

International Intelligence

Brits Oppose NATO Afghan Opium-Eradication Policy

When British military forces arrived in the Helmand province of Afghanistan in 2006, that province was producing about 25% of the country's opium. Today, that figure is nearly 50%, according to Patrick Moon, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia.

While publicly supporting the U.S.-sponsored NATO plan to take on drug traffickers in Afghanistan, the British government's military commanders have privately condemned the plan, reports the Nov. 8 issue of the London *Independent*.

NATO made the decision to go after the drug traffickers at the Oct. 9-10 summit in Budapest, under pressure from U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and NATO Commander Gen. Bantz Craddock, both of whom had complained about the lack of interest of some U.S. allies in dealing with the drug problem. Since the anti-drug operation will be subject to the same kind of national caveats that many nations with troops in Afghanistan already exercise with respect to combat against the Taliban, the British will continue to sabotage it.

Czech President Declares War Against Lisbon Treaty

If the European Union's Lisbon Treaty ends up in the garbage can, it will be more due to the Czech Republic than Ireland, writes the Nov. 11 *Le Figaro*. Only three weeks ago, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek had promised German Chancellor Angela Merkel that the Lisbon Treaty, which he himself called "a necessary evil," would be ratified "before the end of the year." But now, the "very euro-skeptic" Czech President Vaclav Klaus is acting to prevent ratification.

Panic among the Euro-maniacs broke out Nov. 10 when Klaus asked the Constitutional Court to delay its finding on

the constitutionality of the treaty until after he could address the court. He said, however, that he could not attend the Nov. 10 hearing, because he was on a three-day state visit to Ireland.

Besides official meetings, Klaus was to meet the controversial liberal businessman Declan Ganley, who had spent big money on financing the "No to Lisbon" vote in Ireland.

After the Irish No vote in June, Klaus was the only head of state to welcome the "death" of the Lisbon Treaty, and Ganley was invited to Prague in July. Klaus promised his support for Ganley's initiative to create a slate for the 2009 European Parliament elections, whose platform includes rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. This would finally allow the rest of Europe to express their views on the treaty.

The Czech Republic, 55% of whose population, according to polls, opposes the treaty, will succeed France in presiding over the European Union for the semester beginning January 2009.

PRD Leader Cárdenas Backs Mexico's PLHINO Project

Cauhtémoc Cárdenas, leader of one of the factions of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), son of Mexico's nationalist President and Franklin Roosevelt friend, Lazaro Cárdenas, and a civil engineer by training, gave his firm support for building the tri-state Northwest Hydraulic Plan (PLHINO), during a day-long visit to Ciudad Obregon, Sonora Nov. 13.

Cárdenas's message, in a press conference, interviews on the radio and television, and speaking before a public meeting organized by the Pro-PLHINO of the 21st Century Committee, was straightforward: The PLHINO is viable both technically and financially, and the need to reactivate the farm sector to confront the approaching world crisis, merits its construction.

The PLHINO involves a number of large tunnels and dams which are ambi-

tious, but also eminently achievable, Cárdenas emphasized at each opportunity. He reminded people that his evaluation was based on experience, since he had worked on civil construction projects around the country. It is also financially feasible, amounting to an estimated \$1.2 billion a year, over ten years, he said.

Some 250 people, including farmers, industrialists, trade unionists, religious leaders, and others, participated in the Pro-PLHINO Committee forum, which was opened by the state's secretary of agriculture, speaking in the name of the governor, and by the president of the Municipality of Cajame.

Iceland President Blasts Brits on Bank Crisis

President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson of Iceland on Nov. 14 again slammed the British and their allies, who are trying to force Iceland to help bail out their bankrupt banking system. Iceland's banks have been hit hard by speculative operations run from outside the country.

Iceland lost more people, relative to the size of the respective populations, than did Great Britain during World War II, the President said, "and ... most of those losses were in shipping food for the Brits." Iceland had kept to the European Economic Community rules, he said, and it is therefore preposterous that it should be left with the bills from the British and other countries because of the breakdown of the banking system.

Speaking to a group of diplomats in Reykjavik, Grimsson said that if the Atlantic community refuses to help Iceland, then Iceland must find new friends. He said that only the Faroe Islands and Norway have proved to be friends in the crisis, but other old friends had turned their backs on Iceland. According to news reports, the President attacked Sweden and Denmark, and made "insulting expressions against the Brits." He also attacked the IMF, which for the third time Nov. 10 postponed a loan to Iceland.