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[Virginia Tech Killer Was *Another* Video-Game Fanatic](#)

[by Michele Steinberg and Anton Chaitkin](#)

Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche have been right since Columbine. You won't stop school shooting sprees *until* the multibillion-dollar video-``game"-killing-simulator industry is stopped from brainwashing youth.

On April 16, within moments of the news reports that mass shootings had occurred on the Blacksburg campus of Virginia Tech, Lyndon LaRouche, chairman of the LaRouche Political Action Committee (LPAC), flagged the incident as a major national, and international security event. LaRouche noted that the event would shape policy in a major way--especially by those forces in the United States, around Vice President Dick Cheney, who would wish to use any type of security alert as a means to further their police-state powers to silence political opposition--as happened in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks....

In-Depth Coverage

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[***Vol. 34, No. 17***](#)

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A speech by Lt. Col. David Grossman (ret.) on May 20, 2000.

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Media, Arms Dealers & Killer Video Games

Violent Video Games Reward Children for Killing People

An interview with Lt. Col. David Grossman (ret.) in 2002.

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International

Nations Get Back To Building the Eurasian Land-Bridge

After being pushed to the 'back burner' for close to a decade, the Eurasian Land-Bridge is again at the forefront on discussions among nations of the world's largest landmass, with ambitious infrastructure projects moving forward.

Iranian Maglev Will Link Tehran to Land-Bridge City

Russia Building First Floating Nuclear Plant

Eurasian Powers Defy Sanctions on Myanmar

Policies, Not Scandal, Destroyed Wolfowitz

Is World Bank Chairman Paul Wolfowitz dead meat?

German Press Slams Brit Lies on LaRouche

France: Ségolène Royal— Our Vote for Reason

A statement by former French Presidential pre-candidate Jacques Cheminade.

National

'Ask the Man Who Owns One'

By Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

Since none among the leading candidates for the Presidential nomination of the U.S. Democratic Party is presently actually qualified to serve during the 2009-2013 terms, we must select and develop a suitable pre-candidate, who must undergo the necessary development and guidance.

'We Should Be Willing To Talk to Syria and Iran'

An interview with Gen. Joseph P. Hoar (ret.)

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Chairman, International Caucus of Labor Committees.
- [In Memorial: Indira Gandhi, d. Oct. 31, 1984](#)
This poem was composed by Kenneth Kronberg.
-

Economics

[Germany Leads Charge To Regulate Hedge-Fund 'Locusts'](#)

There is increasing ferment in Germany, China, and other locations, demanding intervention to stop the rapacious attack of the hedge funds and private equity funds on national economies.

[EIR Submits Congressional Testimony on the 'Global Warming Con Job'](#)

Interviews

[Lt. Col. David Grossman \(ret.\)](#)

Colonel Grossman, a former U.S. Army Ranger, and former professor at West Point and the University of Arkansas, gave this interview to Helga Zepp-LaRouche on May 4, 2002. He has written two books demonstrating how media and video-game violence is making killers out of children.

[Gen. Joseph P. Hoar \(ret.\)](#)

General Hoar, a retired four-star general from the U.S. Marine Corps, was Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command (1991-94), commanding the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf after the 1991 war. He also served in the Vietnam War, as a battalion and brigade advisor with the Vietnamese Marines.

Departments

[Banking Oil Prices Fueling the Bubble.](#)

Editorial

Goebbels Sends His Greetings

U.S. Economic/Financial News

News Reports Covered Up Another Housing Plunge in March

Extremely misleading reports in the U.S. press covered up another severe drop in housing starts nationally in March, which occurred along with another upward lurch in foreclosures, estimated at 25% above February levels.

New U.S. housing starts fell to an annualized level of 1.518 million homes in March 2007, from a level of 1.972 million in March 2006, a fall of 23% year to year, the Commerce Department announced April 17. These figures are "seasonally adjusted"—although the same month is compared for each year; when unadjusted figures are compared, the drop from March 2006 is about 25%. Simultaneously, for March of this year compared to March of a year earlier, the level of U.S. building permits for homes fell by 26%.

Emergency Meeting on Housing Crash

Industry movers and shakers, including banks, lenders, heads of Fannie Mae, the FDIC, Freddie Mac, and consumer groups held a "seven hour closed door meeting" at FDIC headquarters April 16, according to the *Washington Post*. A statement said they "agreed on a goal of keeping deserving borrowers with high-risk mortgages in their homes," according to FDIC head Sheila Bair. *EIR* is investigating this and other indications that a major LTCM-type bailout of the mortgage market is underway.

Inland Empire Latest Victim of Housing Bubble Collapse

The Inland Empire of Southern California is being walloped by the housing bubble implosion. For those willing to commute to jobs in the Los Angeles Basin, it long provided housing cheap enough for even the lower middle class to buy. However, for many who jumped on the bandwagon during the recent expansion of the housing bubble, relying on such instruments as sub-prime mortgages, the future looks grim.

The Inland Empire encompasses a vast area east of Los Angeles in the San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, and is centered on the cities of Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ontario. According to a manager with the Neighborhood Housing Service of the Inland Empire, a group that promotes home ownership, calls regarding foreclosures have jumped from one per month, to 50 per month in recent months. Mortgage defaults for the first quarter of 2007 are up 168% over last year's first quarter figures. The price of property in some Inland Empire towns has doubled in the last five years.

According to Dr. Christopher Cagan, director of research and analytics at First American Real Estate Solutions (as quoted in the *Financial Times* April 21), "Anything can turn that has doubled in five years.... What we have is an explosion of building and an explosion of generous lending. There was no single villain." The growth of the Inland Empire bedroom communities has been going on for 30 years, but the acceleration, spurred by initially cheap land and liberal building statutes, and fueled by increasingly lenient mortgages, has trapped many of the working poor and lower middle class in an untenable situation: Now, with a housing glut, and plummeting prices, they own houses they can't afford to keep, and can't sell except at a huge loss.

NYMEX Announces New Uranium Futures Contract

The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) announced April 16 that it will introduce, beginning May 6, a cash-settled uranium futures contract that would be traded on its electronic platform (the CME Globex and NYMEX Clear Port). The *International Herald Tribune* reported April 16 that such a contract, "would provide [speculators] a forum to bet directly on gains and falls in the price of uranium, rather than speculating on the fortunes of miners," i.e., mining companies. Hedge funds could buy and sell uranium yellowcake contracts, without ever having to provide or take physical delivery of the ore.

Numerous reports indicate that during the past year, hedge funds have been significant players in speculative buying of physical uranium on the "spot" market. As a result, by Monday morning, April 16, the price of uranium had been bid up to \$113 per pound, with a record \$18 per pound increase alone during the previous week, and an approximate tripling of its price since Spring 2006.

With Russia, China, and several Asian nations planning ambitious programs of nuclear power plant construction in the immediate future, the speculative bidding up of uranium prices would have a negative effect on such plans.

World Economic News

'An Atomic Group of 7' Emerge from Washington Meetings

The Group of Seven (G-7) (U.S., U.K., France, Canada, Germany, Italy, and Japan) Finance Ministers meeting, held April 13 in Washington, D.C., around the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund, has called for nuclear energy for the first time.

The mention of nuclear power in the G-7 communiqué was a small paragraph that has major implications. It says, "In order to ensure energy security and to address climate change, we consider energy efficiency and the promotion of energy diversification to be important issues for both developed and developing economies. Diversification can include advanced energy technologies such as renewable, nuclear, and clean coal."

According to the French daily *Liberation*, the G-7 countries had not previously been able to come to an agreement on mentioning nuclear because of Germany's opposition, but the rise in oil prices and the growth of energy nationalism in countries such as Russia, Venezuela, and Iran, have led these countries to change their position.

Price Crash Forecast for Irish Housing Bubble

RTE, the national television network of Ireland, broadcast a documentary on April 16 warning of a nationwide housing price crash. The documentary, called "Future Shock: Property Crash," made by journalist Richard Curran, warns about the danger of a 30% collapse of property prices in Ireland, which has been suffering a big housing price bubble.

Curran, who is the Deputy Editor of the *Sunday Business Post*, points to the falling U.S. dollar, the downsizing of the construction industry in Ireland, and questions whether banks and other institutions have behaved responsibly towards "exposed groups such as first time buyers." Curran also looks at the effects of other property crashes, including the British 1990s debacle, on Irish emigrants.

U.S. Ambassador Tells Italy: Give Us Your Telecom, Now!

Ronald Spogli, Ambassador to Italy and founder of the private equity fund Freeman Spogli & Co., attacked Italy's "long

tradition of public intervention in the economy," after the announcement April 17 that AT&T was dropping out of the race to buy Telecom Italia. AT&T reacted to rumors that the Italian government might prevent a foreign takeover of Telecom Italia, by re-nationalizing the network and selling concessions for services only. According to Goldman Sachs, as reported in *Financial Times Deutschland*, the second foreign bidder for Telecom Italia, Carlos Slim's America Movil, is also expected to drop out of the race.

Economic 'Hit-Men' Strangle Iran Financially

Less visible than the military deployments against Iran in the Persian Gulf, a more "discreet" battle is taking place between the U.S. and Tehran—the struggle to "strangle the Islamic Republic financially," says Natalie Nougareyde in *Le Monde* (April 17). Since the Autumn of 1996, American Treasury officials have developed a strategy for this, inspired by the boycott they imposed on North Korea, called "Naming and Shaming," that is, designating those economic interests which are too cooperative with Iran, and shaming them internationally, according to *Le Monde*.

And, after the U.S. approached some 40 large financial institutions and companies throughout the world, "the results are there.... According to diplomats and diplomatic experts, not a single European bank is still financing large projects in Iran," writes Nougareyde. Basically, Treasury economic hit-men pay visits to all foreign investors on Wall Street to talk to them about "sanctions, fines, or the eventual decisions of American pension funds to which those companies would be exposed if they would pursue their business affairs with the Islamic Republic."

This has been apparently extremely efficient, writes Nougareyde. The German Commerzbank and the Swiss UBS and Credit Suisse were rapidly convinced by the Bush Administration. In France, the BNP Paribas has strongly reduced its investments in Iran, and the global engagement of French banks in that country have dropped by half in one year. While not officially endorsing the American strategy, the French Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Finance Ministry have nonetheless sent out messages to French companies underlining the dangers of further engagements in Iran. Energy companies have also been put under great pressure. Total, the "French" oil "major" has been forced to cancel its planned investments this year in the South Pars liquefied gas site in Iran, because of threatened sanctions involving the Iran/Libya Sanctions Act of 1996. AFX news reported on April 17, that AREVA, the French public nuclear company, "excludes de facto any cooperation with Iran." AREVA only works with clients and governments that fully comply with the international regulations on nuclear energy."

Ecuador's President Threatens To Expel World Bank

Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa announced on April 15 that the World Bank and its representative will be expelled from Ecuador, unless the bank can provide an adequate explanation for its attempted "blackmail" of the country in August 2005, reports the government website, www.presidencia.gov.ec, and major Ecuadorian dailies. Correa knows whereof he speaks: He was Finance Minister that August, when World Bank officials suddenly informed him that the Bank would not disburse a \$100 million loan which had already been approved for Ecuador, unless the government reversed its decision to use some of the country's surplus oil funds for national development and poverty reduction, instead of solely paying off foreign bondholders. At the time, Correa told the *Financial Times* that the loan cancellation was an "offense to Ecuador.... We are a sovereign country. Nobody can punish us because we are changing our own laws."

Correa's charge adds fuel to the international campaign to force the notorious neo-conservative heading the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz, to resign, because he has been using the World Bank to crush countries that stand up for their sovereignty.

Uranium Demand To Surge, Says Japan Atomic Industry Forum

Because of the growing numbers of new reactors coming on line or in planning worldwide, a surge in the demand for

uranium is expected to increase by one-third, according to reports from the Japan Atomic Industry Forum. The *International Herald Tribune* reported April 16 that the JAIF report came at a nuclear industry conference held last week in Aomori, Japan.

Mukhtar Dzhakishev, president of Kazakstan's state-owned uranium explorer Kazatomprom, said his country plans to triple its production to 25,750 tons a year by 2016. Kazakstan, the world's third largest producer of uranium, expects to produce 7,250 tons this year.

Jay Thayer, vice president of the U.S.-based Nuclear Energy Institute, told the conference that the U.S. expects to build 33 new nuclear power stations, in addition to the 103 existing ones. The U.S. already needs 52 million pounds of uranium annually, of which 80% is imported.

The U.S. produces 2,050 tons of uranium annually, Thayer said, but hopes to increase production to 5,000 tons by 2014.

IMF to Italy: Pay Debt; Let People Die!

In a rare Promethean impulse, covered by Italian Raiuno television, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi announced that an expected tax revenue surplus will not be used to pay debt, but will instead be redistributed among families and firms. Two-thirds of the surplus, estimated at a several billion dollars equivalent, will go to poorer families, mostly in the form of rent subsidies; one-third will go to corporations.

In response, Michael Deppler, head of the European Desk of the International Monetary Fund in Washington, said that Italy should reduce its budget deficit as a priority. "Therefore, all the surplus revenues must go to reduce the deficit or be allocated for reducing the debt," the IMF official said, according to *Corriere della Sera* of April 14.

United States News Digest

A Pentagon Provocation Against Italy?

On April 19, the Army Combat Studies Institute [CSI] demonstrated for reporters at the Pentagon a new educational tool it is developing called "the virtual staff ride," and chose to demonstrate it with the shooting of Italian intelligence official Nicolà Calipari. Calipari was killed at a U.S.-manned checkpoint on Baghdad's airport road in March, 2005 after he had successfully liberated Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena from kidnappers. Furthermore, they chose to do it on the same week an Italian court put the U.S. soldier who fired the fatal shots, on trial in absentia for murder.

The Army officials did not explain why they chose to demonstrate this tool using this particular scenario at this time. They said the information the scenario is based on came entirely from the Army's own investigations, which concluded that the gunner acted appropriately in trying to stop the vehicle carrying the Italians, given the threat level and the mission. In any case, even though there was no hint of arrogance from the Army briefers, the presenting of this training tool, using this scenario, so soon after a political crisis over Italian involvement in Afghanistan nearly brought down the government of Romano Prodi, certainly appears provocative.

European Parliamentarians Brief Congress on Renditions

Three Members of the European Parliament (EP), briefed members of the U.S. House or Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee April 17 on the EP report on "Extraordinary Renditions," the practice in which the United States has abducted

terrorist suspects and held them in secret prisons without trial, often subjecting them to torture and abuse. The three, from Italy and the UK, were accompanied at the hearing by at least seven other MEPs from France, Greece, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, and Finland.

In opening the hearing, Rep. William Delahunt (D-Mass.), chairman of the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Human Rights, called the Administration's practice of renditions "torture by proxy," adding that this has contributed greatly to world opinion turning against the U.S., despite the overwhelming international support for the U.S. that existed in the immediate wake of the 9/11 attacks.

The MEPs said that the practice of extraordinary rendition violated the Geneva Conventions and other international treaties, and also the European Convention on Human Rights.

LaRouche's Perspective Brought to Los Angeles's Chinatown

EIR's China correspondent, Leni Rubinstein, and Lyndon LaRouche's West Coast spokesman Harley Schlanger brought LaRouche's optimistic and polemical perspective to a potentially enormous Chinese audience at a press conference April 16 in Los Angeles' Chinatown.

The press in attendance included the Chinese *Daily News* (North America's largest-circulation Chinese-language newspaper), an executive for EDI Media Inc. (a large media conglomerate), an editor from Shanghai's XINMIN Evening News (with a readership of over a million), as well as the Los Angeles Bureau Chief of Xinhua (a Chinese government press agency). Translation was provided by long-term supporter of LaRouche's ideas within the Chinese community.

FDR Legacy Club Educates California Democratic Officials

On April 12, the Los Angeles LaRouche Youth Movement held its monthly Franklin Roosevelt Legacy Democratic Club (FRLDC) meeting, continuing the process of bringing key elected officials of the California Democratic Party over to the LaRouche faction. With guests like the chair of the Los Angeles County Central Committee (LACCC), and the secretary of the state party, the FRLDC is becoming the most vibrant aspect of the LACCC, bringing the crucial issues to the floor, as demonstrated in the recent fight within the party erupting around Gore and global warming.

The two main speakers at the meeting were LaRouche representative Mark Calney, and Paul Koretz, former State Representative and leader of the progressive Democratic caucus in the California State Assembly.

Behind Soros' Fight with AIPAC

The April 12, 2007 issue of the *New York Review of Books* contains a lengthy article by mega-speculator and Democratic Party moneybags George Soros, attacking the Bush Administration, the neoconservatives, and AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) for sabotaging opportunities for a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict and the broader Middle East peace accord. Soros blames AIPAC for the U.S. government's refusal to recognize the new Palestinian Authority national unity government, and for blocking a Congressional demand that the President come to Congress before launching any attack on Iran.

Soros's carefully worded article focussed on the urgent need to settle the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: "I believe that a much-needed self-examination of American policy in the Middle East has started in this country; but it can't make much headway as long as AIPAC retains powerful influence in both the Democratic and Republican parties. Some leaders of the Democratic Party have promised to bring about a change of direction but they cannot deliver on that promise until they are

able to resist the dictates of AIPAC. Palestine is a place of critical importance," Soros continued, "where positive change is still possible. Iraq is largely beyond our control; but if we succeeded in settling the Palestinian problem we would be in a much better position to engage in negotiations with Iran and extricate ourselves from Iraq. The need for a peace settlement in Palestine is greater than ever. Both for the sake of Israel and the United States, it is highly desirable that the Saudi peace initiative should succeed; but AIPAC stands in the way. It continues to oppose dealing with a Palestinian government that includes Hamas."

Soros concludes with a fervent pitch for a debate within the American Jewish community on the future of the Middle East. "Whether the Democratic Party can liberate itself from AIPAC's influence is highly doubtful," he wrote. "Any politician who dares to expose AIPAC's influence would incur its wrath; so very few can be expected to do so. It is up to the American Jewish community itself to rein in the organization that claims to represent it. But this is not possible without first disposing of the most insidious argument put forward by the defenders of the current policies; that the critics of Israel's policies of occupation, control, and repression on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem and Gaza engender anti-Semitism. The opposite is the case.... A debate within the Jewish community, instead of fomenting anti-Semitism, would only help diminish it."

Sources familiar with the Soros-AIPAC controversy report that AIPAC has been involved in a smear campaign against Soros because, among other reasons, Soros' Open Society Fund has bankrolled the revival of Jewish communities in many areas of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, whereas AIPAC's backers believe that all of world Jewry should be living in Israel. Soros' views, expressed in the *New York Review of Books* piece, are also shared by a significant segment of the Israeli political establishment, and reflect a debate that is raging behind the scenes in the European Jewish community, according to the sources.

Ibero-American News Digest

LYM to Bachelet and Uribe: Join the Bank of the South!

Four members of the Colombian chapter of the LaRouche Youth Movement intervened in an April 19 event in Bogota honoring visiting Chilean President Michele Bachelet. More than 500 of the country's elites were in attendance, among them the mayor of Bogota, former Presidents, the accredited diplomatic corps, the military command, the church leadership, and other pseudo-intellectuals.

Right after Bachelet addressed the group, and just as Colombian President Alvaro Uribe was preparing to speak, the LYM members stood up to sing, holding posters that read, "LaRouche Says: Stop the Fraud of Global Warming! Al Gore Is a Fascist! Pushing Ethanol Is Genocide! Bachelet: Al Gore is going to Chile to revive Pinochet's fascism! Bachelet and Uribe, YES to the Bank of the South, NO to the IMF!"

After the LYM's intervention, Uribe opened up the debate by saying, "Okay, muchachos, give me a reason to go against biofuels." LYM member Pedro Rubio replied, "Mr. President, biofuels are a genocidal policy that causes starvation in nations that adopt this fraud. Biofuels consume 27% more energy than they produce, and need vast areas of land and of water. To make it profitable, it will need slave labor, which is what is happening in Colombia and Brazil. Nations need nuclear energy to guarantee development with a lasting energy source. Therefore, what is needed is an economic model premised on development and physical economy, like what President Kirchner is doing in Argentina. That is why I invite you and President Bachelet to join the Ibero-American Presidents Club. Peace can be won with development and jobs. "The Train for Colombia and the Metro for Bogota!"

Uribe launched into a bad speech defending biofuels, filling his discussion with rhetorical arguments. Journalists

approached the LYM, asking what we thought of the President's response, to which we answered, "Political rhetoric. This debate should be approached from a scientific standpoint, to overturn the global warming and ethanol frauds."

Cuban Embargo: 'Dumbest Policy on the Face of the Earth'

The New America Foundation (NAF), with Col. Lawrence Wilkerson as co-chair, launched a "21st Century U.S.-Cuba Policy Initiative" at an April 18 lunch-hour forum addressed by Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz), NAF's Director Steven Clemons, and Wilkerson, the outspoken Marine officer who was former Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff. The intent is to end what Wilkerson calls "the dumbest policy on the face of the Earth," the 48-year old failed embargo against Cuba. A planning meeting of people and institutions in the coalition mapped out a publicity and organizing drive prior to the public forum.

Flake, who led a Congressional delegation to Cuba in December of 2006, told the forum, as a Republican, that he thinks that, with the Democrats in the majority, a law lifting the ban on Americans traveling to Cuba can finally be put on the President's desk this year. Flake and New York Rep. Charlie Rangel (D) have sponsored such a bill, with 97 co-sponsors, so far.

Wilkerson and NAF director Steve Clemons had just concluded a four-five day trip to Cuba.

The Cubans "are beating us hollow" on the public diplomacy front in Ibero-America, Wilkerson said. They know more than almost anyone in the world about how to deliver health care to the poor, and they are sending thousands of Cuban doctors and health-care workers into Ibero-America, paid only in barter. If the U.S. is to lead in our hemisphere, it must provide economic assistance, Wilkerson stated.

British Monarchy Attempts Economic Coup in Brazil

The fact that British financial interests are mucking around in Brazil goes a long way toward explaining why the Lula government is throwing a monkey-wrench into plans for the anti-IMF regional "Bank of the South" which Argentina, Venezuela, and Ecuador are pushing.

The place to look is, in and around the activities of Spain's Banco Santander, which is run through its 20-year "strategic alliance" with the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), one of the City of London's most powerful financial institutions, with direct links to the British Monarchy. (See "Empire Strikes Back: Spanish Banks Recolonize Ibero-America," *EIR*, July 2, 2004). The pro-fascist Santander singlehandedly controls nearly 10% of Ibero-America's entire bank assets, including being the largest foreign banking presence in Brazil, with its November 2000 takeover of Banespa bank.

In March 2007, Santander-Brazil's vice president for human relations, Miguel Jorge, was named the country's Minister of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade. Jorge reportedly conditioned his taking the post on being allowed to name a new president of the all-important BNDES, the National Economic and Social Development Bank, which has a \$30 billion budget and has been the spearhead of the financing of South America's infrastructure integration projects (to the IMF's dismay). Jorge nominated Gustavo Murgel—another Santander top executive, who was the architect of the Banespa takeover of 2000—as BNDES's next president, contingent on approval by President Lula da Silva.

But, Lula did not approve Murgel, and instead, on April 18, appointed his own choice, economist Luciano Coutinho. Coutinho comes from the "developmentalist" faction of Brazilian economists, as those opposed to pure monetarism are generally known. "My mission at BNDES," Coutinho told *O Estado de Sao Paulo* after his appointment was made public, "will be to think of industrial and technological development plans which are of greater scope and have a long-term

perspective."

The refusal to hand BNDES over to the rapacious Spanish-British Santander Bank will not sit well with these financier interests. On April 18, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a "news" article spouting the same line as the London *Economist* editorial and 14-page Special Report in its "Bring on Our New Napoleon, Sarkozy" issue (April 14-20): "Investors" are not happy that Lula is refusing to take down "an overbearing state," by ripping up pensions and labor laws, and imposing the financiers' tax reform. Brazilians, the *Economist* complains, are "a nation of statist."

Ibero-American Presidents Reject Biofuels Hoax

Contrary to what the Bush-Cheney crowd had hoped, the April 16-17 Ibero-American Energy Summit on Venezuela's Margarita Island demonstrated real resistance to the lying assertion that biofuel development is the only possible solution to the continent's energy crisis. The brawl that took place there was reflected in the fact that Bolivian President Evo Morales refused to sign the final "Margarita Declaration," without expressing "reservations" next to his signature, over the carefully worded article that expresses the Presidents' "recognition of the potential of biofuels to diversify the South American energy matrix."

Out of deference to Brazilian President Lula da Silva, who has allowed himself to be roped into a "strategic alliance" with George Bush to promote hemispheric biofuel development, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez tried to tone things down somewhat by distinguishing between George Bush's ethanol plan and Lula's. But Ecuador's President Rafael Correa implicitly referenced the point that the LaRouche movement, and more recently Cuban President Fidel Castro, have been making: the biofuel offensive means genocide. There is, Correa said, the "danger ... that suddenly in regions where there is no more cultivatable land, that now used to produce food might ... be used for ethanol and biofuels. That would certainly be risky." Although very diplomatically, the Presidents indicated their concern over this issue, noting "the importance of ensuring the compatibility of all sources of energy with agricultural production ... and promoting the defense of dignified social and working conditions."

The final Margarita Declaration focusses heavily on the need for infrastructure development as the vehicle to achieve energy integration. But behind-the-scenes debate among the Presidents on the broader political agenda, particularly the proposed Bank of the South, was very intense. With Lula da Silva dragging his feet on the proposal, telling reporters that he still "didn't understand" what the new bank's objective is supposed to be, this fight is far from over. A heated discussion can be expected the following week in Buenos Aires, where Lula will meet with Argentine President Nestor Kirchner for the sole purpose of thrashing out the issue.

Western European News Digest

On Eve of French Elections: Vote Fraud Becomes an Issue

For the first time ever in France, 1.5 million voters in 82 districts will vote on electronic machines, amidst much opposition to this in the country. Recently, a further scandal has broken out because some municipalities, such as Issy les Moulineaux, under the control of André Santini, a deputy mayor close to mafioso Charles Pasqua, ordered two sets of electronic voting machines from the U.S. producer Election Systems and Software.

It turns out that the set of more modern machines which was supposed to be used for the voting in the Presidential elections this time, and on which the municipal employees had trained, will not be used because it had not received the approval of the Interior Ministry. Those machines have a system by which an outside controller can clear the machine for the next voter, from the outside, and this system was never approved of. The municipalities which had trained on this

system therefore will have to use the older set of machines which have been approved, but which are equally problematic. They are of the type used in the U.S. in Georgia some years ago, where voting results came out opposite to polling results during the week prior to the election, and to exit polls.

In light of the pending Presidential run-off between would-be Napoleon Nicolas Sarkozy, and Socialist candidate Ségolène Royal, scheduled for May 5, the issue may continue to heat up.

Germany-Iran Maglev Discussions Are Low Key

A spokesman of a firm in southern Germany confirmed April 19 that talks, involving his firm, about a memorandum of understanding with the Iranians on a project for a 900-km route for a maglev between Tehran and Mashhad, Iran, are indeed going on, adding that the issue "is too hot at the moment to disclose any details." The firm wants to go public with details within the week, but first wants to consult with their Iranian partners. The issue is hot, naturally, because of the Iranian nuclear conflict, although railway projects are not threatening anyone.

The railway consulting firm has been active also in the past two years in talks with Arab Gulf Emirates on a maglev route along the coastline, but the source said that the Emirates take an immense amount of time to discuss without deciding anything, which resembles the slowness in project decisions in Germany.

Brits Investigate Legality of Berezovsky Moves

The uproar over Boris Berezovsky's claim, in an interview published on April 13 in the London *Guardian*, that he is fomenting violent revolution in Russia (See Eastern Europe Digest), is such that even the British government is investigating whether he violated the terms of his refugee status. The *Guardian* also reported on April 14, that Scotland Yard is examining the recordings of Berezovsky's interview, and the Foreign Office issued a statement saying: "We deplore any call for the violent overthrow of a sovereign state. We expect anyone living or working or visiting the U.K., whatever their status, to obey our laws. We will look carefully at these and any future statements by Mr. Berezovsky in that light."

Russia's Prosecutor General Yury Chaika said a new attempt to extradite Berezovsky would be made. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Russia has been asking British authorities "to put an end to the situation in which Berezovsky enjoys the status of a political refugee, yet blatantly abuses this status and takes actions that require extradition according to British law."

German Initiative for Hedge Fund Control Endorsed by China

Discussion about German initiatives for regulating the hedge funds is gaining wider support: the Finance Ministry of China endorsed the German initiative for hedge fund transparency, as an important step to maintain financial stability on a global scale. The Chinese also urged supervision of transactions, and of the scope and operational plans of the funds. Beyond that, the April 13 Washington meetings of G-7 finance ministers and central bank governors, as well as a separate meeting with 20 hedge fund representatives on April 15, resulted in no concrete action.

Huge Turkish Rally To Preserve Secular State

Just as the electoral season opens, and candidates prepare to present their bids, huge crowds, estimated at up to 300,000, marched through Ankara, the Turkish capital, to protest the possibility that the moderate Islamist AKP (Justice and Development Party) would select Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan as its Presidential candidate, because of his Islamist

roots. "Turkey is secular and will remain secular," protesters shouted, waving national flags and banners of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who founded the republic with a clear separation between religion and state. "This is the biggest political rally ever in Ankara," said Deniz Baykal, leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party.

The AKP has a big enough majority in Parliament to elect Erdogan to the seven-year post as head of state. The party's executive will meet to decide on the candidate on April 18, but a final decision may come only by April 23. The mass demonstration came on the heels of warnings issued by current President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, that the secular state was being undermined. The army is traditionally the protector of the secular state and has intervened at times when the "threat" of Islamism was perceived, as in 1997, against then-Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

New Questions Raised About Old 'RAF Killings'

There are new hints that Baader Meinhof terrorists were not the ones that shot, in at least some "RAF killings." Remarks by Michael Buback, the son of General Prosecutor Siegfried Buback, who was shot dead by terrorists on April 7, 1977, have provoked a debate in the German public and media, about the authorship of the Baader-Meinhof gang (RAF) in the killings of the big terrorist wave of the 1970s and 1980s.

Buback said in an interview with *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, April 17, that he received a hint from an informant "in the RAF environment" that (still imprisoned) former RAF terrorist Christian Klar was not the one to deliver the lethal shots on Buback. Nor were, as the same informant told, the other two RAF terrorists, Guenter Sonnenberg and Knut Folkerts, who have been charged, together with Klar, with the assassination of Buback, the ones who fired the shots. Which prompts the media to pose the question: who did it, then? Another terrorist, whose identity is not yet known?

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* daily mentions, in this context, the fact that the assassins of Alfred Herrhausen and of Detlev Rohwedder are not known either. In the case of Rohwedder, not even a letter of authorship exists. The German Ministry of Justice announced its intent to interrogate the informant of Buback's son.

Netherlands To Deny Visa to Palestinian Premier

The Dutch government declined to allow the Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh to enter the Netherlands, according to Uzbekistan News.net April 16. Citing the European Union's labelling of the Hamas as a "terrorist group," a Dutch government spokesman made clear that Haniyeh would not get a visa if he chooses to apply.

Haniyeh was planning to attend the conference on Palestinians and Europe to be held in Rotterdam on May 5. Dutch media had reported earlier that Haniyeh was invited as the main speaker at the conference by the Dutch-based Palestine Platform for Human Rights and Solidarity, the organizer of the conference.

According to a Dutch spokesman, "Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by the European Union. It is consistent not only to avoid contact with the Hamas ministers, but not to let them come to Netherlands, or anywhere else in Europe, to spread the message of Hamas."

Russia and the CIS News Digest

Ivanov: State Must Promote Infrastructure, Manufacturing

Elevated to the post of First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia in February, Sergei Ivanov on April 19 presented to a

Financial Times of London interviewer his concept of his area of responsibility, which is "the real sector of the economy, minus energy" (but, including nuclear power). Ivanov laid out how the state ought to act in the national interest, through the large industrial holding companies whose creation he is overseeing.

Ivanov disputed the notion that Russia is happy with current high oil and gas prices. In fact, he said, "high oil prices are more of a minus, than a plus for our economy," because they postpone a decisive "move towards innovation and a knowledge economy." Ivanov said his main task is "to develop a more diversified economy," through transport infrastructure, nuclear power, space, telecommunications, and commercial use of the Glonass satellite positioning system. In some of these sectors, like nuclear power and space services, he added, Russia can be competitive on the world market, under its own steam. Ivanov cited other sectors, like the aircraft industry, where Russia has successful joint ventures with Boeing, or Italy's Finmeccanica.

Ivanov elaborated why it is essential that the state play a major role in some sectors: "Not because we want to leave everything under the control of the state," but because there are some sectors, like nuclear power, which are inseparable from military industry, and others, like rail or shipbuilding, where there will be a 75% or higher state role "by definition."

"People often say, as a reproach," added Ivanov, "that Russia is creating huge holding companies in aerospace, shipbuilding, nuclear power, space—supermonsters, monopolies that are suppressing the market. But the private sector does not go into these markets. We waited for 15 years and understood that the private sector will not go there. The private sector goes into mobile phones. But wherever there's a need for huge resources and long-term credits with subsidized interest rates, because it takes five or seven years to build a modern ship, and when it will make a return on investment—well, you understand. Private business just doesn't invest in this, and we need to create such holdings." The state will promote transport infrastructure, he said, in order to develop whole regions of Russia that are underpopulated. There is an area equal to two-thirds of Russia's total, in which only 20 million people (out of 142 million) live. There will have to be immigration, but Russia needs people to immigrate to these regions, not only to Moscow.

In the second half of his *Financial Times* interview, Ivanov developed several themes from his own recent speeches, as well as those of Putin. Among these were the threat of a new Cold War, Russia's understanding of planned U.S. and NATO military deployments as aimed against Russia, and the U.S. State Department's announced plans to step up funding of NGO activity in Russia as "practically interference in our internal affairs."

Putin Speaks at Kurchatov Institute

Visiting the Kurchatov Federal Nuclear Center on April 18, Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed nanotechnology research as "an area of activity in which the state is ready to invest on a grand scale." Nanotechnology, already in use in high-technology industrial sectors, medicine, transport, and space research, is also to be used to develop new weapons systems, both offensive and defensive, Putin said. Science and Education Minister Andrei Fursenko said the ministry has drafted a nanotechnology development program, now being studied by the Finance Ministry. The Kurchatov institute should lead the research, he said, and the program is being outlined for up to 2015. In 2007, 1.66 billion rubles [\$63.8 million] will go into this field.

Berezovsky Openly Plots Putin's Violent Overthrow

One of Russia's nastiest exiled oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky, is openly bankrolling and fomenting violent revolution against the Putin government. Berezovsky made his role in the attempt to overthrow the Russian government public in an April 13 interview in the London *Guardian*, bringing an immediate renewal of Russian demands for his extradition from London, where he has lived since 2001. Said Berezovsky, "We need to use force to change this regime. It isn't possible to change this regime through democratic means. There can be no change without force, pressure." When the *Guardian* reporters

who interviewed Berezovsky—Ian Cobain, Matthew Taylor, and Luke Harding—directly asked him if he was fomenting revolution, he responded, "you are absolutely correct."

Within hours, Berezovsky apparently realized he had gone too far. He attempted to backtrack, claiming that he was not advocating violence, just "direct action" like the so-called rainbow revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine—both of which were run with the backing of Western governments and well-financed NGOs. Berezovsky's "correction" was also discredited when the *Guardian* posted audio extracts from the interview on their website April 13, along with the interview, and in his own voice, he could be heard promoting violent action against Putin.

Tymoshenko Wants Cold-War Containment Policy vs. Russia

Ukrainian ex-Premier Yulia Tymoshenko, a key figure in the current political crisis in her country, has written an article for the May/June issue of the New York Council on Foreign Relations journal *Foreign Affairs*, headlined "Contain Russia." With that title, she deliberately invokes George Kennan's famous Mr. X *Foreign Affairs* article on containment of the Soviet Union, which became a founding document of the Cold War. Thus, Tymoshenko joins Estonian diplomat Mart Helme in calling explicitly for a new Cold War; Helme's exhortation to the United States and its Anglo-Saxon allies, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to adopt a new Truman Doctrine, against Russia, appeared earlier this month in the *Brussels Journal*.

Tymoshenko writes that failing to contain Russia will replicate the appeasement of the Nazi regime in 1939. The text was pre-released by *Foreign Affairs*. On April 16, the Russian Foreign Ministry released a statement on the publication, refuting Tymoshenko's theses, and commenting that the article "confirms the timeliness of Russian President V.V. Putin's call, in his February 2007 speech in Munich, for serious and frank dialogue. And the Russian leader spoke directly and openly, while those who are behind the article commissioned from Yu.V. Tymoshenko do not have the courage to act with similar decency."

Tymoshenko visited the CFR during her trip to the United States in February, during which she also met Vice President Dick Cheney. She then helped launch the current showdown between President Victor Yushchenko and the Supreme Rada, Ukraine's Parliament, by declaring that Cheney and other U.S. officials fully back the holding of new parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

Russia-China-Mongolia Nuclear Cooperation

Rosatom, Russia's nuclear power agency, announced April 13 that it had signed with Mongolia's Industry and Trade Ministry "a protocol on development of cooperation in the field of geological prospecting, production and processing of uranium ores." Novosti reported that Mongolia is estimated to have 37,000 metric tons of uranium-molybdenum ore. Meanwhile, AK&M.ru reported that Russia's Atomstroieksport is completing assembly of the Tianwan nuclear reactor project in Jiangsu Province, China, which, when finished, will be the biggest nuclear plant in China.

Highest-Level Russian Visit to Pakistan in Decades

For the first time in 38 years, a top Russian government official has visited Pakistan, and signed regional economic cooperation deals that hold out the promise of Pakistan's integration in Eurasian development corridors. On April 11, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, signing a wide-ranging series of cultural, security, and economic cooperation treaties. Among the highlights: plans for Russia to build new railroad lines in Pakistan, including lines linking Pakistan and Iran. The talks included discussion of bringing Iran into the new arrangements, with Iran serving as the transit corridor between Russia and Pakistan. The two Prime Ministers emphasized the importance of Russia's observer status at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Pakistan's observer status

at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Belarus President Visits India

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenka began a visit to India April 15, underscoring his nation's commitment to make strategic relations with India, China, and Russia the cornerstone of his nation's foreign policy. In an exclusive interview with the *Hindustan Times*, Lukashenka said: "We have a huge technological potential, much more than our own requirements, and we are ready to share it with India. Relations with India are the pride of our foreign policy." He backs India as a candidate for full membership in the permanent UN Security Council. Lukashenka also told the paper that he was optimistic about trilateral defense cooperation among India, Russia, and Belarus, and that he wants India to revive the Non-Aligned Movement.

Southwest Asia News Digest

Bush Administration Blocking Syria-Israel Peace Pact

Speaking before the German-Syrian Society in Bonn April 18, Syria's ambassador to Germany, Dr. Hussein Omran, reported that Syria and Israel were close to a peace agreement, but the political will in the United States was lacking.

Certain events in the last weeks alone have pointed to how quickly peace could be reached in the region if Vice President Dick Cheney were impeached. The most recent occurred in Israel, where on April 12, for the first time in its history, a Syrian had addressed the Israeli Knesset with a message of peace from Damascus. Ibrahim Suleiman, a Syrian and naturalized American living in Maryland, who participated last year in Syria-Israeli back channel talks along with former Israeli senior foreign ministry official Dr. Alon Liel, briefed the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee on Syria's readiness for peace talks.

"Syria right now is ready to speak peace. I challenged the Israeli government to answer President Bashar's [Assad] call for peace and sit down together" *Ha'aretz* quoted Suleiman telling a press conference after his Knesset briefing. "I think it can happen in six months."

Both Suleiman and his Israeli counterpart Alon Liel briefed the Knesset committee on their secret talks, held between 2004 and 2006 (see last week's InDepth for "Bush Fiddles While Cheney Plots More Wars," by Jeffrey Steinberg). Suleiman, who reportedly enjoys good relations with the Assad family, presented various possibilities for a peace agreement based on a return to Syria of the Golan Heights in return for normalization of relations, and economic cooperation. He reportedly told the committee that Syrian President Assad has appointed a committee, headed by one of his army generals, to coordinate talks with Israel. He also conveyed messages from Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moallem.

Suleiman said, "I believe that only secret negotiations between Israel and Syria, far away from the eyes of the media, will lead to peace." Thanking the committee for inviting him, he said, "I'm very glad I came. I hope that both sides will begin to meet and we, as a private channel, will disappear. My presence here makes everything possible."

Knesset member Yahava Gal On, of the Meretz party, who initiated the Knesset briefing, said, "In a peace agreement, Syria would agree to stop supporting terror against us and cut ties with Hizbollah, and would demand that we return to 1967 borders in the Golan Heights." She added that the briefing "was a huge step, especially because it returns the Syrian option to public discourse.... It is important that Israel begin formal talks with Syria...."

Neither the Israeli Foreign Ministry nor the Prime Minister's office received Suleiman, for fear that they would incur the wrath of Washington.

While underscoring the significance of the Suleiman's visit to Israel, one Israeli intelligence source told *EIR* that as long as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert refuses to buck the Bush Administration, the prospects for a peace agreement are slim.

Israeli Defense Expert: Iran Threat Is Exaggerated

Addressing a security conference at Tel Aviv University on April 17, a senior Israeli defense expert said the nuclear threat from Iran is exaggerated. Dr. Yitzhak Ravid, former head of military studies at the Armament Development Authority (RAFAEL), said exaggerated assessments played straight into Iranian hands by aiding them in frightening Israelis.

"A 20 kiloton bomb over Tel Aviv would kill 20,000 to 25,000, not 250,000 as had been claimed," Ravid said. "Such an attack is very serious, but it is not the end of the Zionist dream." He added that Iran was now struggling to make a first-generation bomb, but once made, they would have another major challenge in attempting to fit it on a missile that could carry the weight. As for Iran's allegedly nuclear-capable Shahab missiles, Ravid said, "Never in human history has more than one Shiaab missile been successfully test-fired. And the Shahabs themselves are very limited. They are actually a Scud-sized missile."

Quoting Uzi Rubin, head of ballistic missile research for the Ministry of Defense, Ravid said, "The Iranians are almost frantic in volunteering information about their weapons capabilities, sometimes to the point of incredulity.... They are meant to impress before they are meant to be used in anger." As for the threat posed by missiles carrying chemical warheads, Ravid said, "More harm is caused to people by attempts to prepare for such an attack, than harm which would be caused by a direct hit by such a missile." "This exaggeration causes damage in terms of anxiety, and pressured diplomatic activity."

Ravid pointed out that more Israelis were killed through suffocation by mishandling gas masks during the 1991 Gulf War than by the Scud missiles that hit Israel.

Kuwait Prepares for Potential U.S. War Against Iran

Although it was officially announced on April 20 that Iranian chief negotiator Ali Larijani and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana will meet on April 25, to start a new round of talks on Iran's nuclear program, warnings of a coming war continue. Most significant is the report, by AFP on April 20, that Kuwait has announced a plan to prepare for such a war. Kuwaiti State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Faisal al-Hajji was quoted telling the *al-Watan* daily, that an emergency team "will devise a comprehensive contingency plan to deal with risks that may result in case a war breaks out in the Gulf on the back of the rising military escalation towards Iran."

The team, which will draw on officials from the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Health, and Oil, is to be set up by the Cabinet April 22, to hold its first meeting April 23. Then, on May 1, the Parliament will hold a special debate on the government's readiness for a possible confrontation. There are 15,000 U.S. troops now in Kuwait, which was used as the launching pad for the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Tehran Seeks Bids for Two New Nuclear Power Plants

Despite the controversy over its nuclear program, the Iranian government announced April 16 that it is seeking bids for construction of two new nuclear power plants; it plans to site the plants near Bushehr. Ahmed Fayyaz-Bakhsh, the deputy

chief of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, said companies worldwide, including U.S. companies, can bid on plants which would have a capacity from 1,000 mw to 1,600 mw, and cost approximately \$1.7 billion each. The construction time is not to exceed ten years.

Meanwhile, the Director General of the IAEA Mohammed ElBaradei has called on Iran and Israel to join a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East. Reports indicate that ElBaradei made the appeal after his talks with King Abdullah of Jordan. ElBaradei also said the IAEA is ready to help Jordan to develop its nuclear energy for peaceful use.

Iran May Withhold Oil Exports Against Sanctions

At the 12th annual International Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical Expo, Iranian Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri-Hamaneh insisted, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's policy is to supply energy as a responsibility. We are never seeking to cut the energy supplies to the world. But naturally, every country, which is subject to danger or attack, should use all its possibilities to defend itself, and this is every country's right." His comments were reported by Iranian television and the national news service IRNA on April 18.

The minister's statement concerning potential withholding of oil was made as new threats from some UN Security Council quarters, of a third sanctions resolution against Iran for its nuclear program, have surfaced. Ironically, Minister Vaziri-Hamaneh reported to the Expo that Iran has signed more than \$38 billion in development deals during the past year and a half, in the oil, gas, and petrochemical industries. He added, "Signing deals shows firm determination of the Islamic Republic of Iran to make breakthroughs in the oil industry."

Mozart Festival Held in Occupied Palestine

During a two-week period spanning Easter, an extraordinary Mozart Festival was held in occupied Palestine, *Ha'aretz* reported April 18. The Palestinian Mozart Festival included 50 works, including almost everything from solos to operas and ensembles to orchestral works. Some 20 concerts, were held as well as films, master classes, and workshops, in cities throughout the West Bank where Palestinians had to run the gauntlet of checkpoints and security checks in order to reach concert halls.

In the city of Nablus, where, only a few weeks ago, the Israeli military conducted a series of brutal military incursions, the Choir of London held a concert at the Al Masri Cultural Center. The American clarinetist Douglas Metcalf performed a Mozart Quintet with a string quartet from England. Later in the evening, the choir performed *Miserere* K. 85, and the *Ave Verum*. The audience included a group of children aged 6 to 8 who, according to the *Ha'aretz* correspondent, "sat in total silence, staring wide-eyed" at a performance the likes of which they had never seen.

In Bethlehem, the Choir of London performed the *Magic Flute*, and in Ramallah, the *Requiem*. Many of the performers were Palestinians, including the international soprano and Jordanian native Dima Bawab, and 14-year-old violinist Jenna Barghouti.

John Harte, a member of the Choir of London and one of the musical directors of the festival, said, "This tour made us realize that music has far more roles than we imagined. Not only musical harmony, which is supposed to encourage harmony between nations, as many think, but also a means of objecting, a socio-political declaration, an expression of despair in politics and its failures and also an outlet from stress and worry."

Asia News Digest

Philippines LaRouche Movement Rips Global Warming Meet

The Philippines LaRouche movement exposed a high-level global warming conference, forcing the Gore-bots to distance themselves from the racist Al Gore. A full day conference in Manila on global warming April 19, with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, UN reps, academics, and government officials was turned into an educational on real science and Nazi eugenics. After a morning of insane presentations, a LaRouche Youth Movement activist asked: "The leading figure promoting global warming is Al Gore, whose idea would root back to the Eugenics Movement of the Nazis, you know, white supremacy, kill the dark-skinned people—the same idea of his close friend, Prince Philip of WWF, who has said that he would like to be reincarnated as a deadly virus in order to contribute to solving the world's overpopulation. This global warming swindle is being used to deindustrialize countries, blaming human emissions of CO₂, when in fact, human activities contribute only an insignificant amount in the atmosphere. So the clear intention is depopulation, through deindustrialization. Are you for this idea of depopulating the world, or anti-development?"

The audience broke out in applause, so the panelists were forced to be respectful in avoiding any answer to the question. Then a LaRouche Society member asked: "Who is Al Gore? He is not a scientist. Do you know his background?" He then read the first paragraph from Anton Chaitkin's article "Racist Gore's Secret History As a Tennessee FBI Hit-Man,"

Former Bangladeshi PM Accepts Exile in Saudi Arabia

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, who had handed over power last October to an interim government for scheduling the general elections, has accepted an offer for exile in Saudi Arabia, with two of her sons, according to reports April 17.

Since Jan. 11, when the interim government in Bangladesh, after failing to prevent political violence, virtually handed over state power to a military administration, the two most contentious political leaders—both former Prime Ministers—have left country. Sheikh Hasina Wazed, daughter of the founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, and a two-term Premier, is now in Florida. The present military administration has brought a number of charges against her, including some criminal charges. It is expected that Sheikh Hasina will not be allowed to go back to Bangladesh in the near future.

India To Explore Gas Fields in Uzbekistan

India's Manmohan Singh government has asked the state-owned Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) to open talks with the Uzbek government for exploration of natural gas. Uzbekistan has little oil, but is rich with natural gas.

On April 13, India's Minister of State for Commerce Jairam Ramesh, while visiting Uzbekistan, met with Prime Minister Savkit Mirziyayev and discussed gas explorations. GAIL has already identified four specific blocks for gas exploration.

Ramesh, during his ongoing visit, offered to set up a training institute for gas technology in Uzbek capital. Last year, India set up the Jawaharlal Nehru IT institute in Tashkent during the Indian prime minister's visit there.

It has also been pointed out that India has shown interest in exploring Uzbekistan's mineral resources—gold, in particular. Uzbekistan has already agreed to consider a concrete proposal on this issue from India's state-owned National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), especially in gold mining. The Uzbeki government, however, stated clearly that one of the requirements of this investment is that the gold will be processed in Uzbekistan itself.

India Announces Offshore Desalination Plan Operational

India's Minister for Science and Technology, Kapil Sibal, has announced the successful start of operation of a 100,000 gallon-per-day floating desalination plant located about 40 km east of the Tamil Nadu coast. The plant will be upgraded to 1 million gallons per day by 2008. The project was under the aegis of India's National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT). This plant is the first of its kind in the world.

This plant is presently sitting on an anchored 65 meter by 16 meter wide barge. The barge is located in deep sea. The salient features of the plant include bringing in saturated hot steam generated in a nuclear power plant for flash heating of the water in a vacuum chamber located on the barge. The freshly generated water vapor passes into an adjacent chamber where cold water drawn from 600 meter depth of Bay of Bengal, east of the Coromandal coast, by pipe, and wrapped around the cooling chamber converts the water vapor to clean potable water. NIOT said the total dissolvable solid in the desalinated water is 10 parts per million, as opposed to the national limit of 2,000 ppm.

Fresh water is then towed in a specially developed 50,000 gallon containers by barges for getting pumped into the water distribution system on shore.

India Begins Re-Building of Stilwell Road to China

India has begun construction of the dilapidated Stilwell Road that connects India's northeast to China's Yunan province via northern Myanmar, Reuters reported April 19. The road was named after the American Gen. Joseph Stilwell, who supervised the construction of the road as a supply route to the Chinese Army battling the Japanese Imperial Army during the World War II.

Lyndon LaRouche, who served in the U.S. military during World War II in India-China-Burma region, commented: "Maybe I'll travel up there again and see what it is like today."

China has already converted its stretch of about 430 miles of the Stilwell Road into a six-lane highway. China has also, in the process, helped develop a number of Myanmar roads linking the Stilwell Road.

China Plans Strategic Reserve of Natural Uranium

China is planning to create a strategic reserve of natural uranium, to ensure its nuclear power development is backed by a "stable and reliable" fuel supply, the *China Daily* reported April 19. China plans to meet 4% of its electricity needs with nuclear power by 2020, up from just above 1% today. This will mean building three nuclear power plants each year over the next ten years, to achieve a capacity of 40 gigawatts, about five times the installed capacity of 2005. The strategic reserve should be in place by 2010.

The China Atomic Energy Authority's latest nuclear development plan, says that China will build this reserve by "sparing no effort" to find and exploit domestic uranium deposits, while also looking for international collaboration to build the reserve.

Africa News Digest

Reports Say Sudan Agrees to UN, AU Role in Darfur

Sudan has signed a joint agreement with the UN and the African Union, defining the respective roles of those

organizations in Darfur, according to the official Saudi news agency, SPA, on April 15.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir reportedly phoned Saudi King Abdullah, and told him the Sudanese government has signed the agreement for the third stage of a plan previously agreed to by Sudan and the UN, to build up the African Union forces in Darfur. In New York, UN deputy spokeswoman Marie Okabe said she could not immediately confirm the Saudi report. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, who is in Sudan as part of an international push to increase pressure on Khartoum over Darfur, avoided commenting on the report of an agreement.

The United Nations and Sudan agreed last November on a three-stage plan to strengthen the undermanned and underequipped African Union peacekeeping force of 7,000 in Darfur, to bring it up to 17,000 troops and 3,000 police officers, with the help of the UN. However, Sudan was opposed to the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces, saying it would allow the AU troops, but that the contribution of the UN would be limited to providing the African Union troops technical and logistical support. President al-Bashir said the presence of UN troops will undermine Sudan's sovereignty.

UN Security Council Sanctions Against Sudan Blocked

Russia, China, and South Africa acted in concert April 16 to block a move by the United States and the U.K. to start talks on new UN sanctions against Sudan, AFP reported April 18. Russian Ambassador to the UN Vitali Churkin, said, "We don't think it's the right time. It would be very strange." He was referring to the fact that Sudan is now cooperating with the UN on Darfur, and on April 16, agreed to the UN deployment of 3,000 UN personnel plus helicopters (the "heavy package support"), to help the African Union forces there. "Why do we have to be so negative?" Churkin asked. "After a long while we have this positive development in the dialogue between the UN and Khartoum, and all of a sudden to come back with some sanctions would not be good." The Chinese ambassador agreed. "It is better not to move in that direction [toward sanctions—ed.]. Many parties are engaging the Sudanese government. Agreement has been reached for the heavy package support," said Liu Zhenmin.

South African Ambassador to the UN Dumisani Kumalo echoed the Russian and Chinese position in remarks to the press: "It is very surprising that they would be bringing up sanctions when Sudan has just made great improvements on the request of the UN for the heavy package, and has accepted [UN Secretary General] Ban Ki-Moon's offer to assist."

China, which has a big economic interests in Sudan, having built its main oil refinery, was also instrumental in mediating the agreement with the UN.

Gore Democrat Susan Rice Urges Bombing Sudan

"Bombing Sudan will only hurt a little bit," Susan Rice of the Brookings Institute, told the U.S. Senate April 11, in an effort to counter South African and Chinese moves to seek a peaceful resolution for the crisis in Darfur.

On April 9, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun, while on a visit to Sudan, urged the government to accept last year's plan by then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan for a joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur. Zhai pointedly warned that putting too much outside pressure on Sudan could be counterproductive, according to reports in the *People's Daily*.

On April 10, South African President Thabo Mbeki arrived in Khartoum, for discussions furthering peace in Darfur, and between Sudan and Chad. Also, on April 11 Mbeki announced, regarding the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement which ended the years-long strife in southern Sudan, that he was satisfied with the progress being made in implementing this. Mbeki said that his government, as a sponsor and mediator of that agreement, will remind humanitarian aid donors to

honor their commitments to Sudan.

These initiatives are in line with the request last month to the United States by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, for the U.S. to delay imposing any new sanctions on Sudan for at least two to four weeks, to allow more time for the Secretary General's negotiations with the Sudan government about sending in a Darfur peace-keeping force. On April 11, the Bush Administration indicated it would refrain from imposing new sanctions.

However, war-hawk Democrat Rice (Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under Clinton-Gore), in direct opposition to these diplomatic initiatives, led the charge at an April 11 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, calling for "severe, sharp, and swift" sanctions against Sudan, and for military action.

In response to a question from committee chairman Joe Biden (D-Del.), about the prospect of bombs harming the 13,000 aid workers and their "functioning" in Sudan, Rice said that bombing would only cause a "temporary disruption" and "diminution" of their work. Under further questioning, Rice resorted to her oft-repeated charge that "enough is enough" for genocide in Sudan.

Andrew Natsios, U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, said, "The only way to achieve long-term progress in Darfur is to promote a political settlement among the parties to the conflict within the framework of the Darfur Peace Agreement, and this is where we are now focusing our attention. We strongly support a leadership role for the United Nations and the African Union...."

Late on April 12, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte arrived in Sudan, for what was billed as continued talks on the proposal to deploy U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur.

Malaysian PM Exposes Lies About Darfur

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also the current head of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), blew the whistle on the international racist hype against Sudan and the lies about the crisis in Darfur after a three-day visit to Sudan. After a visit on April 17 to El Fasher in North Darfur, Badawi told the *New Straits Times*, which published his statement April 20, that "I don't agree with what is said in the media about Darfur. They have food there, the security situation is under control. It is just that the internally displaced people need to be put in proper places." He said that 70% of Darfur is secure, that the Red Cross stopped distributing food aid because the harvest has increased, and that the promise of development in the villages abandoned during the conflict would encourage refugees to return.

Prime Minister Badawi also reported on the booming development in Khartoum, with two new bridges across the Nile, a new airport, new hotels, and new office buildings, including those of Petronas (the Malaysian oil company) and China National Petroleum.

Fundamentalists Claim Bombings in Algeria

Two bombs exploded on April 11—one in the Algerian capital of Algiers, and the other in its suburbs—claiming at least 24 lives and injuring 143 others, Indianews reported from Algiers. One of the blasts ripped part of the facade off the Prime Minister's residence in the center of Algiers. A second bomb hit Bab Ezzouar on Algiers' eastern outskirts.

A radical Islamist group formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which changed its name to the Al-Qa'ida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb (QOIM), after restructuring last year, claimed responsibility in a statement released on the Internet.

GSPC has led an insurgency against Algeria's secular government for the last 15 years. The group reportedly wanted to bring down 52 Muslim governments around the world. Islamist radicals also attacked foreign workers in Algeria on Dec. 10, 2006, and on March 3 this year.

The attacks in Algiers were referred to as "Ghazwa" (Jihadi raid) by al-Qaeda, and follow bombing attacks in Morocco the previous week. The group has also announced its intent to attack Western targets, particularly France. Intelligence sources also link the group to radical fundamentalists in Somalia.

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