

International Intelligence

Britain's MI6 in Secret Contact With the Taliban

Officers from Britain's MI6 foreign intelligence service have engaged in peace talks with up to a dozen Taliban officials in Afghanistan, the London *Daily Telegraph* reported on Dec. 26.

The officers were understood to have sought peace directly with the Taliban, "with some of them coming across as some sort of armed militia," the *Telegraph* quoted a source as saying. "The British would provide mentoring for the Taliban."

These secret British contacts undermine American efforts to put the country under control of President Hamid Karzai. The larger British objective is to create a separate nation along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, to undermine both Islamabad and Kabul.

On Dec. 24, Afghanistan ordered a top European Union official and a UN staffer, both British citizens, to leave the country for threatening national security, government and diplomatic officials said. The two were declared *persona non grata*, apparently after allegations that they had met with Taliban insurgents, a European diplomat said.

The report of the expulsion came out the day that President Karzai travelled to Islamabad to discuss reduction of terrorist acts committed by the Taliban and other radical Islamist groups.

These developments, and the leaking of the story, play back into British politics. In mid-December, Brown had pledged to the House of Commons that there would be "no negotiations with terrorists." But the *Independent's* lead headline on Dec. 27 read, "Diplomats to leave Afghanistan as new 'Great Game' played with tribal leaders. . . . For spies, diplomats and soldiers in Afghanistan are playing the Great Game today as much as their forefathers ever did." The Great Game was the prolonged 19th-Century covert warfare between Great Britain and Russia for domination of the Indian Subcontinent, Southwest Asia, and Central Asia.

On Dec. 12, Brown announced a policy of "tribal engagement." Such "engagement"

has been the policy of Britain's ambassador Sir Sherard Cowper Coles, and of of Brig. Andrew Mackay, commander of British forces in Afghanistan's Helmand province, according to classified documents quoted in the *Independent*. "Great Britain's long association with Afghanistan has shown that we got ourselves into this country by forming tribal alliances. Equally we will get ourselves out, over time, by forming tribal alliances that support the government of Afghanistan," Brigadier Mackay wrote in a classified document on Oct. 30.

Russia Tests Missile, Warns Against U.S. ABMs

Russia successfully tested a new type of ballistic missile on Dec. 25, which converts into a cruise missile in the descent phase, making it almost impossible to intercept with conventional anti-missile systems.

The launch was a clear signal of Russia's continuing displeasure with U.S. plans to station anti-missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic, and of Moscow's stated intention to develop asymmetric systems in response. Russian officials also said a land-launched RS-24 missile with multiple warheads had been successfully test-fired from the Plesetsk range in northern Russia, and that a rocket carrying the last three satellites for a mapping and navigation system to rival the U.S. Global Positioning System had been launched.

The new hybrid missile, known as the RSM-54, or Sineva, was launched from the Russian nuclear missile submarine Tula in the Barents Sea, and hit a target on the Kura shooting range on the Kamchatka peninsula in the Far East.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin lambasted once again the U.S. plans to build anti-missile systems in Poland and the Czech Republic. Kamynin responded to an interview by Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, published at the end of the previous week, in which the Czech official said he wanted the U.S. radar to guarantee surveillance of Russian terri-

tory. Kamynin said this was more proof that the U.S. missile defense system in eastern Europe is being built solely to disrupt the strategic balance and gain the edge over Russia, not to defend against a non-existent threat of Iranian missiles (as the Bush Administration has claimed).

Russian President Putin made an offer last Summer for the United States to participate in joint U.S.-Russian radar defense at a base Russia leases from Azerbaijan. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, in an interview published in *Vremya Novosti* on Dec. 26, emphasized that the Russian President "proposed a qualitatively new approach, implying mutual trust and complete openness regarding intelligence data gathered by each side using its most advanced technologies."

Operation Condor: Italy Arrests Suspect

Jorge Nestor Fernández Troccoli, a retired officer of the Uruguayan Navy, was arrested in Salerno, Italy on Dec. 24. He was wanted in Uruguay, because of his role in Operation Condor, the extermination of political opponents of military dictatorships in South America in the 1970s. Troccoli wrote the book *The Rage of the Leviathan* to justify Operation Condor.

Operation Condor was born in the office of the Chilean secret police, DINA, in 1975, under Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the dictator put into power by George Shultz and Felix Rohatyn.

Rome Judge Luisanna Figliola has also issued arrest warrants for 146 citizens of Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia (four of whom are dead), including former Argentinian leaders Rafael Videla, Emilio Eduardo Massera, former Montevideo dictator Jorge Maria Bordaberry, and former DINA chief Manuel Contreras.

The Rome warrants are the product of a nine-year investigation, upon lawsuits brought by relatives of Operation Condor victims of Italian origin.

Briefed on the actions by Capaldo, London LaRouche asked whether George Shultz

and Felix Rohatyn will be arrested too. After all, it was their sponsorship of the Pinochet coup that overthrew the Allende government in Chile, that was the basis for Operation Condor.

Venezuela's Chávez Stages FARC Hostage Release

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez announced at a press conference on Dec. 26, that his government had worked out arrangements with the Colombian narco-terrorist FARC, for the imminent release of two women hostages and a child born in captivity, should the Colombian government accept, which it quickly did. Venezuelan Vice Foreign Minister Rodolfo Sanz announced on Dec. 27 that the timing of the release “is the exclusive competence and authority of President Hugo Chávez.”

The operation is being staged in grandstand fashion, with Chávez suggesting that the next step should be “peace talks” with the FARC—with himself at the center. Although the release of any of the hostages held in their jungle concentration camps is welcome, the Chávez-FARC operation is likely to play into the British policy of legitimizing and granting de facto recognition to the FARC cartel, destabilizing Colombia, and furthering national and regional disintegration.

To be released are Clara Rojas, a Vice Presidential candidate kidnapped in February 2002 along with her Presidential running mate, French-Colombian Ingrid Betancourt; Rojas's three-year-old son; and former Senator Consuelo González de Perdomo, held since September 2001. Dozens of other hostages are held by the FARC.

U.S. Role in International Fusion Program Is Axed

The U.S. Congress cut \$149 million in the fiscal 2008 budget that had been pledged as the U.S. contribution to the construction of the International Thermonuclear Experi-

mental Reactor (ITER), located in Cadarache, France. Thermonuclear fusion power would provide an almost unlimited source of electrical power and high-energy-density process heat, using the deuterium present in ordinary seawater as fuel.

Congress also stipulated that the Department of Energy could not take funds from other programs to give to ITER, but the Administration's science advisor John Marburger told *Science* magazine that he thought that this prohibition would not hold.

This will be the second time that the United States has removed itself from the international fusion project, a collaborative effort funded by several nations.

The U.S.A. was absent from the program from 1999 to 2003. In 1980, with the help of the LaRouche movement, both houses of Congress passed the Magnetic Fusion Energy Engineering Act, which called for an engineering reactor by 1990 and a prototype fusion reactor by 2000. The bill was signed into law by President Carter, but the Reagan Administration never funded it.

Iran's Larijani in Egypt, Seeking Normalization

Ali Larijani, head of Iran's National Security Council, arrived in Egypt on Dec. 25, where he discussed the possibility of renewing diplomatic relations. He met with Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa, and Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, as well as Grand Sheikh Mohammed Seyed Tantawi and other officials of al-Azhar, one of Sunni Islam's most important religious centers.

“So far, we are on a positive track,” Larijani told reporters in Cairo, according to the *Jerusalem Post*. “The dialogue and the discussions are going on, but we should not be hasty.”

Iran cut diplomatic ties with Egypt after the latter signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1979, and provided asylum for the deposed Iranian Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Relations got even worse when Egypt backed Iraq during the 1980-88 Gulf War.

Briefly

YULIA TYMOSHENKO was returned to the premiership of Ukraine on Dec. 18, by 226 votes in the Supreme Rada, a one-seat majority. She is a demagogue of the U.S.-backed 2004 “Orange Revolution,” and one of her first phone calls after her re-election was to U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, to discuss “energy independence.” In early 2007, she met Cheney in Washington, after which she trumpeted U.S. support for the agenda of the Orange Revolution—including a fast track to NATO membership.

CHINA AND INDIA held joint anti-terrorism military exercises, “Hand-in-Hand 2007,” in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Dec. 19-27. This was the first joint military operation on land by the two Asian giants since their border conflict in 1962. The next exercises are likely to be held in India.

KURDISH lawmakers agreed on Dec. 26 to a six-month delay in a referendum on whether the oil-rich city of Kirkuk should join the semiautonomous region of Kurdistan, or remain under the control of the Iraqi central government. The vote defuses for now the potentially explosive issue of Kirkuk, which is claimed by both Kurds and Arabs.

BANGLADESH, looking toward its first-ever nuclear power plant, has received a positive response from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The power-starved, impoverished country is seeking to set up a 700-1,000 MW capacity nuclear power plant in Rooppur in the northwest. Further discussions will take place in Vienna later in January.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II broadcast her Christmas Day message this year on YouTube, to make it “more accessible to younger people and those in other countries,” according to a royal spokesman. “I very much hope that this new medium will make my Christmas message more personal and direct,” the Queen said. Archives are at www.youtube.com/theroyalchannel.