

International Intelligence

Indonesia's Muslims hold national unity congress

The Indonesian Council of Muslim Scholars (MUI) will convene the largest-ever Muslim congress in the country's history on Nov. 4-8, in a bid to forge unity during the economic crisis. MUI Deputy Chairman Ali Yafie said the congress would bring together Muslim scholars and leaders from across the nation to discuss the crisis. "There is no single institution that can handle the current problems alone, including MUI," he said. Speakers will include Abdurrahman Wahid, head of the largest Muslim organization, the Nadlatul Ulama, and Abri (Armed Forces) Commander General Wiranto.

The last time a similar congress was held was in 1945, the year Indonesia declared independence from the Netherlands. That congress led to the creation of the Masyumi Islamic Party, which was later fused, during the Suharto period, with several other Islamic parties into the United Development Party. Since Suharto's ouster last May, over 100 new political parties have been created in Indonesia, including dozens of Islamic parties.

ESA tight-wads threaten space station work

The European Space Agency is unwilling to join with the U.S. National Aeronautic and Space Administration to spend more money than planned to keep space station work in Russia on schedule, according to a mid-October announcement by the ESA's space station chief, Jorg Feustel-Beuchl. Speaking at ESA headquarters in Paris, Feustel-Beuchl said that ESA is planning to sign previously negotiated contracts with Russian organizations for about \$100 million for station-related hardware, but it will be paid out over several years, based on incurred expense as the work is performed. There will be no advance payments to help the Russian companies cope with the economic crisis.

The formation of a Social Democratic-Green coalition government in Germany has added more uncertainty over continued sup-

port for space from the ESA's second-largest contributor. France, the largest ESA participant, has been publicly attacking the space station, and all manned space programs.

Meanwhile, *Space News* reported in its Oct. 12-18 issue that NASA has deposited with the Russian Space Agency the first \$34 million of a \$60 million payment that NASA plans to make by the end of the month. NASA plans to transfer another \$40 million by the year's end. In 1999, NASA is set to transfer an additional \$110 million to Russia, and a total of \$660 million over four years.

U.S. official: Relations with Nigeria are mending

Strained relations between the United States and Nigeria are over, said U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense and International Affairs Franklin Kramer, who visited Nigeria at the end of September. Kramer also said that Sept. 24 talks at the White House between President Clinton and Nigerian President Abdulsalam Abubakar were "fruitful." The talks took place while President Abubakar was in the United States for the UN General Assembly.

Kramer said that the United States was prepared to work with Nigeria in maintaining security in West Africa and Africa as a whole. He commended Nigeria for helping to restore democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone. "Closer military contacts between the United States and Nigeria would benefit not only Nigeria's military, but all the Nigerian people," Kramer said, during a speech at the Nigerian National War College in Abuja.

He also said that "having a closer bilateral military relationship first requires that Nigeria complete its transformation to include: the successful transition to civilian government, the military's permanent support of civilian government, the formalizing in law and in practice of civilian control over the military, and the military's commitment in word and action that abuses of political power and human rights have no place in the new Nigeria."

Kramer expressed optimism that programs would be put in place between the two nations, including U.S. training and more coordination on regional security.

Pakistani murder linked to British intelligence

The murder of a Pakistani woman, and the flight to England of her British lover, a top diplomat and alleged spymaster, has rocked Pakistan. One important feature of the story is that it leads in the direction of exposing how Britain runs the Taliban.

The story is as follows: In the first week of October, First Secretary of the British High Commission (embassy) in Pakistan, Dominic Jermy, fled to England, one day after the decapitated body of his lover, Nina Aziz, was found in a closet in her home. Aziz was the daughter of a retired Pakistani Air Force commodore.

According to coverage in *Asian Age*, Jermy was in charge of overseeing British intelligence operations in Afghanistan, "running the Afghan war with aplomb from his desk in Islamabad." Citing unidentified sources, the paper added that Aziz was also a British intelligence agent. The sources told *Asian Age* that she "was beheaded by an agent of the British intelligence agency MI6. . . . The police had evidence that Nina, through Dominic, had special links with the British MI6. She was killed by the agency when it thought that Nina was no longer reliable."

The British Foreign Office, through its spokesman, said that Jermy was "deeply shocked . . . and it is not surprising that he has taken some leave." The spokesman said Jermy would be returning to Pakistan shortly to help the investigation. *Asian Age* added that the proof of Aziz's intelligence link was her connection with British Security Techniques agency, which it described as an arm of MI6. The former head of BST in Pakistan was Ian Croke, who had been implicated in espionage.

In fact, Ian Croke, a retired SAS colonel, later ran a British dirty war in southern Africa, under cover of the World Wildlife Fund's "Operation Lock." His brother, Alis-

tair Crooke, oversaw arming the Afghan mujahideen during the mid-1980s when he was a British diplomat in Islamabad. Alistair Crooke is currently the EU counter-terrorism adviser to the Palestinian Authority.

Canada shutting down Tamil Tiger haunts

The Canadian government has informed the government of Sri Lanka that it is considering adopting new British laws restricting terrorist organizations, which would mean shutting down the Canadian operations of the Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, according to India's *The Hindu*. The British laws, which were enacted after an international uproar and, especially, U.S. pressure over British safehousing of terrorists, will likely be adopted with "suitable amendments," Sri Lanka's Justice Minister G.L. Peiris, was told in Ottawa.

The Tamil Tigers, which killed more than 100,000 persons in suicide bombings and similar attacks since the 1980s, and which provided the hit man to murder former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, are internationally headquartered in London. But they also have important bases in Toronto and in the United States.

Ironically, the new restrictions come at a time when restrictions in the United States were forced to be lifted, as a result of a Federal lawsuit brought jointly by two of Britain's favorite terrorist gangs: the Tamil Tigers and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). A Los Angeles Federal court declared in September that most of the provisions of the October 1997 ban were unconstitutional.

Yemen wins disputed island from Eritrea

An international arbitration committee in The Hague decided in mid-October in favor of the Republic of Yemen in its dispute with Eritrea over the Hanish Island, which is strategically located at the southern opening of the Red Sea. Eritrea occupied the island in 1995, reportedly with Israeli help. Israel has sought beachheads in East Africa.

Rather than respond militarily, Yemen sought arbitration, while Egypt and France intervened diplomatically to solve the problem which posed a danger to maritime traffic through the Suez Canal. Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki telephoned Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Assalih to confirm that his country approved the decision and is looking forward to normalization of relations.

The Hanish Island issue is also an important strategic point for the crazies around Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who are seeking military control over the Red Sea and leverage over Egypt.

New German rulers face labor protests

Germany's incoming red-green government, the Social Democrats and the Greens, already experienced their first labor protests on Oct. 15, before even completing coalition talks. Trade unions demonstrated against the mass layoffs that would take place should Gerhard Schroeder's government shut down the nuclear energy industry and pull government support out from under the Transrapid maglev transportation project.

In Kassel, where Thyssen-Henschel, the producer of the core technology of the maglev train, is located, union representatives strongly denounced the red-green plans, as not only killing numerous highly specialized jobs, but an entire modern transport technology.

Workers from nuclear technology firms have voiced concern over the future of their jobs. At Siemens alone, about 4,500 jobs, most of them engineers, would be eliminated, should the withdrawal from nuclear power and the shutdown of nuclear plants begin during the four-year term of the government.

The red-green coalition has told the nuclear power industry and other utilities to draw up a plan within 12 months for creating a non-nuclear energy supply, and to set a timetable for a voluntary shutdown of Germany's 19 nuclear plants. Otherwise, the new government threatened, it will change the laws regulating nuclear power, to shut it down by force.

Briefly

A CANADIAN indigenous activist is pushing for Australia's Aborigines to use a Canadian precedent and claim native title, or land rights, over freehold title (i.e., privately owned land). Don Ryan is touring Australia, citing the ruling of a British Columbian court that native title rights are not extinguished by freehold titles.

PHILIPPINES President Estrada gave a populist speech at a major international economic conference in October, pledging a war on poverty and more extensive social safety nets for the poor. However, he fully embraced free trade, including greater foreign investment in social infrastructure, the modernizing of capital and bond markets, foreign involvement in management of pension and social security funds, and no currency controls on the peso.

VIETNAMESE Prime Minister Phan Van Khai arrived in China on Oct. 19 for talks with Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji. This is the first visit of a Vietnamese Prime Minister since 1991, when Vietnam normalized ties with China. Phan will also visit the cities of Suzhou and Hangzhou, as well as Guangxi province, which borders Vietnam.

SCOTLAND YARD will help train the police in Argentina's province of Buenos Aires, after the provincial police force was "reformed" under the aegis of Prince Philip's anti-corruption gestapo, Transparency International.

WESTERN GEORGIA is being subjected to an armed rebellion, according to various Russian news reports on Oct. 20. On the night of Oct. 18, supporters of the late President Zviad Gamsakhurdia raided a Georgian tank battalion post, seizing tanks and armored personnel carriers. Headed by former military commander Col. Akaki Eliava, the band reportedly took three government officials hostage. President Eduard Shevardnadze appealed to the rebels to surrender.