shultz, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine Albright, and the entire neoconservative apparatus ensconced in the Pentagon civilian bureaucracy and the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney.

The Events

On March 24, Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev fled the capital, Bishkek, in the face of opposition demonstrations. In a matter of hours, three bold actions had taken place, that led to the Akayev departure and the regime change:

First, former Kyrgyz security chief Gen. Felix Kulov, a longtime KGB asset, was freed from jail. He would play a pivotal role in all the succeeding events.

Next, a group of no more than 200 demonstrators took over the "White House"—the government headquarters building. Eyewitnesses to the events, interviewed by *EIR*, confirmed that security personnel guarding the building disappeared as soon as the demonstrators arrived, thus offering no interference with the takeover.

Finally, the same group of demonstrators took over the national television station.

The Kyrgyz Supreme Court nullified the results of the recent parliamentary elections of Feb. 27 and March 13, and appointed Kulov and former Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiyev to head up a new interim government. After several nights of looting and violence, widely viewed as linked to drug-mafia networks that operate in Kyrgyzstan's southern region, which abuts the Fergana Valley, order was restored to the Central Asian republic. Former President Akayev, who initially fled to Kazakhstan, later arrived in Moscow. He has not yet resigned his post, and has challenged the legitimacy of what one observer described as a "palace coup by a faction of the security services."...

[...link to full article in InDepth \(PDF\)](#)

Southwest Asia News Digest

Extremist Rabbis Put *Pulsa Denura* Curse on Sharon

Yosef Dayan, former close adviser to the late Jewish-American terrorist, Rabbi Meir Kahane, has been given permission to enact a "*pulsa denura*"—Aramaic for "lashes of fire"—or curse of death—on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, reported the *Jerusalem Post* on March 30. It was Dayan who pronounced such a curse on former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, prior to his assassination in November 1995. He was given permission by Yeshua Ben Shushan, a kabbalistic rabbi who in 1980 was arrested for being part of a plot to blow up the Dome of the Rock on the Al Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount.

Commenting on this threat against Sharon, *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche warned that this religious curse from fundamentalist Jews is a serious danger, and is part of the religious-warfare scenario that includes the current ongoing destabilizations of Lebanon and Syria (see this week's InDepth).

Dayan and Ben Shushan both believe in creating an Israeli monarchy, and since Dayan claims a lineage that goes back to King David, it's obvious who would be king. Dayan is a key leader in this most extremist of right-wing movements. In October 2004, Dayan reenacted a First Temple-era water libation ritual at the Siloam spring in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan, with the goal of removing Sharon from power and instituting a Jewish monarchy.

Ben Shushan is one of the leaders of the Temple Mount terrorists—i.e., those Jewish extremists who believe that they will build the Third Temple of Jerusalem on Temple Mount, which requires the destruction of the existing Islamic mosque, the Dome of the Rock, which stands on the same site. When he is not plotting to blow up mosques, Ben Shushan spends his time looking for "red heifers" to sacrifice, fulfilling a Biblical prophecy, so that he and the Temple Mount crazies can build the Third Temple. According to Ben Shushan, it was the lack of a red heifer which was one of the "spiritual difficulties" which led to the failure of the earlier plot to blow up the Dome of the Rock.

On March 30, *Yedioth Aharonot* reported that Israeli police refused to issue a permit for collaborators of these organizations to hold a mass demonstration planned for April 10 on the al Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount site. The so-called Revava organization was the organizer of the demonstration, and it claimed it expected 10,000 people to participate. Founded by David Halvri, Revava is directly linked to the Jewish terrorist Kach organization, founded by Meir Kahane. The police have also banned Baruch Marzel, Baruch ben Yossef, and Iramar Ben Gvir, all of whom are members of Kach, from entering the al Haram al Sharif.

Fearing a provocation at the site, police have held a meeting with senior Palestinians from East Jerusalem to discuss these potentials.

Threat to Sharon Will Come from 'His Own Shadow'

Senior Israeli security correspondent Amir Oren wrote April 1 in *Ha'aretz* that the threat to the life of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will not come from a lone assassin like Yigal Amir, who assassinated Yitzhak Rabin. Oren writes that the security around Sharon is so thick that a Yigal Amir does not stand a chance. The real fear is that the attack would be of a commando-scale operation, or a rocket attack. Also, the fear is that there would be no forewarning. The two groups whom officials fear most are those who supported Sharon, and those created under his own shadow. The first is from Brooklyn—the extended Jewish Defense League network—and the other is Sharon's old buddies in the intelligence services and the old Stern Gang apparatus.

Of the first, Oren writes, "If four people are at this moment sitting in Brooklyn and plotting to murder Sharon, be they opponents of the evacuation or mercenaries, planning to land at Ben-Gurion International Airport, ... they will be discovered only at the moment of the assassination attempt, or at the earliest [when] indications of their activity are uncovered...."

On the second possibility, Oren paints a picture of the type of threat that the mafia boss encounters after he double-crosses one of the "families." He writes "that the adversary now pitting itself against protective security in the Shin Bet is a copy of its shadow, an exact negative. It's a handful of people, maybe a dozen, who served in the elite units in the army and the Shin Bet, in the Mossad and the police, who know how to blend into their surroundings and attack, some of them perhaps second-generation underground, sons of members of the special units, maybe also former fighters who served under Sharon in the prestigious Unit 101 and in the Paratroops. The participation of security personnel in terrorist attacks is known from

the period of the Jewish underground and in political assassination...."

The fact that over half of the Israeli security services that deal with VIP security for government officials are being deployed to protect Sharon, not only reflects a level of danger, but the level of fear that Sharon has—like the mafia boss.

Iraqi Insurgency Will Continue Until U.S. Occupation Ends

The Iraqi resistance will continue until the United States presents a plan for the withdrawal of its occupation troops, Sunni Sheikh Harith al-Dari stated, as reported in the *New York Times* March 29. As a leading member of the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS), al-Dari said, "We ask all wise men in the American nation to advise the administration to leave this country. It would save much blood and suffering for the Iraqi and American people." He said that once that occurs, "I think Iraqi leaders could speak and appeal to the resistance. they could tell them: 'If you want to liberate your country, liberation now is coming without any price. So you must save your efforts and money.' "

According to the *Times*, the AMS wants to have Sunnis in the Interior and Defense Ministry positions of the Iraqi government now being created.

Al-Dari is being courted by Iraqi political figures, in hopes of getting him to help bring some Sunnis into the government. Al-Dari is a tribal leader, from a family that was prominent in the 1920 rebellion against the British.

As *EIR* warned, before, during, and after the U.S. invaded Iraq, the Dick Cheney-led destruction of Iraqi institutions such as the Ba'ath Party civil government structures, the Iraqi economic and infrastructure ministries, and the orders disbanding the Iraqi military, would lead to ungovernability. The last two months' impasse in creating an Iraqi government is a reflection of the lack of credibility that George W. Bush's "democracy" has inside the country.

Sistani Reaffirms Commitment to Political Process in Iraq

In the continuing political crisis, where the new Parliament proves incapable of putting a government together, on March 29, Iraq's Shi'ite Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani stated: "Whenever it is necessary, I will participate in the country's developments. So far, I have played a role in my country's development whenever it was necessary, and from now on I will continue to be on the scene whatever the circumstances," as reported by the Iranian news agency IRNA March 29.

Fourth Bombing Against Christian Area in Lebanon

On April 1, a bomb exploded in an underground parking lot of a shopping and residential complex in the mountain resort of Brumana, 20 kilometers east of Beirut, in the Christian area. It is the fourth bombing against Christians since March 17. In the April 1 incident, about a dozen cars were destroyed in the blast, which caused heavy material damage. The eight-story center contains a branch of the Mediterranean Bank, owned by the Hariri family. Rafik Hariri, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, was killed in a highly sophisticated bombing of his motorcade on Feb. 14, an incident which kicked off a crisis in the country, which could erupt into renewed civil war.

[For background, see this week's InDepth.](#)

Former UN Arms Inspector Warns of U.S. Attack on Iran

Scott Ritter, a former UN arms inspector, is convinced that the United States will move against Iran, even as early as June

2005, according to a lengthy op-ed carried in Aljazeera.com on March 31. The former U.S. Marine officer reports that he had been approached by someone close to the Bush Administration, after the 2004 elections, and asked about the situation in Iraq.

Ritter writes: "There was a growing concern inside the Bush Administration, this source said, about the direction the occupation was going. The Bush Administration was keen on achieving some semblance of stability in Iraq before June 2005, I was told. When I asked why that date, the source dropped the bombshell: 'because that was when the Pentagon was told to be prepared to launch a massive aerial attack against Iran, Iraq's neighbor to the east, in order to destroy the Iranian nuclear program.' Why June 2005? I asked. 'The Israelis are concerned that if the Iranians get their nuclear enrichment program up and running, then there will be no way to stop the Iranians from getting a nuclear weapon....' "

Ritter went on to list all the statements made by Washington, indicating intent to hit Iran, and ended saying that John Bolton's appointment as Bush's UN Ambassador is the clincher, since Bolton has been the point man for the anti-Iran campaign.

Asia News Digest

India, Japan To Develop Natural Gas in the Andaman Sea

Japan and India have agreed on the joint development of natural gas off the Andaman islands in the Bay of Bengal, the *Nihon Keizei Shimbun* reported. The agreement was reached when Shinzo Abe, a Japanese opposition leader, met with the Indian Premier Manmohan Singh in Delhi on March 28.

The natural gas deal is also aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, because Japan's ruling party hopes to use its strong partnership with India to keep in check China's increasing presence in western Asia, the report said. It noted that China is extending ties with Myanmar, with its troops deployed on Myanmar-held islands north of the Andaman Islands.

India Cautions Developing Nations on WTO

Urging the developing nations to close ranks, Indian Commerce Secretary S. N. Menon, addressing the leading Indian Chambers of Commerce at New Delhi, said: "There are attempts at creating further differentiation among the developing countries.... We must see that there is no further division or we will lose our strength of negotiating at WTO [the World Trade Organization]."

Stressing increasing South-South trade, Menon said India was actively looking at how it can open up its markets for the Least Developed Countries.

Menon cautioned the developing nations, saying that the developed nations are now pushing for tightening of the "scrutiny of preferences" (under which the WTO demands to examine, imperial-style, trade agreements of member countries under the Regional Trade Agreements), and that this should be resisted by developing nations.

Kuomintang Leaders Visit China; First Time Since 1949

Leaders of Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT) party began a five-day visit to mainland China March 28, their first official visit since 1949. Party vice chairman Chiang Pin-Kun is leading a 30-member delegation in a visit to Guangzhou and Nanjing, and then to Beijing, to pay respects to the late Chinese nationalist leader Dr. Sun Yat-sen and to the KMT martyrs of the

April 1911 Huanghuagang Uprising, which was led by Dr. Sun. The delegation is visiting to mark the Qingming Festival, a time to pay respects to the dead. After Guangzhou, they will go to the beautiful Mausoleum of Sun Yat-sen in Nanjing.

This is the first visit of KMT officials since the Revolution of 1949, when Mao's People's Liberation Army defeated the KMT forces in China. The KMT is now leading the opposition in Taiwan, and this visit is intended to ease relations across the Taiwan Straits. On his arrival, Chiang Pin-Kun said: "We hope to help ease cross-strait tensions to ensure people's well-being,... [and] to do what the government [led by the 'pro-independence' Democratic Progressive Party (DDP)] does not do and cannot do." Before he left Taiwan, Chiang said: "We oppose Taiwan independence. We advocate peace across the Straits and oppose the mainland using force."

A leading issue of Chiang Pin-Kun's visit is improving economic relations. On the agenda are expanding exports of Taiwan agricultural produce to the mainland, and increasing direct air links across the Taiwan Straits. During the Spring Festival this year, direct charter flights were started for the first time, and these may be expanded to other festivals and even regular weekend service. Chiang also wants to negotiate opening direct cargo transport links, since so many Taiwanese have set up manufacturing facilities on the mainland. In Guangzhou, the biggest center of Taiwanese investment in China (worth some US\$35.6 billion), Chiang met with leaders of the Taiwanese community. The *China Daily* quoted Frank Tsai, executive director of Airmate Electrical (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., saying that, "As a leader of Taiwan, [President and DDP leader] Chen Shui-bian should focus his efforts on boosting economic development and trying to ensure Taiwanese people live better lives, instead of frequently challenging the mainland's bottom line."

U.S. Does Not Want Democracy in Afghanistan

The United States has made clear, by postponing Parliamentary elections from October 2004, to May 2005, to September 2005, that it does not want democracy in Afghanistan, according to an article in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* April 1. Steve Coll, managing editor of the *Washington Post* and the author of *Ghost War*, a book about post-Soviet Afghanistan, writes in the *Globe and Mail*, that at this point, if President Hamid Karzai is assassinated, Afghanistan's political situation will be exactly what it was in the winter of 2001. If the Parliament had been formed, the process itself would have helped to create a successor to Karzai. At this point in time, Pushtuns do not have a political party, unless Taliban is considered as one, and the northern Afghans are maintaining their ethno-centered militia as their political identity.

Coll is right, and he is worried, like many others. There is a strong belief within the U.S. military that Karzai may not last through this summer. The usual spring violence has begun. On March 30, as First Lady Laura Bush landed in Kabul, a bomb went off, killing several people. On April 1, a bomb attack on a Canadian embassy car in Kabul injured a Canadian and three Afghans. These are just the opening salvos.

North Korea Raises the Bar

North Korea's Foreign Ministry has requested that the six-party talks sought by the United States to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program be transformed into regional disarmament negotiations that also address the U.S. deployments in northeast Asia. At the same time, according to the *International Herald Tribune* April 2, a senior North Korean government official announced they would not return to the six-party talks unless Washington apologized for calling the Communist nation an "outpost of tyranny," as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice did during her Senate confirmation hearing; she has since refused to retract her description of the country.

North Korea's announcement on April 1 that any negotiations on curbing its nuclear ambitions must also discuss curtailing U.S. military influence in northeast Asia as well, will further undermine possibility of talks.

Washington must realize that its attempt to tighten screws on China will have a decidedly negative effect in dealing with

North Korea. But that is exactly what Washington is involved in.

Africa News Digest

Angola: Marburg Virus Continues To Spread

The deadly Marburg virus is continuing to spread, and to spread panic, in Angola. The death toll is now 130, making it the largest outbreak of Marburg ever. Recombinomics.com commented March 31 that the death toll is running at 100%, the only living cases being those who "have not been sick long enough to die." In previous large outbreaks in Africa, mortality ranged from 40% to 88%.

In Angola, "basic barriers such as gowns, gloves, and masks are lacking, facilitating the spread of the virus," according to Recombinomics.com March 26. "Three nurses died about a week ago, followed by two more nurses on Tuesday [March 22]. An Italian pediatrician died on Thursday, followed by a Vietnamese physician on Friday. A sixth nurse died on Saturday and an Angolan physician is infected," it reports.

Doctors Without Borders, the Department of Infectious Diseases (Manchester, U.K.), Johannesburg Hospital, the Canadian National Microbiology Laboratory, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control are now engaged in a full range of public-health activities, including lab work, training health workers, and infection control, including running isolation facilities.

Angolan Health Ministry spokesman Carlos Alberto said March 26, "The situation is critical," and pointed out that the numbers of infected and dead could be much greater, since the reported numbers reflect only those who come to hospital.

Five corpses, victims of Marburg fever, have been found in residential areas by health staff working to detect new cases, Deputy Health Minister Jose Van-Dunem told the press March 30 in Luanda, according to the Angola Press Agency. Van-Dunem was apparently referring to neighborhoods in Uije province.

A death has occurred in Camabatela (Kwanza-Norte province), about 70 km from Uije; the victim was a professor who had contact with infected corpses in Uije and later travelled to Camabatela. The virus had earlier spread to Luanda, the capital, and Cabinda, bordering both Congos.

The hospital in the town of Uije (the epicenter) was closed as of March 30, according to a statement by a health official in the town, Quiala Godi. The apparent reason was the panic of the staff and of staff sent from Luanda, since the number of health-care workers who have died has risen to 12.

In Xawande (Malanje province), 450 km from Uije province, merchants and vendors are refusing to buy produce from Uije province, suspecting it may be infected with the virus.

ICC Authorized To Hear War Crimes Cases Against Sudanese

The UN has approved a resolution to prosecute Sudanese suspected of war crimes, before the International Criminal Court. The resolution passed, after the U.S., reversing policy, decided not to veto the move. The U.S. has rejected the ICC criminal court. But it abstained, after receiving guarantees that Americans working in the country would not be handed over to either the ICC or any other nation's courts if they commit crimes in Sudan. The final vote was 11-0 with four abstentions, from Algeria, Brazil, China, and the United States.

The resolution refers Darfur cases occurring since July 1, 2002, to the court, as recommended by a UN panel that had concluded in January that crimes against humanity, but not genocide, had occurred in the western Sudanese region.

Sudan Message to Rebels on Ceasefire Covered

The *Washington Post* gave page-one prominence March 22 to the message of Sudan's First Vice President, Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha, that, "We need a strong, unequivocal message that the rebels have to honor the ceasefire...." The rebels in Darfur "started this war by attacking police stations and the airport.... What is needed at the moment is for them to have pressure from Europe and the U.S. to stop."

The *Post* says Taha "is considered by many to be the most powerful man in Sudan, partly because he helped negotiate a peace deal in a separate conflict in the country's south." In fact, he directed the negotiations on the government side, and has now been charged by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir with achieving a settlement in Darfur. (Is the *Post* suggesting that Taha should succeed Bashir as President?) The *Post* does not mention that Taha was at one time in charge of internal security. He has also been Foreign Minister.

Taha told the *Post* that the government did not have enough money to develop the Darfur region. "Taha visited Darfur in late 2002 to discuss the needs of the local populace. He said the visitors were told that 'there was need of fresh water, health care, and primary schooling.... We agreed with that.' But just a few months later, Taha added, 'the response was shooting by the rebels.' "

Britain: Darfur Rebels Must Negotiate Without Preconditions

British Foreign Office spokesman Chris Mullin said March 22 that the Darfur insurrectionists "should reconsider their current position and agree to the immediate resumption of the peace talks in Abuja [Nigeria] without preconditions." He added, "The current position of non-engagement is unacceptable and is unnecessarily delaying peace in Darfur." He made these statements after meeting with Minni Minnawi of the Sudan Liberation Movement in London.

The Darfur insurrectionists recently announced that they would not return to negotiations with the Sudan government until war crimes trials of figures in the government were underway.

Mugabe Foils Anglo-American Scheme for Gov't of National Unity

Under great pressure from the Anglo-American powers, the South African government of Thabo Mbeki has sought to identify and encourage factions within Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF that would be receptive to forming a government of "national unity" with the Anglo-American puppet, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). According to Chris Maroleng of the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria (largely influenced by the Anglo-Americans powers), Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe put an end to this effort, which had focussed on ZANU-PF figure Emerson Mnangagwa. Maroleng's view was carried by Reuters March 24.

After the ZANU-PF party congress in December, Mnangagwa and his supporters were stripped of key party positions. "They had banded together to oppose Mugabe's choice of veteran ZANU-PF member Joyce Mujuru as second vice president, placing her in a position to succeed [Mugabe]. A number of key ZANU-PF officials close to Mnangagwa have since been jailed after a swift trial on charges of passing official secrets to a South African spy," Reuters claims.

South African President Mbeki's spokesman, Bheki Khumalo, "dismissed the alleged Mnangagwa link as 'a conspiracy theory.' 'What South Africa wants is a home-grown solution by the Zimbabweans,' he said," according to Reuters.

Kabila, Entourage Seek Asian Investments

Congolese President Joseph Kabila and an entourage of 200 have concluded a tour of Japan, South Korea, and China in search of investment. As it happened, Condoleezza Rice arrived in Japan and South Korea on Kabila's heels, and was in China at the same time that he was there. The Congolese tour extended from March 13 to the 25th, including four days in China at the invitation of Chinese President Hu Jintao. Kabila last visited China in March 2002. The results known so far:

Tokyo cancelled the Congolese public debt to Japan. It will create a free-trade zone between Kinshasa and the coast, and will built a high-speed train across this zone. It promised \$7 million toward the expenses of the upcoming elections, on top of its existing large contribution to peacekeeping in the Congo. Kabila was received by the Emperor and had talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Seoul signed an agreement for developing mining production in general, and cobalt in particular. Seoul will reopen its embassy in Kinshasa—closed many years ago. A large delegation of businessmen will be sent to Kinshasa in June. Kabila was guest of honor at a dinner in the Presidential palace, and the heads of Congolese enterprises spoke before a meeting of South Korean investors on Congo's wealth of raw materials.

In Beijing, Kabila had discussions with President Hu Jintao, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, the Minister of Defense, and the Chairman of the National People's Congress. In receiving Kabila, Hu encouraged Chinese enterprises to invest in Congo. Kabila had discussions with some leading Chinese businessmen. China and Congo signed agreements with respect to military cooperation, agriculture, energy, minerals, and fishing, and other areas. A large financial donation to Congo of unspecified amount was announced. (To meet Chinese demand for cobalt, for example, Congo would have to increase its annual production by 20,000 tons.)

While Kabila was in East Asia, the Congolese Vice President in charge of the Commission for Economics and Finance, Jean-Pierre Bemba, visited India, Britain, and Brazil.

This Week in History

April 4-10, 1935

70th Anniversary of President Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration

In the spring of 1935, it was obvious to President Roosevelt that more measures would have to be taken to put Americans back to work. The Civilian Conservation Corps was providing work and income for young men and for a large group of veterans, and the large-scale infrastructure programs such as the Tennessee Valley Authority were getting off the ground, but there were still millions of unemployed Americans, many of them unable to see where their next meal was coming from.

Therefore, on April 8, 1935, the President signed an appropriations bill aimed at providing work relief. The next month, a Presidential Order used funding from that bill to establish the Works Progress Administration. The concept of providing relief to the unemployed through useful jobs, rather than a simple dole, had several aims. It provided hope and a sense of self-worth to the unemployed, while giving them the buying power which would lead to increased production of goods and services.

In addition, the jobs which were provided were not random or make-work: they were requested by counties, cities, and towns which needed roads, schools, water systems, health clinics, and other infrastructural projects. President Roosevelt had made it clear that each local area had to decide what projects it needed and then had to match the skills which would be needed for the projects with the skills of the unemployed in that area. By March 1936, more than 3,400,000 people obtained work through the program, not counting the youth in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The President wrote that, "There has been a growing conviction on the part of the Congress and myself that the time had come when the Federal Government could well afford to withdraw from the field of direct relief, leaving that responsibility to the various States and localities, and to establish a larger Works Program for the unemployed who were employable.... With respect to work projects, the State and local governments were given the responsibility, with few exceptions, of originating and planning the work to fit local needs and also of determining the eligibility of workers on the basis of actual need. At the same time, through Federal approval of these projects and through the carrying out of a Federal wages and hours policy and by means of Federal accounting and purchasing, there were obtained a general centralized planning and responsibility."

Roosevelt continued by saying that "On the average, 85% of the Federal funds spent on WPA projects went directly into wages for labor.... Taking the program as a whole, local funds made up 16% of the total expenditures on WPA projects, the proportion increasing steadily, and 80% of these local contributions was used for materials, supplies and equipment.... In the few exceptions in which the projects were not initiated by States, cities, villages, towns, counties, districts, highway commissions, boards of education, boards of health, park boards, etc., the WPA itself acted as sponsor. These activities were usually devoted to artistic and historical and clerical work which was designed for the so-called white-collar workers."

Although the program operated for eight years, the number of workers enrolled in it peaked in February of 1936. Improving economic conditions soon enabled President Roosevelt to call for smaller appropriations in succeeding years. In total, the program employed more than 8.5 million people on 1.4 million projects. These projects created 650,000 miles of highways, 125,000 public buildings, 8000 parks, 850 airports, and sponsored the construction and repair of 124,000 bridges.

The overall figures only give a hint of the scope of the program. The public buildings constructed and repaired included schools, hospitals, courthouses, and fire stations, as well as gymnasiums, stadiums, playgrounds, athletic fields, and other recreational facilities. The work on water supply systems included water mains, aqueducts, storage tanks, reservoirs, dams, treatment plants, pumping stations, storm sewers, mosquito control and fish hatcheries. The work on health infrastructure included the conducting of medical and dental clinics, nursing visits, and immunizations.

On the cultural side, there were over 2,000 branch libraries and almost 6,000 travelling libraries established. Classes were given in music, theater, and art, and the famous Writers' Project produced a valuable series of guides to the individual states and recordings of living history. Books and maps were transcribed into Braille, while literacy, vocational, and nursery school classes were established all over the country.

During his 1936 campaign tours, Roosevelt often referred to the work of the WPA; and, in fact, many times he was speaking in, or within sight of, an edifice constructed by the program. On Oct. 15, the President spoke at Atwood Stadium in Flint, Mich., and recalled the height of the Depression: "I am thinking of Flint as it was in January, or February, or March of 1933, and Flint was not the only city that faced conditions of desperation. Faced with that widespread suffering from unemployment, this administration, as you know, has followed a fixed policy—a policy that does not believe in the dole, on the ground that temporary charity without work results in a breakdown of self-respect....

"And so, we have come through the worst economic crisis in our history, and we have kept our morale. Money spent to do

that was money soundly invested. We faced that choice in 1933; and it was a test of what I call straight economic thinking and good economic statesmanship, even if some professors did not agree with us.

"We could have gone into the relief problem by spending, let us say, a dollar for a dole. That dollar for a dole would have kept unemployed men just alive—just in a state of suspended animation. Or, we could think beyond our noses and spend, say, a dollar and a half on work instead of a dollar on a dole. That extra half dollar would maintain the normal relationships of the unemployed with their families and their grocers, and their merchants, and so on down the line. They could later slip back into normal industry in a normal way.

"Yes, we chose to spend money in order to save men. But who can measure in dollars and cents what the self-respect and the morale of a people mean to their nation? They must be measured, rather, in terms of the preservation of the families and the normal life of America.

"But work relief has done more than that. In these many communities throughout the land, it has helped the unemployed to make a contribution of social value to the life of the nation. Across the entire country a far-reaching series of structures has been built by the working unemployed—and I see a WPA sign right out there by the gate—structures which for generations to come will contribute to the well-being and permanent happiness of the nation.

"Remember that no project has been adopted by the Federal government except on recommendation of the local community itself. You people of Michigan initiated the projects in Michigan. And the people of the other states also told us which projects they wanted in their states. In the vast majority of cases your advice was good. This year you and I have noticed that the projects which are being criticized are never the projects in the community in which the critic lives. They are generally a thousand miles away.

"You can look in your own towns, your own counties all through America, to see for yourselves what this work relief program has done—in schools and roads and pavements and reforestation and flood prevention and sanitation and in 50 or a hundred different types of undertakings that have no peacetime parallel in all of our history."

President Roosevelt's critics called many of the WPA projects "boondoggles," and the image they used was of workers leaning endlessly on their shovels. Roosevelt turned the tables, and referred, with a slight wink, to successful projects completed in each town he visited as "boondoggles." People got the message. Here is what he said when he visited New Jersey: "I want to say just one word about the usefulness of what we are doing. There is a grand word that is going around, "boondoggle." It is a pretty good word. If we can "boondoggle" ourselves out of this Depression, that word is going to be enshrined in the hearts of the American people for many years to come."

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