
International Intelligence

Russia: Unite To Fight Drug-Money-Backed IS

March 13—Kremlin press secretary Dmitry Peskov, discussing the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) terrorists, told *Kommersant* daily that “the significance of international cooperation on counterterrorism is increasing every day.” *Kommersant* also reports that yesterday Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree announcing the appointment of a new Deputy Foreign Minister for Counterterrorism, whose main role will be to deal with international cooperation in the war on IS. Moscow has not yet announced who will fill the post.

Meanwhile, at the Dushanbe, Tajikistan meeting of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), its member-nations—Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan—are addressing the IS threat. CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha said the CSTO has an arsenal of tools to protect the sovereignty of the member states in the event of an external threat, Armenia News reported today. “We have information about an increasing number of extremist armed groups in Afghanistan, and we do not exclude their penetration into the territory of the organization,” Bordyuzha said.

Pointing to the nexus between the IS and the drug traffickers in Afghanistan, who have proliferated under the 12-year watch of U.S. and NATO troops, Bordyuzha said that the CSTO and Iran are cooperating effectively in combatting drug trafficking, RIA Novosti reported.

On March 6, Russia’s Federal Drug Control Service (FDCS) Director Viktor Ivanov said that over the past five years, the Balkan drug-trafficking route has been split: Heroin traffic now also goes through Iraqi territory, TASS reported him saying. “According to our estimates, IS makes up to \$1 billion annually on Afghan heroin trafficked through its territory,” he added. The FDCS in November said that the sale of Afghan heroin in Europe could gener-

ate upwards of \$50 billion for the narco-terrorists.

Iceland Scraps Its Bid To Join the Europe Union

March 12—Iceland, the only European nation to have jailed bankers for their involvement in the financial crisis, informed the EU today that it was withdrawing its application for membership. Iceland had applied for EU membership in July 2009, but negotiations were stalemated and then frozen after elections in April 2013, which brought the Progress Party and the Independence Party to power, RT reports.

Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson had talked of formally withdrawing the bid in January. “Participating in EU talks isn’t really valid anymore,” he said then. “Both due to changes in the European Union, and because it’s not in line with the policies of the ruling government to accept everything the last government was willing to accept. Because of that, we’re back at square one.”

Attacks in Nigeria Aimed At Nigeria/BRICS Deals

March 10—A two-front military intervention into the northeastern Nigerian state of Borno, by forces of the neighboring nations of Niger and Chad, marks a shift in the attack on the so-called Islamist insurgency of Boko Haram. It is the first time there has been a combined counterattack by two neighboring nations.

The insurgency is now threatening the stability of the nations in the immediate zone of conflict—Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. A prolonged destabilization would have a devastating effect on West Africa and, because of British Empire manipulations, could even threaten the breakup of Nigeria. While Nigeria is the African nation with the largest population, West Africa is the most populated region.

Such a long-war destabilization would deal a severe blow to the opportunities for the BRICS nations’ infrastructure-development initiatives in Nigeria and in Africa as a whole. Last November, China signed a \$12 billion rail deal with Nigeria, the first phase of a much larger Nigerian project to build a rail network to solidify the country. This Chinese approach in Nigeria coheres with the Memorandum of Understanding to build infrastructure throughout Africa, signed by the African Union (AU) and China Jan. 27 at AU headquarters in Addis Abeba.

Britain Applies To Join AIIB; Fur Flies in the White House

March 12—Britain today applied to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Britain’s Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne said, in a Treasury release. A dispatch by Xinhua noted that China’s Finance Ministry welcomed the initiative, which would make Britain a founding member. The Ministry is now seeking the opinions of other founding countries.

At a March 6 press conference, Lou Jiwei, China’s Minister of Finance, said that 27 countries have applied to jointly found the bank. March 31 is the application deadline. Xinhua reports that the bank is to be formally established by the end of 2015. Lou said that a number of European nations have shown interest in joining the bank.

Within hours of today’s announcement of Britain’s application to the AIIB, reports came out of White House disapproval. The Financial Times reported that, “The Obama administration accused the UK of a ‘constant accommodation’ of China after Britain decided to join a new China-led financial institution that could rival the World Bank...”

While Britain has a long history of playing all sides, its decision also has a basis in reality: The Asian sector is growing, while Europe is collapsing.