

International Intelligence

Austria's Haider Wants 'Europe of Macroregions'

Austrian populist leader Jörg Haider, on the eve of a visit to Venice, gave an interview to an Italian daily, calling for the creation of a "Europe of the Regions," and proposing to form a new "macroregion" between Austrian Carintia and the Italian regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto. The concept is in opposition to the late French President Charles de Gaulle's idea of a "Europe of the Fatherlands," which placed the emphasis on cooperation among sovereign nation-states. A Europe of the Regions would emphasize regional and ethnic particularities, eroding what remains of European nations.

In the interview, given to a new daily called *Libero*, and summarized in the newspaper *La Repubblica* on July 22, Haider says that he is against the "United States of Europe," because he is against any states at all. He prefers a "Europe of the Regions," whose borders are re-drawn according to a common "political and cultural identity. . . . We share one culture, the lifestyle and the way to conceive daily life, the organization of our systems. It is not important if we do not speak the same language."

Haider's interview provoked generally negative reactions among Italian politicians. Parliament speaker Luciano Violante said, "I believe it is idiocy." Gianfranco Fini, leader of the right-wing Alleanza Nazionale party, said that his party has "a different view. We think that Europe starts from national states and not from regions."

British Official Attacks NATO's Kosovo War Policy

Lord Gilbert, Britain's Minister of State for Defence, who was in charge of intelligence during the Kosovo war, made a stunning attack on the war in testimony in Parliament, the *Guardian* reported on July 21.

Declaring that NATO had forced Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic into war, he said, "I think certain people were spoiling for a fight in NATO at that time. I think the

terms put to Milosovic at Rambouillet were absolutely intolerable: How could he possibly accept them? It was quite deliberate." Lord Gilbert accused his own intelligence service of withholding information from him.

He also attacked British Chief of Staff General Sir Charles Guthrie for claiming that NATO was prepared to mount an invasion in September 1999. "I think a land invasion of Kosovo would have been possible by September, but by September this year, not by September last year." He said that Ministry of Defence intelligence ought to "be picked up by the scruff of the neck and shaken. A very serious look needs to be taken at the quality of British and U.S. intelligence. . . . We also got extremely varying intelligence on the state of Serb morale and what was happening post-Milosevic.

"I have to say that it was very difficult to know what to believe from one day to the next."

He then complained that the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERE) "employs no fewer than 100 psychologists. I was very surprised when I found this out." When asked why he didn't get answers as to why they had 100 psychologists, he said, "You know how it is, you ask a question three times and if you do not get an answer you give up asking the question; you are only a humble Minister of State."

Shevardnadze Boosts Brits in Transcaucasus

Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze visited London beginning on July 17, in an effort to re-create Britain's historical position in the strategically key Transcaucasus. Before leaving Tbilisi, he was interviewed by the London *Daily Telegraph's* Simon Sebag Montefiore, who affectionately refers to him as the "Grey Fox." Sebag Montefiore begins: "President Shevardnadze will appeal to the British government for help for his impoverished land, and seek support for Georgia against Russian encroachments during his visit this week."

The journalist writes that Georgia is ner-

vous because, despite Russian promises to evacuate bases in Georgia, President Vladimir Putin is using the war in neighboring Chechnya to threaten Georgia. And so, "Mr. Shevardnadze has cleverly covered himself by placing monitors from the Organization for Security in Europe, including British troops, on the border."

In the interview, Shevardnadze waxes ecstatic about the British. He says that during his years as Soviet Foreign Minister, beginning in 1985, then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was "certainly one of the most impressive" leaders he worked with. Asked who his hero is, he responded, "Churchill, oh yes, Churchill. We need England, and I will discuss with Mr. Blair the strategic importance of Georgia, and remind him of the traditional friendship with Britain, which helped us so much in the first independent Georgia of 1919-21. England is a traditional ally." British post-World War I geopolitical strategy against the Soviet Union, as devised by Lord Curzon and his close adviser Sir Halford Mackinder, as well as by Winston Churchill himself, was to create a League of Caucasian States, allied to Britain.

Shevardnadze goes on to say how much he admires the British monarchy, and that he contemplates restoring the monarchy in Georgia, under the ancient Bagratian dynasty, the which ruled Georgia for a thousand years, until 1801. He says: "I've thought about it, and it's very appealing. It is still early days, but the time for a king will come."

Rees-Mogg Says Blair Is 'in the Bunker'

The state of British Prime Minister Tony Blair today is reminiscent of Adolf Hitler in his Berlin bunker as the Soviet Red Army approached, and of former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1963, as the "Profumo Affair" brought an end to his regime, wrote Lord William Rees-Mogg in his column in the London *Times* on July 17.

Rees-Mogg is a backer of Conservative Party leader William Hague, and one of

THE THAI government appealed to U.S. Drug Policy Adviser Barry McCaffrey in June to help Myanmar's anti-drug effort. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Jurin Laksanawisit, who oversees Thailand's anti-drug program, urged the U.S. "not to increase Myanmar's isolation," which "had taken its toll on neighboring countries, especially Thailand."

MALAYSIA'S Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, in a speech on July 11, dwelt on the recent theft of 90-100 weapons from two Malaysian military facilities by the Al-Ma'unah cult, which tortured and murdered two Special Branch officers, one Christian and one Hindu, and tortured two Muslim policemen. The incident, he said, shows that "if you support the wrong kind of ideas, you will only get hurt. That is why we have always been against this politics of hate."

QUEEN ELIZABETH II visited Berlin on July 19 to inaugurate the new British Embassy there. This was the first visit by a monarch to open an embassy, and provided a field day for Anglophiles in Germany. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Green Party) gushed how grateful Germany should be for all that Great Britain has done for it, from World War II to the Beatles. He also praised "the contribution of Winston Churchill to the founding of the European Union."

DRACONIAN anti-bribery laws were passed by Australia's Federal Parliament in July, which will see corporations fined up to \$330,000 and criminally convicted for corruption. Press reports attribute the passage of this law to the work of Prince Philip's political hit-squad Transparency International. Virtually any corporate activity may be defined as "corrupt" under the purview of this bill.

INDO-AMERICAN Christians will send a delegation to India to persuade New Delhi to protect minorities from violence and harm. The delegation will meet the President, Prime Minister, and the Home Minister.

those moving to realign the Anglo-American relationship, in the direction of a "Bush-Hague axis," in the years to come.

He begins by reminiscing about sitting in the House of Commons, in June 1963, "listening to the debate which marked the end of the Macmillan administration, though it tottered on for another few months. The debate was about the Profumo scandal." Today, "the atmosphere of 1963 seems to be returning to Downing Street. Indeed, Harold Macmillan, though damaged by the scandals and rumors of scandals, never became quite as isolated personally as Tony Blair seems now to be."

The whole atmosphere in and around Blair's Downing Street is "very depressing," Rees-Mogg writes. He says the comparisons which come to his mind, are "with Fort Apache, with hostile Native Americans clustered around, or Hitler's bunker in Berlin, with the Red Army in the suburbs of the city."

He charges that Blair has "lost his touch, he has lost his voice, he has lost his humility. . . . I cannot remember him making any profound speech to the House of Commons." Blair is clearly suffering from "exhaustion and isolation," and if he doesn't overcome these, he will certainly suffer the same fate as Macmillan, His Lordship concludes.

Japan To Lift Sanctions on India and Pakistan

Japanese business leaders and Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have persuaded the Japanese government to lift the two-year-old economic sanctions on India and Pakistan, according to the Japanese English-language daily *Yomiuri Shimbun*. The anti-sanctions lobby pointed out that Japan must make efforts to repair its relations particularly with India, which is becoming one of the world's largest markets.

Tokyo also feared that further deterioration of the Pakistani economic situation would fuel activities among Islamic fundamentalists and cause political instability.

Japan imposed sanctions, including a

freeze on new non-humanitarian grants and loans, after India and Pakistan carried out a series of nuclear tests in May 1998.

Friction Grows Between France and Russia

The already-tense relations between France and Russia have been worsened by the fact that a French court issued an order in mid-July to seize the *Sedov*, a large Russian sailboat used for training by the Murmansk Technical University, which had sailed to France in order to participate in the "tall ships" festivities at the French seaport of Brest.

The court acted in compliance with the ruling handed down by an international arbitration court in Stockholm, which has ruled in 1997 in favor of the Swiss company NOGA, in a suit against the Russian Federation Council for breach of contract. In 1991, NOGA had worked out a food-for-oil contract with Russia: The Swiss furnished the food, but the Russians never supplied the oil, so the company decided to sue the Russian Federation in the Stockholm court for \$1.4 billion. The court's ruling in favor of NOGA allowed it to seize Russian assets wherever they found them, for more than \$800 million. Earlier this year, NOGA had seized the accounts of the Russian Embassy and Central Bank in Paris, as well as money that was owed by France's state electrical firm EDF to Russia.

This new situation comes at a time when relations between the two countries have significantly deteriorated. The new Russian government is angry over France's support for former Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, prior to Putin's election, and over the fact that France has taken the lead in pressuring Russia to open up political negotiations in Chechnya. France is the only major European nation that President Vladimir Putin has not visited since he came to power, and he has let it be known that he is in no rush to do so. French diplomatic circles say that France wants to build good relations with Russia, but that it will not stop insisting that Russia must handle Chechnya politically.