

# International Intelligence

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## ***Sinn Fein, SDLP election pact becomes stalemated***

A deal to unite Northern Ireland's two nationalist political parties, Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), fell apart over Jan. 4-5, in large part due to the IRA's failure to renew its cease-fire, according to British news media. SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams had been working on an electoral plan to unite their voting bloc for the British elections which must take place by June, so as to gain representative strength in the Parliament.

Hume told Irish radio, "If there was an unequivocal IRA cease-fire, we will sit down and discuss anything with Sinn Fein regarding the British elections." While Hume's formulation leaves open the possibility of renewing discussions, SDLP's other demand of Sinn Fein is much more problematic. Hume wrote in the *Irish Sunday Independent* that Sinn Fein would have to "jettison [its] policy of parliamentary abstention," which would entail swearing the oath of allegiance to Queen Elizabeth. Sinn Fein has avoided taking the oath, by abstaining from taking office whenever it won any parliamentary seats.

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## ***Algerian regime reaps benefit from terrorism***

A bomb at an Algiers supermarket on Jan. 7, leaving 13 dead and some 100 wounded, was the latest in the escalating terrorist assaults against civilians, which caused the death of 43 civilians in the two previous days in outlying villages. At the end of December, a series of attacks had caused 15 deaths and 200 wounded. The killings were so brutal (decapitations, mutilations) that hundreds of villagers reportedly either fled, or accepted government weapons and payments to form armed militias. Although no one has claimed responsibility, it is widely believed that the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) is behind the violence which has peaked in the days preceding the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

The opposition Islamic Salvation Front

(FIS) officially distanced itself from all the terrorist attacks against civilians, in its communiqués. It also accused the GIA, under its new leader Antar Zouabri, of working with the Algerian regime. The FIS argued that the regime has thoroughly discredited itself, by rejecting any serious dialogue, eliminating all opposition, organizing the phony constitutional referendum that gave the President extraordinary powers, rigging its results, and issuing a new election law based on it.

The French daily *Libération* on Jan. 8 pointed out that "numerous experts . . . believe that maintaining a wave of violence through the manipulation of armed groups by the security services, serves the interests of a discredited regime by allowing it to appear as the 'lesser of two evils.' These experts think . . . the government's refusal to make the least concession recognizing the Berber language, and the recent adoption of the 'law on the generalization of the Arabic language,' is a provocation capable of drawing the [Berber region] Kabylie into the turmoil."

It is now estimated that 80,000 people have died since the civil war broke out in 1991.

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## ***Japan's prime minister tours ASEAN nations***

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, after visiting Brunei on Jan. 7, arrived in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Jan. 8 on a week-long tour of five members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (ASEAN). The Japanese embassy in Kuala Lumpur said one aim of the visit was for Hashimoto "to build stronger personal relations" with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. Hashimoto also met Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and had an audience with King Tuanku Ja'afar. According to a Malaysian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hashimoto suggested to Mahathir that there should be more regular meetings between ASEAN leaders and Tokyo, to which Mahathir responded that he would consult other ASEAN leaders. Malaysia currently chairs the organization.

Mahathir also told Hashimoto, regarding

China's growing involvement in Asia, that "Malaysia feels a policy of friendship is better than a policy of containment." The spokesman also reported that Hashimoto said Tokyo was positive to the idea of entry by Myanmar (Burma) into ASEAN, which is opposed by London's "human rights" non-governmental organizations networks.

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## ***Venezuelan bishops protest TV pornography***

The Commission on Social Communications of the Venezuelan Bishops Conference finally issued an official statement early this year against the long-announced plans to broadcast pornography by cable and satellite TV companies, particularly by Direct-TV, a company owned by the Cisneros family, although the Cisneroses are not named in the statement. According to reports published Jan. 7 by most Venezuelan newspapers, the bishops called on "Direct TV, and all companies offering such services in Venezuela, to reconsider their proposed programming." It adds that these programs "only contribute to the debasing our people, and, although it is true that these sort of services are in some cases expensive, we all know that those most hurt are children and youth."

The bishops note that while technical means can be used to block access to children, it would still be wrong to transmit such programming. "An organization that is interested in investing in Venezuela, should be concerned about the country's moral health. Economic benefits cannot be put above the common good," says the statement, signed by the chairman of the Social Communications Commission, William Delgado, auxiliary Bishop of Maracaibo. It also calls on Congress to intervene "to defend the interests of Venezuelans."

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## ***German social democrats push dope decrim***

Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) has drawn up a legislative proposal that would effectively decriminalize illegal drugs in the country, according to a Jan. 7

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**TWO FRENCH SOLDIERS** were killed in the Central African Republic, as an eight-month-long mutiny by that country's Third Army is beginning to expand into a wider revolt against the French military presence. The French came in to protect the election of President Ange Patassé, and retains a 2,000-man force.

**OVER 30,000 BULGARIANS** demonstrated on Jan. 6 in front of the Bulgarian Socialist Party headquarters in Plovdiv. "If we have to die, we'll die out on the squares," Plovdiv Mayor Spas Garnevski of the Union of Democratic Forces said. Earlier 40,000 people, calling themselves the "new majority of the hungry," rallied in Sofia against the ruling BSP on Jan. 3. Further rallies are planned for Varna, Burgas, Lovech, and Montana.

**TONY BLAIR'S** British Labour Party is reportedly holding discussions with the Liberal Democratic Party of Paddy Ashdown to form a "Lib-Lab" coalition government in the wake of what is expected to be the demise of the Tories in the next elections, according to the *Times* of London on Jan. 7. Ashdown told BBC's "Today" program, that he would not rule out accepting a portfolio in a Blair cabinet, which, of course, means he has been offered a post.

**NOTSO CORDIALE** relations between France and Britain followed the European Union summit in Dublin, according to France's *Le Point* on Jan. 7, and "strong disagreements" between President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister John Major "over the monetary and political union have visibly left traces" on their erstwhile Entente Cordiale.

**GEORGE SOROS** was named "Man of the Year" by Kyrgyzstan's Rukhaniyat organization. In 1996, the super-speculator and drug-legalization sugar daddy donated more than \$4 million to fund educational and cultural programs in Kyrgyzstan.

news broadcast by Deutschlandfunk. The SPD's "Draft to Change the Law on the Traffic of Narcotic Substances," uses protective coloration of rehabilitating of addicts instead of striking out at the drug kingpins—the "social" approach to legalization favored by George Soros—to push legalization. The draft criminal code would emphasize "help instead of punishment" for dealing, especially in cases where addiction was a factor; expand the legal definition of amounts for "personal use"; and would protect drug rehabilitation centers, which have become notorious as places for drug consumption and sales, from police raids.

By contrast, drug addiction in Russia is anything but a "social" phenomenon, feeding directly into the social collapse and skyrocketing violent crime. The Department of the Illegal Use of Drugs, has reported that the number of people in Nizhny Novgorod who use narcotics zoomed to 180,000 in 1996. The number of drug-related crimes increased by 20%, reaching 800 per year. Two-thirds of the criminals are under 30 years old. The majority of the addicts are unemployed workers. Some 80% of the drugs are transported to the region from Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan, as well as from Krasnodar, Stavropol, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, and from Ukraine and Moldova.

### ***Russian patriarch decries worsening social crisis***

In his address at the midnight mass in Moscow celebrating the Orthodox Church Christmas on Jan. 7, Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Aleksii II declared that 1996 was "a very, very difficult year for Russia and for the other republics of the former Soviet Union." Among the terrible hardships endured by the population, he cited "the insecure economic and social situation, the tragedy in Chechnya [and] the refugee problem."

The ROC has become loudly critical of the regime's practices, epitomized by the Holy Synod on Dec. 28, presided over by Aleksii II. The synod issued a declaration that was sharply critical of the social situa-

tion, and especially attacked the non-payment of wages and pensions. The declaration stated: "The church declares that the non-payment of money, that was honestly earned, is a crime against man and a sin before God." It went on to say that "all those responsible for the non-payment of salaries, pensions, living expenses upkeep, and stipends" are called upon "to realize the necessity of reaching a quick decision on this problem."

### ***Hongkong paper teaches history to Gov. Patten***

The Hongkong Chinese newspaper *Tzu Ching* had to teach some of the ABCs of history to Britain's last colonial governor, Chris Patten, after he delivered a provocative final policy address in late 1996. Patten had declared: "Over the past few years, there have always been people secretly appealing to Beijing to reverse some decisions that the Hongkong government has made in good faith." This, he claimed, will cause Hongkong's autonomy to "be forfeited bit by bit" and "enable Chinese officials to interfere in affairs that are clearly within Hongkong's own jurisdiction."

*Tzu Ching* responded: "The history of Britain's withdrawing from its colonies was a history of taking advantage of conflict, fomenting discord, spreading hatred, employing the 'divide-and-rule' policy, fostering trusted followers, and creating chaos. . . . Britain did it for one purpose only, which was to prolong its political and economic benefits and influence in those territories and to try to prove that the absence of British colonial rule would 'spell disaster.'"

In India, *Tzu Ching* continued, the British fomented Hindu-Muslim hatreds and "split the national independence forces." They used the same methods in Palestine and in Cyprus, where there is still bloodshed today. As a result of these methods, "in today's Africa, wars frequently break out, the economy is backward, and people in many regions live in dire poverty. British colonial rule can claim some 'credit' for all this."