

International Intelligence

Venetians found 'soft' separatist party

A "soft-core" gang of secessionists from Venice, founded the "Northeastern Party" on Feb. 16. Venice Mayor Massimo Cacciari, a follower of Friedrich Nietzsche, and other representatives of the Venice-Trent-Friuli regions, met in "Serenissima" Venice to found the Partito del Nord-Est (PNE), which is supposed to represent the alternative to the outright separatist strategy of the Northern League of Umberto Bossi.

In fact, it was the Venetians who first spawned the Northern League as an affiliate of the Venetian Philological Circle, and then distanced themselves, when the League became radicalized. The PNE's program is the same as the Northern League's—"fiscal federalism." Cacciari declared that they demand "a radical federalism."

Public Works Minister Paolo Costa and Labor Minister Tiziano Treu attended the meeting, but Prime Minister Romano Prodi attacked the party in a letter to the Venice daily *Il Gazzettino*, saying, "It is a step backward."

Iranian center attacked by Pakistani terrorists

Eight people were killed in a terrorist attack on the Iranian Cultural Center in the Pakistani city of Multan on Feb. 20, the latest in a series of attacks by sectarian Sunni terrorists against the Shia Iranians, and the first such attack since Nawaz Sharif was voted up as Pakistan's new prime minister.

The assault, which is believed to be a warning to the new government against improving relations with Iran, came only a week before the scheduled visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati to Islamabad, to discuss such sensitive regional issues as Afghanistan, Kashmir, and the developments in Central Asia.

In the attack, six gunmen stormed into the Iranian Cultural Center at Multan, after having gained entrance to the premises by using "red chili powder" to blind the security

guards outside. The Director, Agha Muhammad Ali Rahimee, the highest-ranking Iranian official at the Center, and three members of the staff were immediately shot dead. The six assailants, according to the Iranian official daily *Ettela'at*, were reported to be members of the Sepah-i-Sehaba, the leading terrorist group in sectarian violence in Pakistan.

Both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Farooq Leghari have not only condemned the gruesome incident, but have taken a very serious view of the situation. Similar attacks on Indian targets are also possible. The recent thaw in Indo-Pakistani relations around solving the Jammu-Kashmir problem, could be regarded as a *casus belli* by the internal and foreign enemies of the nations of the region.

ASEAN warns EU against 'human rights' meddling

On the eve of the Feb. 13 ASEAN-EU (ASEM) meeting in Singapore between the members of the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN has warned that if the EU raises the subject of Indonesian occupation of East Timor, the "whole [EU-ASEAN] relationship would be seriously affected." Relations between the two associations have been further poisoned by the EU's suspension of tariff privileges for Myanmar (Burma) on grounds of human rights violations. Myanmar is expected to become a full member of ASEAN later this year, along with Cambodia and Laos.

Any significant progress in increased trade between the associations has reached a roadblock due to ASEAN's refusal to compromise on its "constructive engagement" policy toward Myanmar and its unanimous support for Indonesia. There has been no "Action Plan" ratified between the two associations since the expiration of the 1980 plan, because Indonesia and Portugal are at loggerheads over the human rights clause. One analyst has told *EIR* that, if a final declaration is issued with no action plan, the meeting will be a flop.

On Feb. 15, the EU and ASEAN foreign ministers were joined by their counterparts from the United States, China, Japan, and South Korea.

Segal: The quality of sovereignty is strained

"Break-up China" champion Gerald Segal, of the London International Institute for Strategic Studies, wrote a commentary for *Asia Times* on Feb. 5, insisting that China, "one of the world's most authoritarian governments . . . needs to learn that sovereignty is constrained." Calling the transfer of Hongkong to Chinese sovereignty "a tragedy of historic proportions," the China-basher Segal attacks the Beijing-sponsored transition legislative body for "undoing the democratic reforms necessary to rule a vibrant, open civil society." These reforms seemed unnecessary to the British for 155 years of colonial rule: Gov. Chris Patten slipped them in last year as a provocation to Beijing.

Segal concludes: "The fate of Hongkong is not only a test for China, it is also a test for those who would manage the rise of China." In classic gang-countergang fashion, the *Asia Times* ran an editorial denouncing Segal's op-ed, as a voice of Britain's colonial past. Puffed the *Asia Times*: "The rise of China is and will continue to be managed by the Chinese. The days of the white man's burden are over, with no tears to shed."

German pro-monarchist sentiment pleases Brits

Donald Foreman, who heads Britain's Monarchist League, said his circles are encouraged by a growing "pro-monarchist" sentiment in Germany, in a recent discussion with *Strategic Alert*, published by EIR Nachrichten Agentur in Germany. At a time when Germans are increasingly disaffected over "political horse-trading" and rising unemployment, more and more Germans are trying to "rediscover" their pre-1945 history. In this situation, the old Kaiser is being looked at again, somewhat nostalgically.

Briefly

MYANMAR and Russia have agreed to cooperate with anti-narcotics operations, according to Radio Myanmar on Jan. 22. Myanmar now has cooperation agreements in the drug interdiction arena with both Russia and China.

SHIMON PERES, Israel's former prime minister, blasted Australian billionaire Joseph Gutnick, and the Israeli extremist group Habad, for "mongering evil and hatred" through the financial aid they give to Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian areas. Peres reportedly threw down this gauntlet at Bar-Ilan school for religious studies in Tel Aviv, an extremist stronghold.

PAKISTANI ARMY chief Gen. Jahangir Karamat called for a sense of urgency in settling the Kashmir issue with India, and hinted that Kashmir policy for the new government of Nawaz Sharif might be set by the military leadership, according to *The Hindu* reporting from Islamabad.

GREENPEACE, the oligarchy's environmentalist gang, is demanding that Spain shut down its nuclear and coal power generation rather than sell its surplus electricity to Morocco, via a high-voltage submarine cable across the Strait of Gibraltar.

THE WILD CAMEL Protection Foundation's chairman, Briton John Hare wants to set up a reserve in the Gashun Gobi desert in Xinjiang, China to protect the wild bactrian camel. The proposed reserve would encompass 38,599 square miles, and include China's nuclear testing zone at Lop Nur.

MOST GERMANS do not want Helmut Kohl to have another term as Chancellor, according to February's monthly poll by the ZDF television network, with some 56% saying he shouldn't even run again. If there were national elections on Feb. 28, only 40% would vote for Christian Democrat Kohl, while 46% would vote for Social Democrat Gerhard Schröder.

Among the "signs" Foreman cited, are the current exhibition in Berlin commemorating the pre-World War I "Anglo-German monarchical relations"; a recent poll showing that 42.7% of Germans admired the British monarchy, after "our dreadful debate on the monarchy in Britain" was aired on German TV; a poll showing 43% of Saxons favor restoration ("people [in Saxony] see themselves as Saxons first, and Germans second"); and strong pro-monarchism in Bavaria, which he said, is "more oriented to the Wittelsbachs than to the Hohenzollerns." A 1992 poll taken in Bavaria, showed 68% of Bavarians favorable to the monarchy.

Foreman was also very enthusiastic about the potential for restoring the monarchies in Russia, Bulgaria, and Romania, all of which have been ravaged by the Bush-Thatcher economic "reforms."

Weekly cites Bofors link to Palme, Gandhi murders

"Bofors Papers to Reveal Link Between Palme and Gandhi Assassinations," ran the front-page headline of *Sunday Business*, on Feb. 16. The London-based weekly asserts that recent documents released by Swiss authorities, concerning payments to middlemen by the Swedish armaments firm Bofors, to help get a \$13 billion contract to sell howitzers to the Indian government, "could give credence to the view that the Bofors gun deal was not merely a scandal involving alleged kickbacks to middlemen, but part of a wider political strategy of the U.S./U.K. governments and their intelligence services to play off Iran and Iraq against each other during the 1980s, destabilizing their regimes." As *EIR* has documented, especially in its *Special Report* "George Bush and the 12333 Serial Murder Ring," both Palme and Gandhi were obstructions to Bush's international guns-and-drugs ring during the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War, later.

Sunday Business reports that Swedish investigators looking into the Feb. 28, 1986 assassination of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme are eager to look at the documents, adding, "Some speculate that both

Palme and Rajiv Gandhi, the former Indian premier, were killed on the orders of Western intelligence because they opposed the Anglo-U.S. policy on Iran and Iraq."

In a related development, one of the potential witnesses in the Palme murder investigation and in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Peter Casselton, died in a bizarre accident in early February. Casselton, Eugene de Kock, and Craig Williamson had been involved in the 1982 bombing of the headquarters of the African National Congress. Last year, de Kock testified in court that Williamson was central to the 1986 killing of Palme.

Albania feared to be next Balkans flashpoint

The situation in and around Albania could be the trigger for a new, broader Balkans conflict, writes Rémy Ourdan, of the Paris daily *Le Monde* on Feb. 20. Since November 1996, tension has been rising in the Kosovo region of Serbia, whose majority population is ethnic Albanian. A strain of Kosovar extremism has emerged, taking advantage of the upheaval against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, at the same time that Milosevic could readily exploit the situation in Kosovo, to draw attention away from the revolt against him in Serbia.

Even more volatile is the situation of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Macedonian leader Gligorov has been a factor of stability since Macedonia was formed from the breakup of Yugoslavia, but, step by step, he is losing control. According to the French daily *Libération*, "more than 10,000 high school and university students demonstrated" on Feb. 19 in the Macedonian capital Skopje, "for the third consecutive day, against a law introducing Albanian-language courses in the teaching faculty. The Albanian minority in Macedonia accounts for nearly 30% of the population." Macedonia, claims *Le Monde's* Ourdan, "is the heart of the Balkan problem." There are conflicting claims on this country by Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania, as well as by the Greater Serbians.