

# International Intelligence

---

## ***Indian President Talks Democracy With Myanmar***

Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, during his March 10-12 visit to Myanmar, raised with the junta leaders the issue of returning to democracy in Myanmar, informed sources told *EIR*. Reports indicate that the Indian President used a "tone of gentleness and persuasion," advising that democracy is demanded the world over. This was interpreted to mean that President Kalam was warning of a push for a "regime change" if Myanmar did not move on its own steam to bring democratic rule in the country. He also pointed out that democracy would bring about the best in Myanmar, and ensure military and economic security.

President Kalam also touched upon the mutual benefit for India and Myanmar of piping Myanmar gas over to India via Bangladesh. Myanmar had earlier agreed to such a plan, but later sold the gas to China instead. During their discussions with the Indian President, the Myanmar authorities assured New Delhi that India would get a portion of the hydrocarbons in new, yet-to-be-developed fields. India has so far invested \$2 billion in Myanmar and the country is the cornerstone of India's ambitious "Look East" policy.

---

## ***Conflicts Emerge in Anti-China 'Troika'***

The United States, Japan, and Australia launched a "Trilateral Strategic Dialogue" on March 18 in Sydney, Australia at a meeting among U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso, but the event caused an open conflict between the U.S.A. and Australia over the role of China in Asia—a dispute which is reflected even within the Bush Administration.

Rice has generally left Asia matters to her deputy, Robert Zoellick, but before leaving for her visit to Asia, Rice told reporters that the Troika was driven by the

"China threat," contrary to explicit statements by Australia's Downer. "We need together to recognize that China is going to improve its military," said Rice, "but we need to make sure that this improvement is not outsized for China's regional ambitions and interests. That is concerning, particularly for those who have had the responsibility for defending the Asia Pacific region." On the economy, Rice added that "the last thing we need is a very, very big Chinese economy that's operating outside the rules of the international economy. . . . That's why I think the trilateral dialogue is very important."

Downer, when he announced this meeting a year ago, stated clearly that the troika was not intended to counter China, with which Australia is increasingly dependent as a market for energy and raw materials exports. He reiterated that stand in a public appearance with Rice.

Rice partially backtracked from her hardline stance, assuring the Australians that the United States was not viewing China in terms of the "containment" of the Cold War days. Still, Australian officials noted that she refused to use the phrase coined by Zoellick, that China was a "responsible shareholder" in the world economy, with which "engagement" was the only appropriate policy.

---

## ***UN Blasts Israeli Closure Of West Bank and Gaza***

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a warning on the disastrous consequences of Israel's closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the daily *Ha'aretz* reported on March 18. The Israelis, claiming that they fear a revenge attack after their raid on the Jericho prison, extended a closure that had been going on for weeks. The closure has also blocked the exit and entry of trucks that carry flour and other food into the Palestinian territories. Within a day or two, the newspaper reported, there will no longer be any flour and therefore no bread, the staple of the Palestinian diet.

The UN office also warned of the conse-

quences of Israel's refusal to transfer duties it collects on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority's imports. The UN warned that this is contributing to the collapse of the P.N.A., as well as the health, education, water, and electricity systems and other essential services. The three-week closure has cost the tiny Palestinian economy over \$10.5 million in losses. This is plain robbery, since that money belongs to the Palestinians. The UN also reports that roadblocks in the West Bank have increased by 25% over the last six months, and now stand at 471, which is strangling the Palestinians.

---

## ***China and Russia Reject Preemptive War Document***

Russian Federation Council speaker Sergei Mironov and the Russian Foreign Ministry each issued criticisms of the Bush-Cheney "preemptive war" National Security Strategy doctrine which was released March 16, and included an attack on Russia for its "diminishing commitment to democratic freedoms and institutions."

Mironov said, "Regrettably, serious international problems, including the fight against terrorism and partnership in energy, are not reflected in the U.S. national security doctrine." He added, "The new U.S. national strategy document arouses some queries, but its gist is: 'I like who I want and I love who I want,' and each country will be assessed from the angle of liberties in the way in which Washington understands them." Russia will tackle international problems exclusively on the basis of international law, he insisted, concluding, "What is happening in Iraq is the product of the American doctrine."

A March 20 Russian Foreign Ministry communiqué asked, "Should we understand this means that in the immediate future U.S.-Russian relations face far from the best of times?"

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Qin Gang, also denounced the document, saying that it made irresponsible remarks in groundlessly reproaching China's domestic and foreign policy and interfering in China's internal affairs.