

International Intelligence

ASEAN Regional Forum meets in Thailand

Ministers representing the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and their "dialogue partners," which together make up the ASEAN Regional Forum, began a week of meetings in Hua Hin, Thailand on March 14, preparatory to the annual meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers, in Bangkok at the end of July. The meetings are to discuss upgrading the "security" component of the ARF, from confidence building to preventive diplomacy.

Also on the table will be ASEAN's draft for a code of conduct for the South China Sea, where four ASEAN members (the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Brunei) and China and Taiwan have contesting claims. The draft, according to the March 12 *Bangkok Post*, calls for a stop to any new occupation of reefs, shoals, or islets in the disputed area. China opposes the conduct of any military exercises in the area.

A further topic will be ASEAN's desire for recognition of its 1995 treaty for a Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. Of the major powers among the "dialogue partners," only China has indicated willingness to lend formal support. In the past, the "dialogue partners" have also pressed ASEAN to agree to include them in the rotation of ARF's chairmanship. Currently, ARF's "dialogue partners" are: China, India, Russia, the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, and the United States.

Tehran rocked by murder attempt, terror bombings

On March 12, Iranian newspaper editor Saeed Hajjarian was shot in the face by would-be assassins, who fled on a motor bike. Hajjarian was former Deputy Director of Intelligence in the 1980s and is now editor-in-chief of the daily *Sobh-e Emrouz*. He is an adviser to President Mohammad Khatami and the key theoretician for the reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF), which won most of the Parliament seats in February. Hajjarian's daily recently pub-

lished revelations that conservative intelligence officials were involved in the murders of several secular opposition leaders in 1998.

On March 13, four civilians were wounded in a mortar attack on a residential complex in northern Tehran, an official told IRNA. This attack resembles a similar one by the terrorist London- and Paris-based Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) in early February, against government offices in northern Tehran. That attack took place one week before the Parliamentary elections, and heightened already great tensions between Iran's moderates and extremists.

The attack on Hajjarian has had a similar effect: Three leading members of the IIPF accused their defeated rivals of being behind the attempt, at a press conference on March 12.

In view of this renewed conflict between the moderates and the conservatives, it should not be ruled out that an outside force would very easily instigate bloody confrontations within the country, as February's MKO bomb attacks demonstrated.

Baghdad will not allow UN inspectors into Iraq

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan said on March 12 that Iraq will not allow United Nations weapons inspectors back into the country. "It is unnecessary to set up a new commission to look for weapons of mass destruction, as such a task had ended a long time ago, and thinking of a new commission is an act of imagination," Ramadan told Paris-based Radio Monte Carlo. Would Iraq continue to bar inspectors? he was asked. "Of course," Ramadan responded. "The issue of weapons of mass destruction had ended since 1991, even though we had accepted the commission of spies until two years ago."

On Dec. 17, 1999, a UN Security Council resolution set up a new disarmament agency, UNMOVIC (UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission), and is offering to ease sanctions if Baghdad cooperated with UNMOVIC and accepted UN weapons inspections. Iraq has already re-

jected the resolution. "We will not cooperate with any resolution which does not include a complete lifting of the embargo without any restriction and does not condemn the U.S.-British aggression," Ramadan insisted.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan named 17 members of a board of commissioners to advise the new agency in early March. Hans Blix, the Swedish diplomat and former chairman of the International Atomic Energy Agency, was appointed as head of the UNMOVIC.

Clinton to visit turbulent South Asia

U.S. President Bill Clinton has decided to make a stopover in Pakistan, on returning from his March 19-25 to Bangladesh and India. It is the first time a U.S. President has visited Bangladesh, and the first such visit to India in 22 years. The originally planned visit to Pakistan was put on hold after the coup by Gen. Pervez Musharraf late last year. Clinton will stop over in Islamabad airport en route back to Washington on March 25.

On March 12, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee told media that India is ready to talk on "all issues" during Clinton's trip. He admitted that New Delhi has not succeeded in changing Washington's views on the status of Kashmir: "The U.S. position is well known. They consider it a disputed territory. We don't accept this."

He declined immediate comment on Pakistani Chief Executive Musharraf's reported statement that his army was not able to stop *jihadis* from infiltrating from Pakistan into India. "I will react only after verifying what exactly he has said," Vajpayee demurred.

According to the March 13 issue of the Pakistan daily *The Nation*, General Musharraf gave an interview to *Newsweek's* Lally Weymouth, asserting that the Kashmiri struggle is a just cause and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for it. He also said that there is no terrorist group operating within Pakistan now. Musharraf also said that Clinton's decision to visit Islamabad is recognition of Pakistan's importance in the region, and of the righteousness of Pakistan's stand on

Kashmir.

He agreed with Weymouth that Indo-Pakistani tensions are at an all-time high, but added, "I do not think it will get out of control. They know that there is a deterrence in place on our side."

Brookings Institution Prof. Stephen C. Cohen, a specialist on the Indian and Pakistani armies, told Islamabad's daily *The Dawn* on March 7, that Clinton is coming to the region as a peacemaker. "This is how I read his mind," said Cohen, who is rumored to become Clinton's Kashmir coordinator. "He has said several times that we've got to do something about Kashmir. . . . Privately, I hope that he would tell the Indians to reduce the level of violence in the [Kashmir] Valley and tell Pakistanis to stop the *ihadis* from going into the Valley."

Manilov: Most 'Chechen' rebels are mercenaries

First Deputy Chief of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff Gen. Valeri Manilov told a press conference on March 10 that, according to his best information, "the still surviving bandit formations [referring to the Chechen rebels] consist of mercenaries to the extent of 50-60%. We said that so far the still-organized bandit formations number from 2,500 to 3,500 men, that they still pose a serious danger, and that about 1,000 of them, or slightly more, are mercenaries." Although he detailed the mercenaries' countries of origin, he stressed, "I am deliberately not mentioning nationality so as not to describe any nations, because these nations have nothing to do with these mercenaries. The mercenaries are trying to base their well-being on the death and suffering of others."

Manilov added, "There are also those who are simply mentally deranged, those who have the syndrome of murder. They simply derive pleasure from killing and cutting up people, from torturing them. This acquires a special importance at the concluding stage of the counter-terrorist operation, because the remaining bandits have no families, no kin, no ties with anybody. . . ."

"I regret to say that the spectrum of representation . . . is very broad. This gives us

reason to emphasize again that we are dealing with international terrorism. We are dealing with international extremist organizations that are operating throughout the world. They planned to set up a foothold in Russia to spread terrorism to other parts of the world." Therefore, he said, the Russian soldiers who died in Chechnya were also "defending civilization, Europe, and other countries, once again from the possible expansion of terrorism. This is an extremely dangerous development for the whole of mankind."

Canadian daily: Kagame killed Rwandan President

In an article entitled "'Explosive' Leak on Rwanda Genocide," the March 1 issue of Canada's *National Post* reveals that three informants told UN investigators back in 1997 that they had been part of an elite strike force that carried out the April 6, 1994 assassinations of Rwanda's President Juvenal Habyarimana, Burundi's President Cyprien Nyatiramana, and other officials, by shooting down their plane as it landed at Kigali airport in Rwanda. The assassinations triggered the killings of 800,000 Rwandans during 1994.

Although the version of events accepted by most news media has always been that Habyarimana was killed by Hutu extremists, *EIR* has consistently demonstrated that he and Nyatiramana were killed under direction of the oligarchical controllers of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame, the military head of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), who wanted to fully take over Rwanda to use it as a launching pad into mineral-rich Zaire (see *EIR*, Feb. 4, 2000).

The *National Post* account acknowledges that the assassination was carried out under the overall direction of Kagame; Kagame, now Rwanda's Vice President and Defense Minister, was at the time, the deputy director of Ugandan military intelligence. According to the *Post*, the three informants were prepared to work with the UN-established International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), but when their information was presented to the chief UN war crimes prosecutor, Canada's Louise Arbour, she shut the investigation down.

ITALIAN Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema announced from Seoul, South Korea on March 3, that Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini would be travelling to North Korea later this month. D'Alema made the announcement following his meeting with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, with whom he is coordinating the diplomatic initiatives between Rome and Pyongyang.

VIOLENT VIDEOS may have played a role in an incident in which several U.S. teenagers, whose parents were stationed with the military in Germany, were arrested for hurling rocks at moving vehicles from an overpass in Darmstadt, on Feb. 27. Two people were killed and several were wounded. According to the German weekly *Focus* and the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the three boys, who are being charged with murder, regularly watched violent videos.

BULGARIAN National Radio interviewed U.S. Ambassador Richard Miles on March 6, who said that calls for a new Marshall Plan for the Balkans were "misinterpretations of history," as the present situation in the region was "totally different." Rather, Balkans states should open up trade barriers and get help from "international financial institutions." President Clinton had called for a Balkans Marshall Plan in April 1999, which was echoed by Bulgarian President Petr Stroyanov.

15 MILLION AFRICANS in the Horn of Africa are at risk of severe hunger this year, according to All-Africa News, which gives the following breakdown: Eritrea, 545,000; Kenya, 2,744,580; Somalia, 1,200,000; Sudan, 2,400,000; Uganda, 730,270; and 8 million in Ethiopia. A minimum of 1.3 million metric tons of food aid is necessary to prevent famine.

JOHN MAJOR, Britain's former Prime Minister, announced on March 10 that he will not run again for Parliament in the next elections.