

## British bring U.S. the Chamberlain line

by Mark Burdman

Highest-level officials of British intelligence traveled to the United States during the week of April 24, bringing dire warnings that should the West support Lithuania's Declaration of Independence, this might destabilize Mikhail Gorbachov and drive the U.S.S.R. to the edge of civil war. Reportedly, this disinformation from London was important in consolidating the Bush administration's "Neville Chamberlain" approach toward Lithuania.

This is the latest case, and one of the more extraordinary cases, of a history of damaging British manipulation of U.S. foreign policy. It shows the bankruptcy of the intelligence evaluations and political judgment coming from London and evidently endorsed in official Washington. The fact is, as Lithuanian leaders themselves have stressed, selling out Lithuania will help nobody, including Gorbachov. Meanwhile, the longer-term effects of betraying the West's own principles of justice and freedom will also backfire. This treachery will only hasten the day that mass-strike political upheavals will erupt in the English-speaking world.

The British intelligence deployment to the U.S. was highlighted by the *Times of London* April 28. The paper's U.S. editor Peter Stothard wrote from Washington: "A consolidation of CIA and MI-6 intelligence assessments, reinforced by a top-level inter-service meeting in Washington in the past few days, has resulted in an analysis of extreme gloom about President Gorbachov's prospects of holding the Soviet Union together without the increasing use of armed force. . . . A senior U.S. administration source confirmed this week that allied concern about the fragility of the Soviet Union was an important factor in President Bush's surprise decision against imposing economic sanctions on Moscow in retaliation for the Lithuanian blockade."

Stothard reported that the British delegation was headed by Sir Percy Cradock. Cradock is Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's top foreign policy adviser, with responsibilities for intelligence coordination at 10 Downing Street, as head of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). According to Stothard, Cradock left the U.S. on April 26, accompanied by other senior British officials. One unnamed U.S. official told Stothard that the British-American talks were "as close as

you would expect at this critical time."

Stothard further affirmed that the Bushman most eager to do all possible to bolster Gorbachov, would be Secretary of State James Baker III. Stothard warned that the Soviets could be moving toward "nuclear civil war." In fact, as many European intelligence experts have noted in recent weeks, the Soviets have pulled back nuclear weapons to the "Russian core" of the U.S.S.R. and have placed them under the most stringent operational controls.

### 'Thatcher was told by Gorbachov'

In a background briefing, a London insider affirmed April 28 that the British Foreign Office and British intelligence services were mobilized in mid-April to put out the line that "Gorbachov is in danger," and that nothing substantial should be done to help Lithuania. He said this was because more and more politicians in both Britain and the United States, including President Bush, were coming under pressure on the Lithuania issue and being accused of letting Gorbachov bully the Lithuanians.

He said: "We've been hearing this line repeatedly in off-the-record briefings during the past days, that Gorbachov is in grave danger. The reading of our intelligence is that various Soviet republics are in a state of near-insurrection. If sanctions were imposed on the Soviet Union to punish them for the blockade of Lithuania, the suffering of the Soviet population would increase, and that would make matters more volatile. . . . It's quite clear that Mrs. Thatcher was told so much by Mikhail Gorbachov when they had that television conversation right before she met George Bush in Bermuda [April 13]. My understanding is that he said to her that he didn't like to do what he was doing vis-à-vis Lithuania, but he had no choice, and that it was becoming a high-stakes game."

He added that the visit of British intelligence chiefs to the U.S. was the latest in a "constant series of meetings and joint assessments since the Lithuania crisis erupted. . . . In fact, meetings have been going on constantly since East Europe began to unravel, particularly since the time of the opening of the Berlin Wall. . . . I wouldn't be surprised if William Webster were not over here recently, too."

This source affirmed: "The roots for such coordination go back to the British-American intelligence-sharing agreements worked out in 1947, but such coordination has taken on fresh urgency now. George Bush is personally very much committed to cooperation among the intelligence services of the leading English-speaking nations," he added. "Such cooperation is easy, since the 'Dominion' intelligence services—Canada, Australia, New Zealand—were set up at the impetus of Britain in the first place."

He further stated that "it is certain that the British-American intelligence meetings this past week discussed other international issues, including the international economic and financial situations. . . . What they are doing is setting up various committees, precisely to look into matters like this."