

International Intelligence

Kenya's President Moi condemns Congo invasion

President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya "condemned all acts of aggression against the government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo," on Aug. 11, Kenyan government radio reported. He called for the "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country." He noted, according to the radio summary, that the new war "has raised fresh fears of political instability and security in the Great Lakes region. He said the outbreak is likely to have adverse effects on the lives of innocent people. . . . President Moi said he had expressed fears on many occasions . . . that the underlying problem in the 1996-97 crisis had not been properly addressed, and that the crisis will recur. He said these facts have turned out to be true. President Moi said he considered it prudent for the international community to take measures to contain the current cycle of violence. . . . The head of state said Kenya will cooperate with all peace-loving countries, and use every means possible to make a contribution through the OAU [Organization of African Unity] and other diplomatic channels to find a solution to the problem."

According to Agence France Presse, the OAU demanded on Aug. 11 that Rwanda respect the principle of the "inviolability and sovereignty of the borders" of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Cambodian opposition out to wreck elections

On Aug. 18, Cambodia's opposition parties, the Sam Rainsy Party and the royalist Funcinpec of Prince Norodom Ranariddh, issued a joint statement calling on King Sihanouk, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the U.S. government, members of the U.S. Senate and House, the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Friends of Cambodia member-states, and signatories to the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement "to come up with an agreement that a genuine new Democratic Elec-

tion be held in Cambodia." More than 500 observers from the UN, EU, and ASEAN, among others, found the July 26 elections, which had 90% participation, to have been orderly and peaceful.

Notwithstanding, Sam Rainsy, who is closely tied to the U.S. International Republican Institute, said he would join his supporters camping outside the offices of the National Election Commission on Aug. 20, with the protest culminating in a joint demonstration on Aug. 23 to demand a new election. Ranariddh's Funcinpec planned a parallel rally in Seattle, Washington on Aug. 21.

On Aug. 18, Rainsy and Ranariddh slammed Philippines Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon for his Aug. 14 statement that it would be "immoral or irresponsible" for Rainsy and Ranariddh to refuse to participate in a coalition government with Hun Sen, whose party had won 64 of the 122 seats in Parliament. The two rebutted that it would be immoral for them to "accept the undemocratic outcome that the ruling party has engineered" and to abandon "our people . . . to further exploitation by the current illegal regime." Siazon is one of the three ASEAN foreign ministers who have been assigned since July 1997 to assess Cambodia's situation, when Ranariddh (then First Prime Minister) and the Khmer Rouge attempted to overthrow Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Meanwhile, troops led by Ranariddh's Gen. Serey Kosal, in league with Khmer Rouge guerrillas, captured the village of Thma Da on the Thai border on Aug. 13.

Bangladesh struck by worst floods in decade

Bangladesh is being hit by the worst floods in a decade, and the high waters are lasting longer than at any time in the country's history. Reports are that it could be weeks before the waters recede. So far, 500 people have been killed, \$1 billion worth of crops destroyed, and infrastructure and communications have been devastated.

Many areas of the capital, Dhaka, are under water. The highway between Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong on the Bay of Bengal has been flooded, and the Army has

been deployed in several areas to protect the bridges and embankments. The road links between Dhaka and as many as 19 southern districts have been cut off.

Hungry people are now flocking to the capital, as there are severe food shortages in many areas, and a lack of clean water and medicine, as well as sanitation. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed, who had originally not asked for international aid, has reversed her decision and requested help, not only for the immediate crisis, but also to rebuild the devastated country.

Central Asians confer on regional security

The foreign and defense ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan met in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, on Aug. 22-23 to confer on the problems of regional security. The ministers adopted a "confidential joint statement," but no details have been disclosed, ITAR-TASS reported. Interfax on Aug. 24 quoted Tajik Ambassador to Uzbekistan Tajiddin Mardonov as saying that the ministers discussed "possible scenarios of the events" in Afghanistan and measures that the four states could take. He said combatting the spread of Islamic extremism was also discussed, as there are "forces that are paving their way to power under the cover of Islamic slogans."

Mardonov added that there are no plans to call for talks with Afghanistan's Taliban movement or to attempt to mediate a peace in Afghanistan. "The Taliban leaders have stated on many occasions that they do not recognize anyone and that there is nothing to be discussed," he explained.

Tajikistan itself is experiencing new turmoil, in the conflict between the government and Tajik insurgents based out of Afghanistan. The UN observers' mission in Tajikistan announced that it will temporarily withdraw some of its personnel and has suspended "nonessential" visits to the country by UN employees, ITAR-TASS reported. The decision affects those who were monitoring the peace process in areas outside Dushanbe, after four UN employees were killed on July 20, in a remote area in

INDONESIA'S President B.J. Habibie told Middle Eastern reporters on Aug. 22 that he was "very sorry and very sad" about the U.S. bombings in Afghanistan and Sudan, "but it was not an attack against Islam," citing the good relations between the U.S. and Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. Rather than wage war on religion, he offered the advice that the world should declare war on poverty, injustice, and ignorance.

ISRAEL'S KNESSET Finance Committee, which is controlled by Netanyahu's coalition, approved another 90 million shekels for Jewish settlements, including new ones, in the occupied territories. The move was denounced by Knesset member Avraham Shohat (Labor), who said, "The government claims that there is no money for health, education, research, and development and infrastructure, but it keeps pouring money into the settlements, fueling an unstable situation."

ARMENIAN PRESIDENT Robert Kocharian has accepted an invitation from Turkish President Suleyman Demirel to attend the 75th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Republic of Turkey.

NEW ZEALAND POLICE are reporting that 9 out of 67 homicide offenders in the country last year were under the influence of cannabis while committing the crime. The police also reported to the N.Z. Parliament health select committee inquiry that 14 of the 67 killers were regular cannabis users.

TWO GEORGIANS were killed on Aug. 24 and 60 injured when part of the regional administration building in the west Georgian town of Zugdidi was destroyed by a bomb, Caucasus Press reported. Most of those injured were refugees from neighboring Abkhazia. Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze condemned the blast as "an act masterminded and executed by enemies of Georgia."

central Tajikistan.

On Aug. 27, an attack on the mayor's office in Tursunzade left six people dead and four others seriously wounded, including Mayor Nurullo Khairullaev, and the head of his administration. Masked men in camouflage opened fire outside the building, also killing two guards and a policeman. On Aug. 28, the Tajik government accused former Army Col. Mahmud Khudaberdiyev of ordering the murders. Khudaberdiyev was commander of the Presidential guard's rapid reaction force, but, dissatisfied with the terms of the Tajik peace accord, he came into armed conflict with the government in the second half of 1997. Khudaberdiyev denied the charges.

Tajik authorities also ordered four Pakistanis to leave the country by Aug. 25, according to ITAR-TASS. Three of the men were apprehended in a Dushanbe mosque as they tried to hand out propaganda, which has been described by some sources as "pro-Taliban" and by others as "pro-Wahhabi."

Mufti of Dagestan killed by car bomb

Sayid Muhammed Abubakarov, Mufti of Dagestan, was murdered, along with his brother and chauffeur, on Aug. 21 in the capital, Makhachkala. His car exploded in the yard of the Dzuma Mosque. Dagestan is an autonomous republic in Russia's Caucasus, neighboring Chechnya. Six kilograms of hexagen had been buried under his car, which blew up when the driver went to start it. Specialists called it a typical "trap mine." Several days before his death, Sayid had told Ravil Gainutdin, Mufti of Moscow, that he was in the habit of changing cars many times, because of the threat of assault.

Russia's RTR television associated the terrorist action with the Mufti's negative attitude toward the adherents of Wahhabism, who in a short-lived move in mid-August had declared an independent Wahhabi republic within Dagestan. "Some members of the Jamaat are against civil peace and against real Islam," the Mufti had recently said. In his last interview, he had said: "It is well known that, for certain people, war is busi-

ness, enrichment, a way of life. Wahhabism is only a bright cover for this. There is no spiritual content beyond this bright cover."

"Sayid Muhammed Hadji Abubakarov was one of the most respected leaders who professed traditional Islam," declared Dagestan's Religious Department.

According to the newspaper *Kommer-sant*, the Mufti had some personal enemies in the Muslim clergy in the Caucasus. In 1996, he demanded that one of them, named Bauddin (who is said to be involved in drug-trafficking), be extradited from Dagestan. Bauddin went to Gudermes, Chechnya, and became the spiritual leader of the local Wahhabites.

In his statement, broadcast by ORT TV, Mufti Ravil Gainutdin said that "even if the villains are not found, Allah will still punish them." Russian President Boris Yeltsin termed the assassination an attempt to divide and factionalize the Muslim community. Russian Interior Ministry police immediately flew to Chechnya to begin their investigation.

Australian Defense Force goes part-time

Australians are looking forward to the official adoption of a new, white flag, which is expected to follow changes about to be introduced into the Australian Defense Force (ADF) that will allow "flexible" work arrangements for defense personnel in all three services. Under the new arrangements, personnel will be able to work part-time, work from home, take a rest from "difficult" periods of service, and negotiate flexible hours with their commanding officers. The new policy is being promoted as an attempt to make the ADF more attractive to those with families.

However, senior ADF officers are admitting that this is really a scheme to cut costs: e.g., personnel will be granted leave, but without pay. The deputy director of the ADF's personnel policy, Wing Cmdr. Bob Nilson, said the new system was part-time work under a different name. "Flexible work practices are part of a change in culture," he said.