

Britain's 'Operation Surety' launched for post-crash world

by Mark Burdman

Influential elements in the British establishment have set in motion emergency contingency plans for dealing with large-scale civil disorder and chaos in the United Kingdom, in the event of a late-summer/early-autumn crash of the global financial system.

That is the interpretation that informed British sources are giving to a most unusual "signal" article that appeared on the front page of the July 18 London *Sunday Times*, under the title, "Soldiers Pull Out of Kosovo To Deal with Millennium Bug Chaos."

The article began by asserting that "the SAS [Special Air Services] and other special services are to deal with civil disorder and the collapse of utilities under secret plans being drawn up by the armed forces to cope with the millennium bug. The plans, codenamed Operation Surety, will see the special forces and other armed troops deployed to protect not only key government sites, but also civilian installations, such as banks, airports, and power stations. . . . Half the combat troops are to be withdrawn from Kosovo by the end of August, a total of up to 2,000 soldiers."

Defense correspondent Hugh McManners cited an unnamed British Ministry of Defence (MOD) source, who said that Operation Surety was drawn up over 18 months by a small team of specialists at the Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood, Middlesex, and had been given the highest military priority after active operations in Kosovo. The source is quoted: "The operation is designed to ensure that essential government and civilian functions can continue between September and February next year, which is the period of danger. It's a real threat and highly classified."

The *Sunday Times* piece further affirmed that "eight leading financial institutions have asked the MOD for protection."

Y2K is a pretext

The article played heavily on fears of computer failures beginning on Sept. 9, 1999 (9/9/99), and continuing into the so-called "Y2K," at the turn of the millennium. But *EIR*'s British sources insist that the whole Y2K/"millennium bug" scare is being put forward as a "pretext," for setting into motion contingencies that would be required in the event of a systemic financial crash. As one source put it, "We're all very

concerned that something is up, and that the millennium bug issue is being used as a pretext, a dry run, for something very nasty."

The period of August-September is identified by informed City of London sources as the most likely time for the next currency crises and ensuing financial breakdown to occur. That powerful elements in the British oligarchy are positioning themselves for a crash, and are *already* operating in a "post-crash" reality, has otherwise been evident from the recent action by Bank of England Governor Eddie George, to sell off the "crown jewel" of British government gold to selected private (or "privateer") interests (see last week's *EIR*).

The simultaneity of financial upheaval and significant military mobilization has a recent precedent in the United Kingdom. In 1974, in the era of social-financial chaos precipitated by that period's oil price explosions, the SAS was deployed at London's Heathrow Airport, and there were other key domestic military movements, in what were clearly moves toward a coup against the Harold Wilson/Labour Party government. On July 21, 1999, one British source commented on the "chilling" coincidence, that on the same July 18 that the *Sunday Times* ran its feature on Operation Surety, BBC-TV broadcast an exposé feature on the 1974 coup plot.

It cannot entirely be excluded, that elements in the British oligarchy are now planning coup operations against Prime Minister Tony Blair. Some British higher-ups undoubtedly regard Blair and his team as too incompetent to deal with a period of large-scale financial and social breakdown.

'A great deal of unease'

An additional element in the picture was elaborated by a well-informed continental European intelligence source. He insisted that Operation Surety "is not bluff, but very real." Other countries in the British Commonwealth also have detailed emergency contingencies for the coming period, but Britain's is "the most extreme." He forecast imminent large-scale military moves in and around the U.K., involving units deployed back to Britain out of Kosovo, because of the unravelling of the Northern Ireland peace process. This deployment could be utilized as a cover for military moves designed for other, more sinister purposes, he said.

A Scottish source told *EIR* on July 21 that Britain is overripe for large-scale social tumult, and authoritarian counter-moves to crack down on it. He recalled that on June 18, there were large-scale "anti-capitalist" riots in the City of London, an outbreak of violence not seen in the City for over 200 years. "There is a great deal of unease running about this place, a definite current of uncontrolled violence, random violence, with a large population of unemployed youth who can be manipulated," he said. He stressed that Britain has entered a "very strange" period of "considerable uncertainty," bordering on "panic" in certain policymaking circles.