

International Intelligence

Peres: Greatest threat to Israel is cultural

The threat Israel has most to worry about is that symbolized by the fact that the pornographic rock star Madonna is better known among young people than the great women figures of the Old Testament, said Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in a lengthy interview published in the Paris daily *Le Monde* on Dec. 28.

The interviewer asked him: "Beyond common Jewish roots, is there today an *Homo Israelus*, who would have particular traits?" Peres responded sardonically: "For us, as for you Frenchmen, the greatest threat is not a military invasion but a cultural invasion. Cable television is more dangerous for our identity than the *Intifada*. Because, on the ground, you have frontiers. Television doesn't know any frontiers. It arrives, directly, into each apartment. There are young people who think that, among the greatest women of the world, there is Madonna. Not Rebecca, not Sarah, but Madonna! For them, she is the most important woman."

Many Croatians oppose Tudjman's policies

Many Croatians have begun to openly question President Franjo Tudjman's policy toward Bosnia, according to wire service reports from Zagreb. Tudjman is supporting the British-Serbian plan of carving up Bosnia into ethnic enclaves, and is trying to grab a chunk for Croatia by military means.

The growing public dismay has reportedly spilled even into the state-dominated media.

"Croatia's geostrategic position and economy are endangered without a unified Bosnia. The consequences of Bosnia's partition could be disastrous for us," said Martin Spigelj, a retired Croatian Army general and popular commentator.

"Even the most faithful disciples of Croatian policy have begun to review it, thinking: 'Was there anything else we could have done?'" said the government-controlled

newspaper *Vjesnik*.

"Tudjman's policy in supporting Bosnia's breakup is incredibly foolish because it runs the risk of the same thing happening in Croatia," a senior western diplomat is quoted in the Croatian press.

Tudjman regards partition as a step toward annexing any Bosnian Croat state in "Greater Croatia." But Croat critics believe the upheaval caused by Croat-Muslim fighting will mean that two out of three Bosnian Croats may end up stranded outside of a future Croatian mini-state. Many would be refugees, imposing a severe economic burden on Croatia and breeding a culture of revanchism which could make for long-term turmoil in the region.

The discontent surfacing in the Croatian media and among newly ascendant moderates in Tudjman's party, the HDZ, has not escalated into a broad opposition to Tudjman.

Russia will stop military demobilization

Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev announced on Dec. 29 that the government of President Boris Yeltsin is stopping plans to demobilize the Armed Forces. "We aren't going to make sharp cuts, we aren't going to hurry," he told a Moscow news conference.

Grachev said that he would ask the newly elected legislature to shelve a decision by the former parliament, the Supreme Soviet, to reduce the size of the Armed Forces to a maximum of 1% of the population, or about 1.5 million men, by the year 2000. The parliament that made that decision was dissolved by Yeltsin in September, before the bloody siege of Oct. 3-4, 1993.

Grachev said at the news conference that the decision to cut the military had proved to be flawed and that the optimum level for the Armed Forces was now regarded as 2.1 million men. "We now have 2,341,000 men. We plan to have 2.1 million by the end of 1994. We will keep the Army at about this size and not at about 1.5 million," he said.

In a commentary published on Dec. 30,

"Far-Right Brings Gun and Butter U-Turn by Russia," the London *Guardian's* Moscow correspondent Jonathan Steele wrote that the decision shows that Russia is moving in a Zhirinovskiy-type direction, even if the Yeltsin regime denounces Vladimir Zhirinovskiy himself.

Algerian FIS rejects dialogue with government

Algeria's outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) appears to have rejected a government proposal for dialogue to end violence in the country, France-Info radio reported on Dec. 28.

A statement from the FIS reportedly turned down proposals for a national dialogue, calling instead for continued armed struggle. The three-page statement further warned those who might be tempted to talk, not to negotiate with "the arbitrary junta supported by arrogant foreign states and the Army."

"The FIS calls on the Algerian people to demand an Islamic regime, and calls on fighters to continue the Jihad holy war and on the Islamists to unite," the radio quoted the statement as saying. The broadcast said it appeared to be a response to calls from the Algerian government for dialogue to resolve the country's political crisis, following the cancellation of a 1992 election that the FIS was expected to win.

Russia 'between bayonet and cross'

"Between a bayonet and a cross, Russians are awaiting 1994," wrote the Moscow correspondent for the Italian daily *La Repubblica* on Dec. 29, in an article broadly corroborating Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR's* view of the "Third Rome" configuration that is ruling Russia. The traditional pillars of the Third Rome imperial elite have been the *nomenklatura*, the army, and the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to the newspaper, new polls

Briefly

● **CHINESE** military leaders defended their bloody massacre of freedom fighters at Tiananmen Square in June 1989, in an interview aired Dec. 30 on the British network Independent Television News. The officers said that communism in China was at stake and that therefore they had to crush the protest.

● **ITALIAN POLICE** arrested 10 people in a dawn raid on Dec. 28, charging business links between the Mafia and secret freemasonic lodges. The operation took place in both Palermo and Trapani, a day after a judge had seized assets worth 16.5 billion liras (\$10 million) from Licio Gelli, the former grandmaster of the outlawed Propaganda-2 masonic lodge.

● **PAKISTANI** Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the guest of honor at a banquet hosted by North Korean President Kim Il Sung on Dec. 29, said that her country "firmly holds the view that nuclear non-proliferation should not be made a pretext for preventing states from exercising fully their right to acquire and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes geared to their economic and social developments."

● **THE BALTIC STATES**, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, urged Russian President Boris Yeltsin in a New Year address to complete the withdrawal of Russian troops from their countries in 1994. Baltic politicians who fear a return to power in Moscow of tough, imperial-minded politicians, expressed grave reservations at the surge in popular support for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Reuters reports.

● **FRANCE'S** former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who is now the chairman of the French parliamentary committee for foreign affairs, said on Jan. 2 that the conflict in former Yugoslavia may be solved only by respecting the existing and internationally recognized borders of the former republics. Giscard had met with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo.

taken by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences are showing that the church and the army are "the last hopes of the disappointed Russians." The largest pluralities of those polled pin their confidence on either of those institutions, with confidence in President Yeltsin and the Russian government being very low. The author notes that the church and the army are the "sacred institutions of the state" in Russia.

Of those polled, 75% say they have great difficulty finding the means to buy food each month, or have no money left for anything else once they have bought food. While people support, at least in name, such ideas as "capitalism" and "privatization," they are against the core features of "shock therapy," and are demanding fixed prices for food, the right to a job, and subsidies for companies in difficulty.

German defense experts contest defense cuts

The German defense establishment is up in arms against the Bonn government's neglect of national defense requirements. While there had been private criticism before, the fight has become a public one since the Dec. 12 Russian elections, when hardline "Third Rome" factions made sweeping gains.

In an internal government document leaked to the media at the end of December, Minister of Defense Volker Rühle warned against any further weakening of the national defense at a time when "uncertainties and the crisis potential in our close and broader neighborhood" provide "reason for concern and unrest."

Europe is still far from the level of security which it needs as a precondition for peaceful integration, Rühle wrote, urging that no further budget cuts occur that could paralyze the role of the armed forces as a "determining factor of the fate of our nation in the future."

"Nobody would cancel his fire insurance when there hasn't been a fire for a long time," Rühle wrote, pointing out that without a "substantial German contribution," it

would be nearly impossible to conceive of a "Europe that is capable of action in military terms if need be."

The warning became even more direct in a statement on Dec. 28 by Peter Kurt Würzbach, a former assistant defense minister who is now defense policy spokesman of his Christian Democratic Union's parliamentary group in Bonn. He charged Chancellor Helmut Kohl with "irresponsible conduct" for allowing the Finance Ministry to plan new budget cuts for the Armed Forces at an internationally tense time, when this would send out just the wrong signal. "Not even at the time of the most degenerate SPD [Social Democratic] government have we had a situation in which the defense minister does not know at all how much money he'll have to spend, at the beginning of a year."

Britain wants 'Singapore model' for Palestine

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd visited the Mideast the first week in January to promote the "Singapore model" for Palestine, Reuters reports. Hurd visited Lebanon, Israel, the Occupied Territories, and Jordan to "reinforce the interest of the former colonial power in the evolution of a Palestinian state. 'We don't fool ourselves into thinking we are center stage in the peace process,' said one official. 'But we think we can help move things forward constructively.'"

What the British Foreign Office means by "constructively" consists of promoting financial speculation and, presumably, the drug trade, as the centerpieces of the new Palestinian entity. London has already offered to help Palestine with "central banking, policing, a radio station, and law drafting," noted Reuters, and Hurd is likely to offer additional assistance "targeted toward Palestinians building on their existing strengths of sophisticated knowledge and experience of world financial markets."

"The new Palestinian entity should not be regarded as a basket case," one diplomat told Reuters. "It's much more likely to turn into a Singapore of the Middle East than a Sudan."