

International Intelligence

German Experts Doubt Afghanistan Mission

June 18—The English-language edition of Germany's weekly *Der Spiegel* magazine online wrote today: "The belief that things will end well in Afghanistan is dwindling in Germany. An increasing number of security experts recommend an orderly withdrawal, and even those who were involved in sending the Bundeswehr [Germany army] on the mission are now voicing doubts about ultimate success." Peter Struck, who was Defense Minister when the decision was made to send German troops to Afghanistan, is quoted in *Spiegel*: "One year, then we'd be back out, that's what we thought back then. We thoroughly deceived ourselves."

"Walther Stützle," the magazine reports, "has worked at London's renowned International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), and now works for the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, in Berlin. All rank among the finest and best organizations focusing on national and international security policy. For four years of his eventful career, Stützle served as state secretary in Germany's Defense Ministry, and the airplane attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon occurred during his term there.

"Unnoticed by the general public, Stützle gave a talk at the East-West Forum Gut Gödelitz this January that contained a minor sensation. 'Afghanistan—The Failed Intervention' was the title of his paper, and the text began with the words, 'The military intervention in Afghanistan was and remains a grave error.' . . .

"The security expert is unimpressed by U.S. General McChrystal's new strategy. 'It follows the principle that if aspirin doesn't work, we'll use extra-strength aspirin,' Stützle says. 'Policy can't be made dependent on the strategy of a single general. . . . God willing, the number of casu-

alties will not increase any more, but the increase is part of the logic of McChrystal's new strategy.'"

'Humanitarian Aid' Can't Resolve the Gaza Crisis

June 21—The dire situation in Gaza cannot be resolved simply by providing humanitarian aid, according to a report issued on June 14 by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC notes that Israel's blockade of Gaza, about to enter its fourth year, is choking off any possibility of economic development. Gazans suffer from severe unemployment and poverty, and the quality of Gaza's health-care system has reached an all-time low.

"The whole of Gaza's civilian population is being punished for acts for which they bear no responsibility," says the report. "The closure therefore constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law."

Among crisis situations cited by the ICRC are:

- Almost one-third of Gaza's farmland has been incorporated by Israel into a "buffer zone."
- Israeli restrictions on fishing have left 90% of Gaza's fisherman "poor" or "very poor," and many have no choice but to sail into no-go zones, risking being shot by the Israel Navy.
- Electrical power is interrupted an average of seven hours a day. This has devastating consequences for hospitals and the primary-care system.
- Fuel shortages have forced hospitals to cancel all elective surgery and accept emergency cases only, three times this year. Pediatric hospitals can no longer function. Fluctuations in electricity have damaged sensitive medical equipment. Stocks of medical supplies are at an all-time low, forcing hospitals to re-use such items as ventilator tubes and colostomy bags.
- Gaza's aquifer is being damaged,

with raw sewage being discharged into waterways. Drinking water is unfit for consumption, and the risk of infectious diseases is high. "The current situation is critical and may lead to an irreversible trend in the degradation of underground fresh water," said Javier Cordoba, who oversees the ICRC's water and sanitation activities in Gaza. "Large-scale projects, such as the construction of a desalination plant, must be undertaken to meet water-supply needs without further exposing the aquifer. The closure must be lifted so that the \$4.5 billion pledged by donor countries over a year ago can be put to use."

Turkish Prime Minister: PKK Works for Foreigners

June 21—Turkey has been targeted for terrorist attacks by the Anglo-Israeli-controlled Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which has killed 59 Turkish soldiers in the last six months. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan blamed the group's "foreign collaborators," adding, "The Turkish nation knows very well on whose behalf the terrorist organization works as a subcontractor." According to *Today's Zaman*, this is a reference to Israel.

The most recent escalation of PKK attacks occurred at precisely the point that Turkey and Brazil signed an agreement with Iran for it to transfer its enriched uranium to Turkey. Israel also attacked the flotilla bringing aid to the Gaza Strip last month, killing nine Turkish citizens.

The attacks come at a time when the Turkish government is pushing several initiatives in favor of the Kurdish population and has established good relations with the Kurdish authorities in Iraq. Masoud Barzani, the head of the Kurdish regional government in Iraq, recently visited Turkey, and there has been good intelligence-sharing among Turkish, Northern Iraqi, and U.S. authorities. Barzani has voiced full support for the Turkish government's policies.