Traces is an on-line news digest service (http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk) provided by the Transnational Communities Programme for researchers and other interested parties. A new issue will be produced every quarter, and past issues will be kept available. The aim of Traces is to make sense of the human dimensions of globalization by monitoring new stories from around the world and presenting them in summary form. These stories are selected for their relevance to the aims and interests of the Transnational Communities Programme. Today's news stories are, in a sense, tomorrow's research questions.

Every effort is made to cross-check the accuracy of factual information and to provide an unbiased account of often controversial issues. The sources used are referenced at the end of each entry and readers may also judge the value of the accounts themselves.

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Dual Citizenship: Mexico joins the list of countries accepting dual nationality, Germany declines

Around half the world's countries recognise dual citizenship or dual nationality. Mexico joined their number in March. Dual nationality raises important questions about the relationship between territory, nationality, allegiance and rights. Canada has begun to reappraise its stance on dual citizenship, while Germany rejected proposals to extend rights to resident foreigners. Additional citizenships, in the form of passports, can now be purchased on the internet.

On 21 March a new law came into force in Mexico allowing Mexicans living abroad to hold dual nationality. This would enable 4 to 5 million Mexicans resident in the USA to hold both US and Mexican citizenship rights. If this was to lead to higher levels of voter registration and voting, it could affect the political complexion of many large cities and states. Until the new law, Mexicans in the USA were often reluctant to acquire citizenship for fear of losing property rights in Mexico.

The law was passed in 1996. It allows people born in Mexico, or with at least one parent born in Mexico, to hold two nationalities. Mexicans with US citizenship will have Mexican nationality, but not full citizenship: they will not be able to vote, hold high-level political posts or join the army. They will however be able to own property, travel without a visa and invest in Mexico without the restrictions placed on foreigners. A decision on extending voting rights will be made later in 1998. For five years, applications for nationality can be made at Consulates: thereafter they will have to travel to Mexico itself. On the first day the law went into effect over 100 Mexicans with US citizenship applied for Mexican nationality in Los Angeles's Mexican Consulate.

Similar provisions affecting immigrants in the USA have already been introduced by Colombia, Dominican Republic and Ecuador. Colombia passed a law in 1991 allowing Colombians abroad to retain their nationality should they become citizens of another country. In three years the number of Colombians in the USA taking out US citizenship doubled. The government changed its emphasis on encouraging nationals to return to encouraging them to take out citizenship where they resided. In 1996 Dominicans in New York voted in the country's Presidential elections and could vote for a New Yorker. Australians resident in the USA have appealed to the Australian government to extend the same rights.

Dual nationality provisions are also intended to allow immigrants to return should they wish, without any loss of rights. They are aimed particularly at the first generation of immigrants in the early years of settlement. They are claimed to facilitate remittances.

Opposition to dual nationality

Some countries remain opposed to dual citizenship, as Ulf Samuelsson found when he was expelled from Sweden's Winter Olympics ice hockey tram for possessing a US passport. The same fate befell Canadian-born Adam Oates, who was not picked for the US team because of his dual nationality. The Philippines and China do not recognise dual citizens.

Jesus R. Galvis, a Colombian businessman and member of Hackensack City Council in New Jersey, also ran for office in Colombia's Senate in March 1998: he lost.
He was criticised by other Dominican-American elected officials, including New York councilman Guillermo Linares, for attempting to hold public office in two countries at once. In 1998's Colombian Senate elections only between 800 and 1800 voted from the USA: many Dominican US citizens abstained from voting on principle.

‘Portable patriotism’

The US federal government does not encourage dual nationality or allegiance, but it is becoming so common that it has to be tolerated at least. The State Department can revoke US citizenship for anyone running for office or voting in another country, but very rarely does. In fact, a number of decisions appear to lend tacit support to dual nationality: lifting the ban on Americans with dual Lebanese citizenship travelling to Lebanon; allowing draft dodgers to return from Canada and resume citizenship.

In 1996 over a million people naturalized as US citizens, including:

217,418 Mexicans
62,168 Cubans
47,625 Vietnamese
45,210 Filipinos
36,265 former Soviet Union
33,240 Salvadorans
30,656 Chinese
28,932 Indians
27,293 Dominicans
26,115 Colombians

Mark Fritz, writing in the Los Angeles Times (6.4.98) terms the phenomenon 'portable patriotism'. Extra citizenships make travel easier by removing the need for visas, which is attractive to such groups as Iraqis and Palestinians. Some commentators fear that dual nationality will hinder assimilation in the country of settlement and lead to divided loyalties which undermine the sense of nationhood. Others argue that it reduces nationality to the possession of a passport. Fritz reports the story of a broker in Denver who markets citizenship on the internet: St Kitts and Nevis citizenship is available for $150,000 of real estate; Costa Rica for $50,000 investment in reforestation; Belize charges $50,000. The broker adds a fee. His chief market is Russia. Belizian citizenship carries with it visa-free entry into countries of the British Commonwealth, plus the status of an additional passport. Supporters of the idea point to the example of the European Union, and the signs of the emergence of a borderless world which transcends the old relationships between territory, nationality and citizenship.

Canada reconsiders immigration law

In Canada, the federal government opened public meetings across the country to consult on immigration issues. These are based on the Immigration Minister's report 'Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration', which reopens deep-seated questions about Canadian nationalism, multiculturalism and identity. Canada allows dual citizenship, which has been taken up by 100,000 Hong Kongers as a safety net. But criticism of it is growing within Canada because, it is alleged, it leads to divided loyalties. Others are critical of the country's policy of making citizenship available in return for financial investments in the country. A poll by the Vancouver Sun with Ming Pao found that 74% of Chinese British Columbians favoured dual citizenship, but that the level of support fell to 58% among those who had lived in Canada for 20 years or more.

In March, the RCMP charged a Montreal man with helping Hong Kong businessmen create fake companies by falsifying files and records in order to obtain Canadian citizenship under the country's
entrepreneurs programme. Under another investor programme, which followed the original entrepreneurs programme, citizenship can be obtained for an investment as low as $50,000: over 17,000 people have contributed $3.75 billion in this way. It involves making an investment in a Canadian business or capital fund rather than starting a business. Some provinces have established low-risk investment funds to attract such people and provide money for local economies. Some commentators have criticised the scheme for selling Canadian citizenship at bargain prices.

**Germany rejects reform**

In March Germany's lower house of parliament rejected a bill which would enable children of immigrants to hold dual nationality by automatically becoming German citizens. Chancellor's Kohl's ruling coalition opposed the reform, which had been backed by the opposition Social Democrats in the upper house. The reform would have allowed children born in Germany with at least one German-born parent to qualify for citizenship. There are 7.5 million foreigners in Germany, 9% of the population, including 2 million Turks. Each year around 100,000 non-German children are born. They are eligible for German citizenship only if they give up their rights in another country. The government demands single citizenship as a mark of allegiance to the country.

The Australian Immigration Minister, Philip Ruddock, complained that Britons and British subjects from former colonies such as Singapore and Hong Kong were the slowest to obtain Australian citizenship. Some one million Australian residents are not citizens, and therefore unable to vote.

The Greek government has rescinded a law under which the authorities were able to remove citizenship from individuals and render them stateless. Article 19 was passed 60 years ago and used to strip rights from Greek-born Muslims and communists who left the country after the 1946-9 civil war. The 1,000 'living ghosts' were unable to vote, obtain state health care or education. Greece has a 120,000 Turkish Muslim minority.

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**Cuba: Papal visit followed by lifting of restrictions on flights and remittances**

Two months after Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba, the Clinton administration announced that it would lift some restrictions on contact with the island first introduced in 1996. The bans on flights and remittances were already widely circumvented. Hundreds of US Cubans travelled to Cuba for the papal visit.

In January Pope John Paul II made a five-day visit to Cuba. He met with Castro, following the Cuban leader's invitation
extended on his own visit to the Vatican in 1996. 100,000 people attended an open-air Mass in Santa Clara. He spoke against abortion and in favour of better wages and the strengthening of family life in Cuba. His speeches also called for an end to the US embargo on Cuba. The Pope held a Mass in the Plaza of the Revolution, where Castro himself usually delivers his speeches. There he praised the country's patron saint, Our Lady of Charity El Cobre and called upon her to unite Cubans wherever they were. He aimed to spread a spirit of forgiveness and peace among islanders and exiles alike.

In advance of the papal visit a coalition of exile organizations and dissident groups published the 'Agreement for Democracy', describing the conditions under which Cuba could abandon Communism and accept democracy. As well as calling for elections, freedom of speech and amnesty for political prisoners, the group affirmed that all Cubans on the island and in the diaspora were a single nation. Opinions on how to deal with Castro are divided among Cuban exile groups. Brothers to the Rescue, who fly over the Florida straits searching for people fleeing on rafts and the Democracy Movement both signed the accord. The agreement was opposed by the Cuban American National Foundation on the grounds that it did not specifically exclude Fidel and Raul Castro from any future government. Their own published plan called for the removal of the brothers. More militant paramilitary groups such as Commandos L and Alpha 66 did not sign the agreement.

In March, President Clinton announced his intention to relax restrictions on direct flights to Cuba, donations of medicine and clothes to the island and remittances. The White House wanted to be seen to respond to the change in mood within Cuba. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met the Pope in Rome on March 7th. Government officials claimed that the move would increase the status of the Roman Catholic Church in Cuba as well as lessen the state's hold over welfare. It would also sideline Castro, they claimed. The ban on flights was imposed in 1996 following the shooting down of two planes flown by Brothers to the Rescue.

The decision to rescind the order divided Congress, being welcomed by Massachusetts politicians, four of whom had flown to Cuba for the Pope's visit, and rejected by others, including Senator Torricelli from New Jersey, Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart from Florida and Rep Ileana Ros-Lehtinen from Miami. Catholic Relief Services holds $1 million worth of insulin.
for Cuba, which it had intended flying via Canada, but which could now go direct. The Cuban American National Foundation supported the provisions for food and medicine, but not the flights and remittances. Brothers to the Rescue were angered by the lifting of sanctions. The Cuban government welcomed the lifting of restrictions but also called for the full removal of the trade embargo.

The embargo causes friction between the US and Canada, Mexico and the European Union. Trade and investment bans remain in place under the provisions of the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, despite opposition from the US Chamber of Commerce.

Cuban remittances

It is estimated that US Cubans send $800 million a year of money to Cuba via third countries, mainly in violation of US Treasury rules. The new rules would allow each household to send $1,200 per year. Family members will also be able to visit one another. Telephone traffic was opened up in 1992. At present, more than 80,000 Cuban-Americans visit Cuba each year, paying extra for flights via third countries. The 1996 ban on flights failed to stop the movement. The ban on remittances was also widely circumvented.

A report in November by the UN's Economic Commission on Latin America found evidence for a sharp rise in remittances to Cuba in 1995 and 1996; in 1990 $100 million, in 1993 $300 million and in 1995 $600 million. These figures are in comparison with the country's gross export earnings from sugar ($1 billion), tourism ($1.4 billion) and foreign investment ($200 million). According to the report, the net flow of dollars for tourism was only $400 million, and for sugar $500 million, both sums smaller than the estimates for remittances. It is reckoned that half of Cuba's families receive cash or food from abroad. Dollars were legalised on the island in 1993, and the towns are full of dollar-only stores. Most of the money comes from recent post-1980 arrivals rather than the earlier streams of exiles and refugees. Remittances have been criticised by Castro.

Within the US Cuban community, there were signs of the hard line taken against anyone expressing positive support for increased relations with Cuba weakening. Many followed the Pope's visit on TV. But one Miami Catholic church was forced to cancel a planned cruise ship visit to Cuba for the Pope's following protest. The Archbishop of Miami attended the papal visit, but the Cuba-American community remains divided over contacts with the regime and with the country itself. It is estimated that there are over half a million Cuban-American Catholics in Miami, where churches continue to process a statue of Our Lady of Charity brought from Cuba in the 1960s.

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Kurds, Turkey, the EU and Schengen

The arrival of over 1,000 Kurdish refugees in Italy sparked off rows between the EU and Turkey, and among EU countries over their immigration and border policies.

In January Goc Der, a Kurdish migrants' organization in Istanbul, called upon Turkey to rebuild the Kurdish region and allow Kurds to return. There are estimated to be 2 million Kurds in Istanbul, many of whom have fled fighting in the south east. At least 28,000 have died since 1984 when the PKK, the Kurdistan's People's Party, began a campaign of violent opposition to Turkish government in the country's south east: about 3,000 villages have been evacuated in the fighting. Five million of Turkey's 8-12 million Kurds live in the region; 4 million live in western Turkey, others in Syria, Iraq and Iran. Turkey accuses Syria and Iran of backing the PKK, and alleges that Greece is tolerating PKK 'terrorists' training there.

At least 28,000 have died since 1984 when the PKK began a campaign of violent opposition to the Turkish government

In February the Turkish army announced that it had finally crushed the rebellion in the south east and declared that the PKK was a spent force. The army began to distribute aid packages to the region's villages. The PKK retorted that it had suspended operations for the winter. A ban on Kurdish language on television and in education remains in place.

It is thought that another one million Kurds belong to the diaspora in European countries. This may include 700,000 in Germany, 120,000 in France and large communities in Scandinavia.

In January the arrival by boat of 1,200 Kurdish refugees in Italy provoked disputes between EU countries and Turkey, but also within the EU. There were rumours that as many as 20,000 Kurds were planning to leave for Europe, paying up to $3,900 each for passage. It is thought that over 10,000 Kurds from Turkey and Iraq have entered the EU illegally since the start of 1997. Under pressure form the EU and Germany in particular, Turkey clamped down on people leaving the country as refugees, arresting Kurds as they boarded boats. One vessel was detained upon arrival in Greece, after 3 people had drowned in the crossing. The German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, insisted that Turkey tighten up its policies on departures.

Although 7 EU countries signed an agreement in Rome to deal with the refugees, the Turkish chief of police complained that the Europeans had failed to lay the blame on the PKK. Turkey denied signing the agreement. The Turkish authorities regard the flow as a criminal matter, not about political refugees, and blames the PKK for the organised smuggling of people into Europe. The PKK accuses Turkey of causing the crisis in order to depopulate the south east.

The arrival of the Kurdish refugees in Italy coincided with a further stage in the Schengen accord, by which the majority of EU countries are seeking to harmonise their external controls over immigration and asylum policy and lift internal border checks. Italy was heavily criticised for dealing with refugees and illegal immigrants in an ineffective way. Austria reinstated its border checks with Italy and increased border personnel only a month after signing the Schengen accord. German politicians chided Italy and
The Schengen agreement facilities exchange of information between European countries on refugees and immigrants. In December Italy and France authorities closed down a network smuggling people into the continent. The panic over Kurds spurred on moves to increase border controls at the EU border. These include mandatory finger-printing of persons without complete documentation and instant deportation. Italy responded and rescinded the 15 days grace period it allowed illegal immigrants to leave the country. German authorities also accused Greece of failing to patrol its borders. Italian police arrested Kurdish refugees on their way to Germany at several locations throughout the country. The French Interior Minister blamed the creation of 'safe havens' in northern Iraq.

In February German courts sentenced Kani Yilmaz, former spokesman of the PKK, to seven years for firebombings of Turkish properties in Germany in 1993: having already served time in detention he was released. Yilmaz was arrested in London in 1994. Germany now recognises the PKK as a criminal organization and not a terrorist group, and authorities are still searching for 18 activists. Turkey reacted angrily to the redesignation of the PKK, which remains banned in Germany. The chief of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, agreed to abide by German laws in 1996, since when arson attacks on Turkish targets had declined considerably. Nonetheless, the German authorities accuse the PKK of dealing in weapons, extortion and false documents.

The Austrian office of the Kurdistan National Liberation Front (ERNK), the political wing of the PKK, called on the country to end investment in Turkey until the resolution of the Kurdish question. ERNK's headquarters is in Brussels.

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Roma in Europe and USA

Amid growing violence and hostility directed against Roma in Europe, representatives are pressing for international protection and reparation for losses suffered during World War II. In the USA, Roma are achieving wider recognition.

At November's conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, European Roma representatives pressed for an international fund to protect their rights. This came in response to growing racist attacks on Roma, or Gypsies, throughout Europe. Among their suggestions were that more Roma should be recruited to police forces and that the press should refrain from hostile reporting of Roma. The United Nations now recognises the term Roma, meaning 'the
people’, instead of Gypsy. There are thought to be 10 million Roma in Europe. Roma form about 5% of Hungary's 10 million population and there are 30,000 Roma in Poland.

Violence against Roma, often accused of being welfare scroungers and criminals, has become widespread in Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, according to representatives. Recent attacks documented by the European Roma Rights Centre in Budapest include the killing of a 41-year-old woman by Macedonian police on the streets of Skopje; the murder of a man by a police sergeant in the Bulgarian city of Stara Zagora; the lynching and drowning of Roma by skinheads in the Czech Republic; the firebombing of homes in North Moravia. At least 28 Roma have been killed by racist attacks since the end of Communism.

Throughout former-Communist countries, independence has brought renewed hostility towards Roma, easy scapegoats for economic distress. When once protected by Communist laws, free speech now permits anti-Roma expressions. The Prime Minister of Slovakia, Vladimir Meciar, has expressed alarm about the alleged high birth rate among Roma. The town council of Satoraljaujhely in Hungary voted to expel Roma, while two Slovak villages passed laws forbidding them to settle. The town of Kladno, near Prague, banned Roma children from the local swimming pool, blaming them for an outbreak of hepatitis. The mayor of Marianske Hory, North Moravia in the Czech Republic, paid for airlines to take Roma to Canada. The town is planning to build a 3-metre high wall around a Roma settlement to ghettoise them, responding to complaints from non-Roma about the unhygienic conditions around the blocks of flats. Throughout the region, Roma are forced into segregated and marginal settlements. In Hungary, UN statistics show that the average Roma baby is born two pounds less than the national average. In Romania, Roma unemployment is 50%.

Increasing numbers of Roma are fleeing eastern Europe and claiming asylum. Some 400 Czechs and Slovaks together with their 580 dependants sought asylum in Britain after February 1997; only one has been allowed to remain. The Czech President, Vaclav Havel, whose wife attended the funeral of one victim of drowning by racists, is aware that the country's human rights record with regard to Roma will be scrutinised by the European Union as part of the Republic's application to join. He spoke out against the racism.

Holocaust victims await compensation

Roma were among the victims of Nazi genocide during World War II. In March, a Swiss fund for victims of the Holocaust made its first payments to three Roma survivors of concentration camps living in Singen, Germany: another 42 people will also benefit. The $190 million fund is mainly aimed at Jewish survivors, but part has been set aside for Roma and homosexuals. Polish Roma representatives are seeking compensation from the German government for suffering during World War II. Between 200,000 and 500,000 Roma were killed by the Nazis. In Germany, Roma called upon the government to give compensation to around 200 survivors who had not qualified under existing provisions because they were not German citizens at the time or because they were incarcerated in places other than concentration camps. The German government has already established a $110 million fund for Jewish Holocaust survivors from eastern Europe.

Between 200,000 and 500,000 Roma were killed by the Nazis
In Bohemia, part of the Czech Republic, other survivors of the camps are still fighting for compensation under a 1994 law, but struggling to prove that they were persecuted because of the lack of documentation. The Czech and German governments have established The Future Fund for victims of Nazism, and the Czech Committee for the Compensation of Romany Holocaust Victims is tracking down individual survivors.

In addition, the International Romani Union claims that the Vatican is holding almost $2 million worth of Roma gold coins and rings taken from Roma held at Nazi concentration camps in Croatia during the war. It is alleged that Catholic priests helped run the Jasenovic camp in Croatia and sent the gold to the Vatican. They claim the return of $135 million from the Allies' Tripartite Gold Commission, the total seized from Roma murdered by Germans and their allies. But the representatives were unable to provide complete documentation.

In Hungary, the Gandhi School operates as Europe's first all-Roma high school. It aims to prepare Roma children for University by teaching them in an environment free from prejudice. Mainstream schools often stigmatise Roma as of low intelligence and place them in classes for slow learners: less than one percent graduate from high school and there are only 160 Roma University students. The school charges no fees, which helps Roma children from the country's poor community. The school is backed and funded by the Education Ministry and has been visited by officials from Romania and Slovakia. It is named after Mohandas Gandhi, in recognition of the origins of Roma in India. The school teaches Roma culture, alongside cultural anthropology and European languages; some Hungarian Roma speak Beas and Lovari.

US Roma organise on the Net

The Roma community in the USA numbers 100,000 according to the Bureau of the Census, but over a million by the estimate of some Roma themselves. In 1997 New Jersey removed from its statutes a 1917 law allowing the state to license and regulate Roma traders, the last law in the country aimed specifically at a single ethnic group. And a Roma representative was admitted to the Holocaust Memorial Council. The current representative is Ian Hancock, a professor of linguistics at the University of Texas and founder of Romnet, an e-mail discussion group for Roma (http:www.roma.com). Romnet lobbied Clinton for Hancock to join the Council, and has also campaigned in support of Czech Roma asylum seekers in Britain.

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Latvia's Russian Minority

Protests by Latvia's Russian minority over its citizenship status and a rally by Latvian SS veterans caused friction between Latvia and Russia. Russia imposed trade sanctions on the Baltic state in reprisal.
Relations between Russia and Latvia deteriorated in March following a rally by members of the Latvian SS Legion in Riga. A counter rally was organised by members of Latvia’s large Russian ethnic minority. The President of Latvia, Guntis Ulmanis, chose to criticise the Russian protesters at the SS rally for failing to respect the rights of free speech. The deputy speaker of Latvia’s parliament and the head of the armed forces attended the march, along with five members of parliament. The next day, Russians protested outside the Latvian embassy in Moscow. In Riga itself, several thousand Russians resumed their protest in demand of citizenship and cultural rights. A third of Latvia’s 2.5 million population consists of Russian-speakers.

Two weeks before the SS rally, the Latvian police broke up a demonstration by Russian pensioners, and were accused of being heavy-handed by the Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov. Their Soviet-era passports do not allow them to travel abroad. In April the government plans to cease recognising these passports, but the Russians cannot easily qualify for Latvian passports because of language requirements for citizenship. Fewer than a quarter of the country’s Russian minority possess passports which enable them to travel abroad. Others may be forced to wait up to two years. Latvia does not grant citizenship to anyone who came to the country during the Soviet era and who cannot speak Latvian. Thousands of public jobs are denied to non-Latvian speakers. In February, the Parliament rejected a proposal to allow children born to non-citizens in Latvia to qualify for citizenship.

Before the rally the SS Legion held a church service to commemorate their fallen comrades in the fight against Soviet forces during World War II, then marched to the Freedom Monument to lay a wreath. The veterans only began commemorating their past following Latvia’s independence from the Soviet Union.

Latvia was occupied by both Germany and the USSR during the war, and Latvians fought on both sides at various times. Many joined the Germans as a patriotic crusade against Soviet occupation, inflicting heavy defeats on Russian forces. Russia’s authorities accused the Latvian SS of war atrocities and complicity in the murder of Jews, Russians and Belorussians. Around 66,000 of the country’s 70,000 Jews were murdered by Nazis with Latvian collaborators. Thousands of Latvians were deported to Siberia after Soviets regained control. There are about 8,000 veterans still alive in Latvia. During the Soviet era Jews slowly returned to Latvia, and now form a small community of around 15,000.

In April Riga’s only synagogue was firebombed for the third time in recent years and a monument to victims of the Holocaust in Liepaja was defaced. Another bomb went of outside the Russian embassy in Riga.
Latvia received widespread international criticism for allowing the Nazi rally. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the EU have criticised Latvia for its treatment of Russians. The EU has warned that it would delay the country's accession to membership. US under-secretary of state Richard Holbrooke also advised Latvia to improve its relations with Russia. President Ulmanis responded by sacking the head of the army and the chief of police for failing to protect the synagogue.

In April Russia retaliated by introducing economic sanctions on Latvia through trade restrictions; it included stopping the flow of oil from Russia to Latvia, which acts as a transhipment location for 13 percent Russia's oil exports. The Democratic Party pulled out of the governing coalition in protest against Latvia's actions towards Russia and the Russian ethnic minority in April. Under pressure, the Latvian Cabinet proposed changing the laws on citizenship to speed up the granting of citizenship: but the proposal would not alter the language proficiency requirement.

Latvian parliament votes down amendment to citizenship law, Agence France Presse English Wire, 12.2.98; Tempers flare as Russian-speakers counter Latvian SS rally, Agence France Presse English Wire, 16.3.98; Backlash in Moscow over Latvian SS rally, Agence France Presse English Wire, 17.3.98; Thousands of Russians protest in Latvia in row over passports, Biruta Zujane, Agence France Presse English Wire 17.3.98; Old ethnic rifts run deep in Latvia, Richard C. Paddock, Los Angeles Times, 6.4.98; Government has worked out sanctions against Latvia, Anna Dolgov, Associated Press, 8.4.98; Yeltsin threatens Latvia with sanctions, Tom Whitehouse, The Guardian 9.4.98; Latvian Cabinet sends proposed citizenship changes to parliament, Associated Press, 2.4.98

**Lithuania's American President: Guyana and Zambia also**

The Baltic state of Lithuania elected a former US citizen as President in January, adding an intriguing element to the politics of the strategically important region. Guyana also elected a former US citizen to office, while former President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, is threatened with losing his citizenship.

In January Lithuania elected as its new President an American citizen Valdas Adamkus. He narrowly defeated his opponent, the neo-Communist Arturas Paulauskas, gaining 50.7% of the vote. Adamkus's predecessor and the first President, Algirdas Brazauskas, had backed his opponent in the elections. Aged 71, Adamkus had worked for the US Environmental Protection Agency and was well known in US government circles. His position as district administrator for the Chicago area had involved him in environmental projects with the Baltic states.

Within Lithuania, his opponents labelled him a foreigner who could no longer speak the language fluently. His support came more from rural areas than the capital, Vilnius. Many hope that, as someone not tainted by the years of Soviet domination and brought up within US democracy, he will be a breath of fresh air. Adamkus pointed out that his agency's budget was larger than that of Lithuania. He stressed that, being an American civil servant, he was honest and above corruption.

Adamkus was born in Lithuania and participated actively in the resistance to German occupation during World War II. Later he switched his energies to opposing Soviet occupation, finally fleeing the country in 1944. In 1949, aged 22, he emigrated to the USA. Adamkus was active in anti-Communist politics and supported Lithuanian independence until becoming a civil servant. He was involved with literary and cultural life of the
Lithuania's new president known in government, in his community, Agence France Presse English Wire, 5.1.98; Newcomer takes power in Lithuania, Agence France Presse English Wire 5.1.98; American retires to run Lithuania, James Meek, The Guardian 6.1.98; Former EPA bureaucrat from Chicago is to be sworn in today as leader of his Lithuanian community. Adamkus registered as a resident of Siauliai in Lithuania in 1994, but did not fully return to the country until 1997 after he had been selected as the candidate of the Centre Union party. His candidature was challenged in the courts on the grounds that he had not lived in the country for at least three years and had sworn allegiance to another state. Adamkus successfully argued that his frequent visits to the country qualified him to run for the post. Following his election he renounced his US citizenship, although the constitution would have allowed him to keep it. After being sworn in as President in February, Adamkus announced that he would pursue Lithuania's entry into NATO and the European Union, a move which would alarm Russia. As President he has limited powers, and Gediminas Vagnorius remains prime minister.

His election was welcomed by representatives of the Lithuanian-American community. Chicago is home to 300,000 Lithuanians, the largest community outside the country. There are some 800,000 in the US.

Lithuania has a population of 3.7 million, 15% of which is made up of Russian and Polish minorities. Unlike Latvia, most of the Russians enjoy local citizenship. Its economy is lagging behind the other Baltic states, having attracted little foreign investment and having failed to leave behind the Soviet-style economy and political thinking. Its GDP per capita is $4,260. The US has moved into the region through its Partnership for Peace programme of integrating the Baltic states' defences, and Baltnet, a jointly planned airspace monitoring system. Russia's interest is both strategic and for the fate of the million or so ethnic Russians living in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. The region is the gateway between Russia and Europe, where the expansion of NATO and the EU will most directly impinge upon Russian interests. Lithuania receives strong diplomatic backing from Denmark.

Guyana and Zambia

Adamkus was not the only former US citizen to be elected to power in another country. In Guyana in December, Janet Jagan, wife of the late Guyanese President Cheddi Jagan, became President when her People's Progressive Party won the election. The PPP receives most of its support from the country's Indo-Guyanese community. The rival People's National Congress, backed mainly by the Afro-Guyanese population, disputed the result of the vote and began a campaign of militant resistance. Born in Chicago in 1920, Jagan moved to Guyana in 1943 to join her husband, who died in 1992.

In Zambia, an attempt was made in the High Courts to have the former President Kenneth Kaunda declared officially stateless. The petition brought by former Legal Affairs minister Remmy Mushota and former MP Patrick Katyoka claims that Kaunda did not actually apply for Zambian citizenship when he renounced his Malawian citizenship in 1970. They claim that Kaunda was foisted upon the newly independent country by the British in 1964 and thereafter ruled the country illegally. The petitioners claim that Kaunda was born in Malawi, then Nyasaland, and not Zambia, then Northern Rhodesia. They question his failure to renounce Malawian citizenship for the first six years of his presidency. Further, they argue that Kaunda should be granted honorary citizenship at the discretion of the present President. The case continued into April.
native land, Richard C., Paddock, Los Angeles Times 26.2.98; Lithuanian president vows to push for entry to NATO, EU, Agence France Presse English Wire, 26.2.98; Hello Again, The Economist 13.12.97; KK Stateless?, Majie Sayila, Africa News Service, 1.4.98

Arménia: Presidential Elections and the Armenian Diaspora

In March, voters in Armenia and among the Armenian diaspora in the USA and France elected a nationalist candidate to the Presidency. The strategic importance of the Caucasian country has increased since western companies have begun courting neighbouring Azerbaijan over the vast Caspian Sea oil fields.

The Armenian Presidential elections were finally won on March 30th by the nationalist candidate and former Prime Minister, Robert Kocharian, defeating the former Communist Party boss, Karen Demicherian. Kocharian was born in Nagorno-Karabakh, the territory disputed between Armenia and neighbouring Azerbaijan. His continued support for a hard line over the territory seemed to have won him support from the voters. He had already forced the previous President, Levon Ter-Petrosian, out of office for appearing to take a softer stance. In the first round of voting, Kocharian gained 39% and Demicherian 31%, although international observers claimed there was widespread fraud.

Previous elections in 1995 and 1996 were overshadowed by allegations of fraud, making the 1998 election vital for Armenia's international credibility. Following independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia seemed to have a bright future. Support from Washington and the Armenian diaspora in the USA, France and elsewhere promised stability and prosperity. But a six year war with Azerbaijan over the Armenian exclave Nagorno-Karabakh, resulted in between 20,000 and 30,000 deaths and many more refugees and it cast a shadow over the new country's future. Landlocked and under trade embargo from both Azerbaijan and Turkey, the country's economy has declined. Its main export revenue comes from cut stones, brandy and vegetables, as its factories stand idle.

Since 1991 Armenia has received around $1 billion in aid from the USA

Early dreams of becoming the Switzerland of the Caucasus fuelled by financial aid and investment from the diaspora, are unrealised. Investors have been deterred by the lack of political stability and the restriction of trade routes. The result is a large black economy and fifty percent unemployment. Armenia's debt to Russia, the IMF and the World Bank stands at $600 million officially. Aid also comes from Armenians living in Russia and elsewhere, some $350 million in 1997. Since 1991 Armenia has received around $1 billion in aid from the USA, placing it second behind Israel in terms of per capita aid.

The geopolitics of oil

The politics of Armenia (population 3.7 million) is regarded by the international community as significant for the future of the region and, in particular, the fate of the huge Caspian Sea oil fields and the stability of the Caucasus. Azerbaijan intends to use its new found oil wealth as a bargaining tool in negotiations over the territory and as a lure to the US and Russia. An unofficial delegation from Moscow led by General Lebed attended the 10th anniversary celebrations of the vote to secede by Nagorno-Karabakh in February. Azerbaijan interpreted their presence as tacit support for Armenia.
Armenia is aware that there is a battle within Washington between pro-Armenian interests, including the Armenian Assembly of America, and the oil lobby which wants to support Azerbaijan.

Since the end of the fighting with Azerbaijan, Iranian merchants have returned to the Armenian capital, Yerevan. The mosque, deserted during the war, is being rebuilt. Fuel and food crosses the border from Iran, and fuel shortages are no longer such a problem. Relations between the two countries are improving, although the loss of key football players from Ararat FC, the country's top side, to the better-funded Iranian teams has caused some dismay.

Armenians resident in California voted in the Presidential elections. The Armenian Consulate in Los Angeles reckoned that most of the diaspora would support Demicherian. In the first round of elections, around 3,000 members of the diaspora voted in Glendale, Beverly Hills, Washington DC, New York City, Paris and elsewhere. The USA does not recognise dual citizenship, so Armenians who are American citizens resident in the US cannot vote.

In a related story, the Los Angeles Times (25.1.98) reports on a drive by the Armenian Assembly to increase voter registration among Armenians in California. Los Angeles County has the highest concentration of Armenians in the USA, largely in Glendale, Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley. The Mayor of Glendale, Larry Zarian, is an Armenian-American (as is former Governor George Deukmejian). But only 14% of the 350,000-400,000 Armenians in Southern California are registered to vote, compared with the state average of 41%.

Group hopes to boost Armenian Americans' political role elections, Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times 25.1.98; Karabakh independence day fete leaves Baku fuming, Miriam Kharoutinian, Agence France Press English Wire 20.2.98; Hovel with a luxury facade - Armenia's economy, Deborah Pasmantier, Agence France Press English Wire 11.3.98; Armenia may tap its past for leader, David Filipov (with Ruben Mangasaryan), Boston Globe 15.3.98; Unlikely bedfellows keep Armenia warm, Tom Whitehouse, The Guardian 18.3.98; Armenians vote for New President, Vanora Bennett, Los Angeles Times 31.3.98; Southland sends votes to Armenia, Jon Steinman, Los Angeles Times 31.3.98; Can Armenia's new man deal? The Economist 4.4.98

**South East Asia Crisis: Fallout continues**

In the wake of the currency and economic crisis which spread across Asia from July 1997 there followed the forced repatriation of migrant workers, the departure of expatriates and rioting directed against Indonesia's Chinese minority.

There are perhaps 8 million migrant workers in Southeast Asia. They became convenient scapegoats during the social and economic crises, from Indonesia to South Korea. Popular and press opinion turned on migrant workers as drains on the economy and contributors of social problems.

In January Thailand announced that it wanted to deport 300,000 workers to Myanmar and more to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to resolve its unemployment problem. It intended to deport 300-500,00 per year over three years. South Korea announced the repatriation of 270,000 foreign workers, to Philippines, Vietnam and Nepal. Malaysia intended to expel a million, having halted recruitment in August 1997. Migrant workers make up 3 million of Malaysia's 8 million workforce: half of these are from Indonesia. By March the government stated that it had deported 19,000 illegal aliens. The loss of jobs and remittances is anticipated to hurt poorer economies in the region, at a time when harvests are already

...
poor because of bad weather. Remittances from the region to Indonesia amount to $2.5 billion a year; over $1 billion a year to Philippines; $200 million to Thailand; $100 million to Vietnam. Thailand and Vietnam had planned to send more workers abroad by improving their training at home and advising migrants how to find jobs abroad.

A quarter of Singapore’s workers are foreigners (officially 450,000), including skilled professionals and low-skilled labourers, maids and street cleaners. There are thought to be 100,000 Filipina maids alone. In recent years the economy has grown at 7% a year, adding 100,000 jobs annually, only half of which are taken up by Singaporeans. In Brunei, one third of the population is a foreign worker.

Riots at the Semenyih detention camp outside Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in March, resulted in the deaths of eight detainees and a policemen. The Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (the international branch of the Aceh Merdeka guerrilla movement), which is based in Sweden, put the number of deaths at 24. Riots at other camps were suppressed, although 140 managed to escape from one. Among the detained migrants are many Acehnese, fleeing fighting in Sumatra. Amnesty International appealed to Malaysia to halt the expulsions of Aceh refugees.

Unemployment in Indonesia doubled in eight months from July to 10% of the country's 90 million workforce. The Indonesian government reckoned that, from January to March, two-thirds of the country's expatriate workers returned home, leaving around 16,000 of the 48,000 employed at the start of the year. Those remaining have accepted reduced salaries.

Companies hit by the crisis include GM, Walt Disney Corp., Levi Strauss and many financial services companies. Economic decline is expected to strike at the consumption and investment patterns of Indonesia's growing middle classes, who had provided foreign firms with an expanding market. Other expatriate employees sent family abroad and made contingency plans for immediate evacuation for fear of a repeat of the violence of 1965-66. Companies laid off expensive expatriate labour in an attempt to switch to local workers. For multinationals, the costs of a supporting an expatriate worker can be three to four times greater than the costs of an equivalent worker at home. The crisis may provoke a shift towards local sourcing. Expatriates are unwilling to be paid in rupiahs, which fell 80% against the dollar in 7 months. The government urged companies to release expatriate labour because of the costs in foreign exchange, reckoned at $3 billion in 1996.

Riots in Indonesia

By January there were food riots in East Java. The plunge in the rupiah relative to the dollar sparked profiteering, for example buying cigarettes or toiletry products in Indonesia and selling them in China for three times the price. Ordinary Indonesians began withdrawing their money from local banks and depositing it in foreign institutions for safety.

Anti-Chinese rioting took place throughout Indonesia in January and February. Riots
occurred in Bandung, Brebes, Lombok, Kendari and Sulawesi. Chinese churches and temples were burned, along with shops and businesses, especially across eastern Java. Chinese-Indonesians make up about 3-5 percent of the population (c6 million), but own or control about 70 percent of the economy.

Previous riots against Chinese-Indonesians occurred in 1960, 1965 (against Chinese 'Communists', when half a million people died) and 1974. On these occasions the Chinese government in Beijing had called for overseas Chinese to return 'home'. In the 1960s it sent boats to rescue over 100,000 people. China broke off diplomatic relations with Indonesia in 1967, which were not restored until 1990. But this time the reaction from Beijing was more subdued. China's policy appears to have shifted towards regarding overseas Chinese as citizens of other countries first and foremost, rather than citizens of China. It does not recognise dual nationality since changing the law in 1980, reversing an edict by the emperor in 1893 which allowed all Chinese-descent people to enter China. By contrast, Taiwan officials have angrily denounced the rioting.

Wealthy Indonesians and Chinese-Indonesians fled to Perth, Australia, where many already had second homes. Twelve months residence or more in Australia is the minimum qualification under the country's Foreign Investment Policy. Perth has an Indonesian population of 6,000, mainly students.

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Korean expatriate communities around the world sent money home to help out the country's ailing finances, as the government sought a loan of possibly up to $60 billion from the IMF. Other expatriates vowed to buy only Korean-made good such as cars. Within Korea itself, 130,000 people raised almost $100 million from selling personal valuables, including gold. The government organised a campaign to attract overseas Korean tourists and shoppers.

Indonesia braces for worst as its currency collapses, Paul Blustein, Washington Post 24.1.98; Ruined Indonesians vent rage on Chinese minority, Nick Cumming-Bruce, The Guardian 28.1.98; US firms may cut back on executive assignments to Asia, Agence France Presse English Wire, 31.1.98; Indonesian crisis unleash exodus of expatriates, Agence France Presse English Wire, 15.2.98; Expatriates set sail as economy sinks, the Jakarta Post, 15.2.98; Indonesian riots spread and worsen, John Aglionby, The Guardian 16.2.98; Expatriates drift, Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, Boston Globe, 26.2.98; Misery for migrant millions, Nicholas Cumming-Bruce, The Guardian 7.1.98; Asian Pride: dollars and dolours, The Economist 24.1.98; Singapore: Foreigners still welcome, The Economist 17.1.98; From Cheap Labor to Economic Burden, David Lamb, Los Angeles Times 3.3.98; China changes its role in recurring scene, Los Angeles Times; Indonesians are seeking safe haven in Perth, Dewi Anggraeni, The Jakarta Post 2.3.98; Four die as illegal immigrants riot, Nick Cumming-Bruce, The Guardian, 27.3.98; Mahathir defends response to riots as Indonesians claim 24 dead, Eileen Ng, Agence France Presse English Wire, 27.3.98; Koreans donate spare coins to multibillion dollar currency crisis, Paulin Jelinek, Associated Press, 1.12.97; Overseas Koreans visit home to help economy, The Korea Herald 12.2.98.

Israel and the Jewish Diaspora

Disputes between Israeli ultra-Orthodox rabbis and US Reform and Conservative rabbis over the rights to conversion to Judaism came to the fore during Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit to the USA. The issue of who exactly may be considered Jewish also affected
relatives of Israel's armed forces and Ethiopian Jews.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the USA in November 1997. He met opposition from representatives of the US Reform and Conservative movements angered at attempts by Israeli ultra-Orthodox rabbis to block official recognition of liberal branches of Judaism in Israel. Netanyahu's governing coalition needs ultra-Orthodox support, and the American rabbis fear that he will accede to their demands. The PM agreed to pass laws to prevent liberal representatives from being members of local religious councils and to officially recognise only conversions to Judaism made by Orthodox rabbis, thereby giving them a monopoly on determining who is properly Jewish and therefore who can migrate to Israel. The state of Israel would continue to recognise conversions by Reform and Conservative rabbis abroad, but not in Israel itself. US Reform and Conservative rabbis also regard children born of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers as Jewish.

Netanyahu attended a gala dinner with Orthodox Jews in Beverly Hills during his visit, but did not attend any meetings or functions with Reform and Conservative Jews in Los Angeles. Unlike in Israel, the vast majority of the 6 million US Jews are Reform and Conservative. US Jewish leaders fear that the issue will distance diaspora Jews from Israel on the eve of the country's 50th anniversary. He did attend a gathering of the Council of Jewish Federations in Indianapolis, where he tried to soothe concerns. Netanyahu appointed Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman to head a commission charged with finding a compromise.

In January, a committee of ultra-Orthodox rabbis in Israel announced plans to publish lists of people it considers to be 'real Jews', so as to ensure that marriages can be kept within Jewish circles. The committee claims that as much as 70 percent of Soviet Jewish immigrant community are not genuine Jews. Nor do they accept as genuine those who are converted to Judaism by Reform and Conservative rabbis, in opposition to official policy.

A later visit to the US by Yaakov Neeman in February failed to reach a compromise over the dispute, although relations between the two sides did improve. The compromise solution of creating an institute for Jewish Studies under the Israeli Jewish Agency, which would include non-Orthodox and Orthodox rabbis, was rejected by Israel's Chief Rabbinical Council. Ultra-Orthodox leaders rejected all suggestions for a compromise coming from Neeman's committee.

The Jewish Agency in Israel, which organises immigration to the country, was announced as being close to bankruptcy in January. It had run up a large defect, mainly because of a drop in funding from overseas Jews, particularly from North America. It is thought that disagreement over the issue of Reform and Conservative rabbis converting people to Judaism was the main cause of the fall in contributions.

Iraqi-Israeli Friendship

In March, a group of Iraqi Jews founded an Iraqi-Israeli Friendship group to improve relations between the two countries and to better the impression that Israelis have of Iraq. They intend to dispel the idea that Arabs have always, and will always, mistreat Jews. The group actively supports opposition to Saddam Hussein's regime. There are around 300,000 Iraqi Jews in Israel, most of whom arrived shortly after 1948.

In Iraq itself, the Jewish community has declined drastically, perhaps to numbers below 100. In 1947 there were 117,000 Jews enumerated by the British in Iraq.
although Jewish sources put the number at nearer 350,000. There is now only a single synagogue open in Baghdad’s Bataween neighbourhood, once the centre of a large and prosperous community. There have been no marriages there since 1980, and the last rabbi died in 1996. Jews were once prominent in Baghdad’s commercial and business circles, up to their exodus in the 1950s. The city had 30 private Jewish schools and a large class of professionals and intellectuals. In 1950 Iraq withdrew citizenship from the Jewish population and confiscated their property, encouraging thousands to flee. Those who remained, some 5,000, were forbidden from travelling abroad until 1968.

Controversy over serviceman’s family

The Ukrainian-born mother of an Israeli immigrant serving in the country’s air force faced expulsion in February because she was not Jewish. The son arrived in 1993, followed by his mother and sister on tourist visas in 1997. But, because they are not Jewish, unlike the father and brother of the serviceman, they are not recognised under the laws of return. The country’s pride suffered another blow when it was discovered that the Russian immigrant family of a young soldier killed in south Lebanon had been living in a tiny slum dwelling. The father and sister of Nikolai Rappoport were visited by President Weizman, who declared that he was appalled by their conditions. Because Rappoport’s mother is not Jewish, he could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery in Israel, in accord with Orthodox law. His mother stayed in the Caucasus, to where his father and sister took the body for burial.

Opposition MPs announced that they would press for legislation to grant citizenship to all parents of armed forces personnel.

‘Yiddish dying out’

There are signs that Yiddish, once the language of the east European Jewish ghetto, is dying out. Once 10 million spoke the language, before the Holocaust and the migration to Israel, where the language was not supported by the government. Yiddish is now mainly spoken in ultra-Orthodox communities such as Mea Shearim in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak in Tel Aviv. Although there is an hour a day of Yiddish on Israeli’s radio, Yiddish newspapers have been closing.

In 1996 1,250 bodies were brought to Israel from abroad for burial in the Holy land, an industry worth $10 million a year. Two-thirds to a quarter of the deceased were members of the Jewish diaspora.

In January the government announced that it planned to bring over a further 2,500 Ethiopian Jews, the Falash Mora, in 1998. Thousands are waiting in transit camps in Addis Ababa, waiting to join the community of 60,000 Ethiopian Jews already in Israel following airlifts in 1984 and 1991.

Dispute among Jews a threat to Premier’s Visit, Rebecca Trounson, Los Angeles Times, 17.10.97; Netanyahu seeks to placate US Jews in Orthodox, Reform rift, Gerard Aziakou, Agence France Presse English Wire, 17.11.97; Netanyahu leaves behind religious squall within Jewish community, Karen Lowe, Agence France Presse English Wire, 18.11.97; Ultra-Orthodox rabbis to publish list of "real Jews", Agence France Presse English Wire, 2.1.98; Ultra-Orthodox unite against compromise with liberal streams, Jack Katzenell, Associated Press, 28.1.98; Southland rabbis express mixed feelings on Israeli leader’s visit, Larry B. Stammer, Los Angeles Times, 19.2.98; Non-Jewish mother of immigrant soldier threatened with expulsion, Agence France Presse English Wire, 12.2.98; Life of a dog, death of a hero, David Sharrock, The Guardian 13.2.98; Booming business burying foreign bodies in Holy Land, Agence France Presse English Wire, 27.11.97; Yiddish probably on its way out despite minor comeback, Agence France Presse English Wire, 22.12.97; Israel’s Jewish Agency near bankruptcy after diaspora aid drops, Agence France Presse English Wire, 29.1.98; Israel
plans to welcome 2,500 more Ethiopian immigrants, Agence France Presse English Wire, 18.1.98; Iraq's Jewish community on verge of extinction, Leon Barkho, Associated Press 27.3.98; Israel's Iraqi Jews look to build bridges to their homeland, Claire Snegaroff, Agence France Presse English Wire, 28.3.98.

St Patrick's Day marked in Ireland and abroad

This year's St Patrick's Day was celebrated against a background of continuing peace talks over Northern Ireland. Ireland's spectacular economic growth and its cultural renaissance, led by the commercially successful Riverdance, may be among the causes of return migration to the country.

St Patrick's Day, March 17th, was celebrated by Irish communities across the world. About a million people attended parades in Ireland. The day is also a public holiday in Northern Ireland, where both Catholic and Protestant Church leaders marked the occasion with calls for unity and an end of conflict. In a ceremony in Armagh, the head of the Protestant Church in Northern Ireland, Archbishop Robin Eames, was joined by the Catholic Primate of Ireland, Sean Brady. A joint Protestant-Catholic parade in Belfast attracted 10,000, but was criticised by Unionist politicians for being hi-jacked by Republicans.

Ireland's leading politicians attended parades and celebrations away from home; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern was in Washington DC, others were in Paris and Moscow and Sydney - in all 16 ministers were abroad. Former Prime Minister Albert Reynolds became the first non-Irish-American to be Grand Marshal of New York City's St Patrick's Day parade. President Clinton held a St Patrick's Day event at the White House, where Northern Ireland politicians, including David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists and Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein leader, were present.

The Irish diaspora is reckoned at 70 million people, including 45 million with some Irish ancestry in the USA and 7 million in Australia. When President of Ireland, Mary Robinson kept a lamp burning at the window of her official residence as a sign to the diaspora. While emigration continues, the strengthening of Ireland's economy is encouraging some to return. In 1997 the economy grew at 8%, the highest rate in Europe, resulting in labour shortages in construction work and professional occupations. Between April 1996 and April 1997 Ireland experienced a net in-migration of 15,000. In the 1980s there was a net loss of 200,000. The Irish government is encouraging workers to return with newspaper ads in British press.

Boston Irish

In Boston, recent Irish immigrants are credited with reviving the cultural and community life of the city's long-established Irish-American community, according to a report in the Washington Post (17.3.98). Perhaps as much as a quarter of Boston's population has Irish roots. The cultural revival includes 27 new Irish-owned pubs opening in three years, dancing, poetry, music, art and film shows. These are often organised and run by a 'new breed' of Irish immigrants, young, educated and entrepreneurial. This generation, not driven abroad by poverty, is credited with reshaping Irish-American culture away from its 'Danny Boy' image.

On 9 March ground was broken in downtown Boston for a new memorial to the victims of the Great Famine, adding to memorials already in place on Deer island and Cambridge Common. The Famine Memorial Park on the corner of School and Washington streets, will be added to the city's Freedom Trail as a further
commemoration of freedom over tyranny, in this case British colonial rule in Ireland. A million dollars will need to be raised for the memorial.

*Irish in Britain*

Two reports produced a contrasting picture of Britain's Irish community, which numbers around 2.5 million, 800,000 of whom are Irish-born. One, by market researchers BMRB argued that Irish men were outperforming the British: one in six earned over £30,000 a year, compared with one in nine for the whole population. In 5 years the number earning over £20,000 increased by over 50%, and one in six Irish people in Britain have a University degree. The British Psychiatry Journal reported that Irish migrants had the poorest mental and physical health of any minority group in the country. They were 50% more likely to take their own lives than the rest of the population. High mortality rates extended to the second generation. Health conditions for migrants to Britain were worse than among those who went to the USA. Manchester city council agreed in 1997 to classify Irish people separately in order to identify their problems in health and discrimination. The BRMB report found that about 20% of the British-born Irish have relatives in Ireland. But it is thought that there are more Irish returning to Ireland, particularly retirees, than migrating from Ireland to Britain.

*Riverdance*

The hugely successful Riverdance show, based on Irish dancing and music, continues to play to packed houses. Three companies are touring with Riverdance world-wide, and the show has been seen by 4 million people: 4 million copies of the show on video have been sold and the album has won a Grammy award. Based on a piece commissioned for the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest and composed by Bill Whelan, it was turned into a full length show which played first in Dublin and then London. Riverdance draws upon traditional Celtic Irish music and folk dancing, but with modern choreography. The second half of the show is based upon the experiences of the Irish in the New World, blending the Irish music and dance with flamenco and tap dancing.

Ambitious Irish scale job heights in Britain, Owen Boycott, The Guardian 27.2.98; Memorial to a famine, Boston Globe 9.3.98; Irish government officials become St. Patrick's ambassadors, Agence France-Presse 17.3.98; Boston's second flowering, Washington Post 17.3.98; After Years of Emigration, Irish do an about-face, John Burgess, Washington Post Foreign Service, 17.3.98.; Appeals for reconciliation in Northern Ireland on St. Patrick's Day, Agence France Presse English Wire, 17.3.98; Riverdance phenomenon flows deep with a new national pride, Michael Scott, Vancouver Sun 8.1.98; Riverdance: Impossible physical dexterity leaves audience reeling, Liz Nicholls, Edmonton Journal 26.3.98

*Vietnamese-Americans react to the possibility of trade with Vietnam*

In California, the Vietnamese-American community anticipate the lifting of trade restrictions between USA and Vietnam. But elections for California's largest Vietnamese-American political organization reveal deep disagreements.

Expectations that the USA will drop its trade sanctions against Vietnam and grant the country full trade status have opened up new possibilities for the US Vietnamese community. Diplomatic relations were fully established in 1995. If Clinton lifts the sanctions, then US companies in Vietnam will be eligible for government-backed financing and Vietnam could eventually qualify for most-favoured-nation trade status. Vietnamese entrepreneurs hope to act as brokers between US companies and Vietnam. The large Vietnamese business community
centred on Orange County, Southern California, expects to benefit. These include engineering and construction companies, financial and professional services, and companies making electronics, medical instruments and machine tools.

The USA exported $616 million worth of goods to Vietnam in 1996, and received £332m of imports. The US exports petroleum, chemicals, medicines, fertiliser and grain. Vietnam has coffee, rice, coal, oil and other raw materials to export if trade barriers are lifted. Large US companies such as Nike Inc., IBM, Motorola, General Electric and Bank of America already operate plants there. Vietnam produces a tenth of Nike's sports footwear. When and if the country's economy grows and pulls through the Asian crisis, then it is expected that construction and engineering will be major markets. Many of the country's roads are in poor shape, and the level of infrastructure provision is poor. Two-thirds of Vietnam's workforce is involved in agriculture, and per capita income is $250 per year.

Southern California is home to some 300,000 Vietnamese, two-thirds of whom live in Orange County. There are divisions within Orange County's Vietnamese community over the desirability of doing business with Vietnam. Westminster's 'Little Saigon' contains over 2,000 Vietnamese businesses alone, and some anticipate growth in services and tourism as a result of increasing trade. Some hope that democracy will follow trade, and the move has been welcomed by many Vietnamese American businesses and political leaders. Others disagree with any move to help the country's government while it remains Communist, including the leader of the Alliance for the Restoration of Vietnam, Ha Van Tran, and the former President of the Vietnamese Community of Southern California, Ban Binh Bui.

Divisions over Vietnam erupted in January's elections for the largest political organisation, the Vietnamese Community of Southern California. This organisation was founded to unite and represent all the region's Vietnamese community in mainstream US politics, and has held regular elections for office from 1989. In 1996 it organised ballots in San Diego as well as Los Angeles and Orange Counties, in which 10,000 voted. Ban Binh Bui, President since 1994, was accused of rigging the ballot to have his allies elected. He had been a fierce opponent of the Communist regime, as well as a successful businessman. He opposed the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1995 and was re-elected in 1996. The organisation blocked a visit by the Vietnamese ambassador to the County. Bui's allies and opponents conducted a campaign full of accusations of fraud and wrongdoing, ending in a public meeting voting to postpone the election altogether. Even so, the election went ahead with a lower turnout amid confusion about the validity of the result. Bui's opponents won the elections and a new President, Duc Trong Do, was inaugurated in February.


Sikh-Canadian Centenary

Canada's Sikh community marked the centenary of its presence in the country and celebrated its progress from excluded minority to political and economic success. Despite signs that radical separatist claims may be waning in the Punjab,
religious and political differences are still capable of causing divisions within Vancouver's Sikh population.

In October 1997 Canada's Sikh community celebrated the centenary of its presence in the country. Of the 340,000 or so Sikhs in Canada, around half live in British Columbia. In 1897 a contingent of Sikh soldiers passed through the province on the way home to India after attending Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in Britain. Many returned in 1904 to work there, until a 1908 federal law halted immigration. The first temple was opened in Vancouver in 1907. In 1914 the ship Komagata Maru arrived in Vancouver harbour with 376 Sikhs on board, but was refused to let them land. Turned back after two months, the ship docked in Calcutta and all aboard were arrested and charged with trying to overthrow the British; many died when troops opened fire. Despite serving in the Canadian forces during World War II, Sikhs in Canada did not obtain voting rights until 1947. Sikh immigration to Canada resumed in the 1960s following the liberalization of immigration laws, and British Columbia became the main centre of the community. The region's lumber and logging industries became a major source of jobs and business ownership. Sikhs were once barred from many public places. Now the province's Attorney General and one of its Supreme Court Justices are Sikh-Canadians.

Religious and political beliefs among Sikh-Canadians are complex. Some support separatism and fundamentalism, while many have moved into the professional classes and a more secular world. Canada became one of the centres of Sikh claims for an independent national homeland, Khalistan. Separatists from British Columbia were suspected of planting the bomb which destroyed an Air India flight from Vancouver in 1985 off Ireland. In 1997, the Guru Nanak temple in Surrey elected moderates to replace fundamentalists, who had insisted that worshippers should sit on the floor for meals rather than use tables and chairs. The episode received widespread attention in the city.

In January, a caretaker at the Guru Nanak temple was murdered. The immediate suspects were fundamentalists, former members of the International Sikh Youth Federation and supporters of Khalistan. RCMP also began an investigation of Surrey's Khalsa Sikh school following allegations of financial wrongdoing and the discovery that a convicted hijacker linked with Sikh separatism had been hiding out in the premises for two years and that the school had links with the International Sikh Youth Federation. A member of the staff has also been charged with sexual abuse of children. Subsequently the fee-paying school had its public funding suspended.

In 1997 the main Sikh political party in the Punjab, the Akali Dal, formed a coalition government in the state with the Hindu communalist Bharatiya Janata Party. In February 1998 the two parties were joined in a national government coalition. Some commentators interpret this as a move away from separatism by the Akali Dal. The leader of the World Sikh Organisation, Didar Singh Bains (a farmer in California), also appears to have moderated his demands, replacing them with more economic imperatives for the region.

Global Diasporas: UCL Press series

The Sikh Diaspora: The politics of homeland

Darshan Tatla

University College London Press, December 1997
Sikhs overcame racism to prosper in Canada, Adrienne Tanner, Vancouver Province 12.10.97; Sikhs mark 100 years in Canada, Kim Bolan, Montreal Gazette 12.10.97; I think we have every reason to be proud’, Kim Bolan, Edmonton Journal 19.10.97; Why Khalistan isn’t in the news any more, Jagdeesh Singh Mann, Vancouver Sun, 3.4.98; Police have few clues in death of Surrey Sikh temple caretaker, Kim Bolan, Vancouver Sun, 17.1.98; Police seize papers in Khalsa school raid, Kim Bolan, Vancouver Sun 28.1.98; Sikh school loses its public funding, Calgary Herald, 31.1.98

Nationalities and diasporas in the former-Soviet Union

Across the former-Soviet Union, various nationalities and diasporas continue to negotiate new relationships.

In March Crimean Tatars in Simferopol, southern Ukraine, clashed with police during a demonstration calling for citizenship and the right to vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections. 70,000 of the 260,000 Tatars in Ukraine do not have citizenship, because many still possess Uzbekistan and other citizenships acquired during their years of exile, brought about by Stalin’s deportations. President Leonid Kuchma responded by signing a decree extending voting rights to those 20,000 Tatars not holding citizenship of another country before the elections despite the opposition of parliament.

So many Volga Germans are leaving for Germany that the remaining community is disappearing. The population of Marx (formerly Katharinestadt) has fallen from 17,000 to 7,000 since 1990. Young people speak only Russian. In 1992 there were some 2 million Volga Germans. But the German consulate in Saratov receives 500-600 visa applications per week. The Russian first vice-premier, Bris Nemtsov, met members of the Russian diaspora in Germany in March to discuss what they can do to improve relations between Russia and Germany.

Regiments formed by Don Cossacks living along Russia’s southwest border with Ukraine were officially restored to the Russian armed forces in October 1997. The move reversed decades of official discrimination and enabled Cossack horsemen to patrol the steppe borders legitimately. Their efforts will strengthen the under-equipped and dispirited Russian army. There are 2–3 million in Russia

Representatives of the more than half-a-million strong North Korean community in Russia appealed to the government to provide humanitarian aid to their homeland to meet the problems of famine.

Representatives of the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan signed an agreement in March on trade and human rights, which included recognition of the latter’s 5 million Russian minority and the Kazakh minority within Russia.

In March representatives of the Chuvash diaspora met in the capital of the Republic of Chuvashia, Cheboksary (east of Moscow on the Volga river). One million Chuvash live outside the republic, about half the nation. They discussed economic and cultural ties.

Down on the Volga, Eleanor fights for her German identity Author Deborah Pasmentier, Agence France Presse English Wire, 29.12.97; Nemtsov meets members of Russian diaspora in Germany, ITAR/TASS News Agency, 3.3.98; Tatars demand Ukrainian citizenship, Agence France Presse English Wire, 10.3.98; Ukraine and Crimean Tatars move toward compromise over voting rights, Steve Gutterman, Associated Press 25.3.98; On Russia’s windswept steppes, the Cossacks ride again, Maura Reynolds, Associated Press 25.10.97; Ethnic North Koreans in CIS ask for humanitarian aid, ITAR/TASS News Agency, 9.4.98; Russia appraises talks with Kazakhstan in Akmola positively, ITAR/TASS News Agency, 26.3.98; Chuvash diaspora to hold a business meeting, ITAR/TASS News Agency 18.3.98
Philippines: Remittances reach record levels

In March the Department of Labor and Employment stated that 4,163,557 Filipinos were deployed overseas as workers between 1992 and 1997, double the figure for the period 1986-1991. Their total remittances were $19.66 billion. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration announced that in 1997 over 270,000 Filipinos went abroad to work. Even so, the government expressed the wish that such workers could find jobs in their own country.

In April, Bangko Sentral og Pilipinas stated that in 1997 remittances from Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs) rose 33.3% to $5.7 billion despite the Asian crisis (1996 $4.3 billion, up 9.7% on 1995). Just over 70% ($4.13 billion) came from the Americas ($4.109 billion from USA), and only $455 million from Asia, $436 million from Europe and $25 million from the Middle East. Although around a third of Filipino OFWs are in the Middle East, they contributed less than one half of one percent of the total remittances received in the first 9 months of 1997, according to the POEA. The fastest rate of growth was from the Americas, 60%, and the greatest decline was from Oceania, 71%, followed by the Middle East, 35%. After the USA, the largest sources of OFW remittances were the UK ($206 million) and Hong Kong ($189 million, just over 40% of the total from Asia). These figures from the bank do not include money sent home by informal channels, although it is thought that migrants are increasingly using commercial banks.

In December, the State Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City announced that overseas remittances through commercial banks rose 12% to $192 million in 1997. Vietnamese banks are encouraging workers to send money home through them in the wake of the lifting of taxes on remittances.

Remittances: Overseas workers’ remittances continue to prop up economy, Silahis M. Ocampo, Businessworld (Philippines), 12.12.97; Remittances from Mideast OFWs plunge 42% to $18m, D'Laarni A. Ortiz, Businessworld 2.3.98; Over 4 million OFWs deployed from 1992 to 1997, says DOLE, Businessworld, 23.3.98; OFW remittances rise 33% to $5.7B, Earl Warren B. Castillo, Businessworld 6.4.98; Overseas remittances grow 12% to US$192 mil. in City, Saigon Times Daily, 24.12.97

Gulf States Workers

In December the United Arab Emirates increased measures to prevent illegal immigration by stepping up coastal patrols and raids. A raid on the industrial city of Musaffah picked up Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers. In 1996 UAE established an amnesty for illegal immigrants, during which 200,000 left the country, returning to South Asia, Afghanistan and the Philippines. Nearly 80 percent of UAE's 2.4 million residents and 90% of the workforce are foreigners. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have also declared amnesties to encourage departure. UAE also introduced financial qualifications for resident foreigners wishing to bring over families intended to prevent low-wage workers settling.

In Bahrain, over 60% of the workforce is foreign. The government initiated a programme to train Bahraini nationals to replace foreign labour, including industrial and information technology training and English language classes. A campaign to increase the employment of Bahrainis in the 1980s failed because it did not provide such training. In 1996 the government required all companies to increase the number of Bahraini employees by 5% annually. Bahrain's oil reserves will soon run out, and the government recognises that the era of comfort will soon be over. The switch to a non-oil-based economy will require new skills and fewer
expatriates. Complaints about unemployment run high among the country's Shiite Muslim community, among whom there are signs of unrest.

Most of the foreign workers in the Gulf states face restrictions on bringing over family members, or voting or owning property. Two-thirds of Kuwait's population are foreigners, and they make up 82% of the labour force.

Seeking domestic peace in a post-oil economy, Mae Ghalwash, Los Angeles Times, 28.11.97; UAE steps up drive against illegal foreign workers, Nadim Kawash, Agence France Presse English Wire 1.12.97; In wealthy Kuwait, foreigners do dirty work, Colin Nickerson, Boston Globe 19.3.98

Non-Resident Indians

Indians in Abu Dhabi requested voting rights from the Indian government in January. Expatriate organisations including the India Social Centre, the Abu Dhabi Malayalam Samajam and the Kerala Social Centre have written to the Prime Minister. They were also trying to start a single umbrella organisation for all Non-Resident Indians in the Gulf states, reckoned at 3.5 million.

Non-Resident Indians complain that India does not acknowledge and help them enough. The Indian Entrepreneurs' Convention argues that the government is not doing enough to attract their investment. Dr Mukul G. Asher (National University of Singapore) estimates that the Indian diaspora numbers 15-20 million, with assets of $300 million, roughly the size of India's GDP. Indian engineers, doctors and scientists are in demand throughout the world. But unlike China, where the overseas Chinese invest around $70 billion in the country, NRIs have not been encouraged to invest back home. Obstacles include bureaucracy and uncertainty about government policy.

Investments by Indian diaspora rooted elsewhere, Business Line 27.1.98; Non-Resident Indians in Abu Dhabi want voting rights, Business Line, 30.1.98

Bangladesh and Pakistan discuss Biharis

In January Bangladesh called on Pakistan to 'take back' 240,000 Biharis who remained in the country following the 1971 war in which Bangladesh and Pakistan separated. The call was made while the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, was visiting Bangladesh for a summit which included the Indian Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral. Bangladeshi human rights groups also demanded an apology for war atrocities from Pakistan.

Up to a quarter of a million Urdu-speaking Biharis remain in Bangladesh, waiting in camps and declining to accept Bangladeshi citizenship. They came originally from the Indian state of Bihar, and moved to what was then East Pakistan after partition in 1947. They sided with Pakistan (then West Pakistan) during the 1971 war.

Chakma refugees from Tripura state in India continued to be repatriated to Bangladesh's Chittagong Hills region. They had fled sporadic fighting in the Hills since 1986. India and Bangladesh signed a joint agreement to resettle the Chakmas and provide economic assistance.

Bangladesh PM urges Pakistan to take back its stranded people, Agence France Presse English Wire, 16.1.98; More Chakma refugees return to Bangladesh, Xinhua News Agency, 16.1.98

Cajuns take on British Crown

A Lousiana lawyer, Warren A. Perrin, is suing the British government for its deportation of Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755 and 1758. His demand is for an apology and a memorial.

The Canadian province of Acadia was founded by French settlers in 1605 and taken by Britain in 1710. The British then
expelled some 8,000 Acadians. Many died at sea on their way to France and the American colonies, but 3,000 found their way to the Louisiana swamplands, where they developed a distinct Cajun culture. The colonists' petition for redress to Britain in 1763 was never fully dealt with. According to British statutes, Acadians are formally regarded as traitors, subject to penalty of death should they attempt to return to Nova Scotia. They were British subjects at the time of exile.

In order to pursue the case in the European Court of Human Rights, Perrin will have to find French citizens, descendants of the Acadians, willing to adopt the suit. Perrin has already met with French President Jacques Chirac at the meeting of Francophone countries in Vietnam. The 1999 summit will be held in New Brunswick, which Perrin regards as an appropriate occasion for restitution.

**Borders and gateways: Borneo, China/Myanmar and Xinjiang**

A brief monitor of three border regions in Asia.

In 1991 a land gateway was opened between the Malaysian state of Sarawak and the Indonesia state of West Kalimantan at Entekong, six hours' drive from its capital, Pontianak on the road to the Malaysian town of Tebedu. In seven years the border town has generated a small, thriving commercial centre. Clove cigarettes, batik cloth, garlic and durian fruit cross from Indonesia to Malaysia. Plywood, fish, pepper and nuts also cross the border in trade. In the first six months of 1996, almost 5,000 mainly Malaysian tourists came to Kalimantan through the gateway.

The border was opened to stop smuggling, although the decision was made in 1967 and not out into effect for many years. Under the arrangements, residents of West Kalimantan can cross without paying departure taxes. Non-border residents from both sides do not enjoy the same privileges. Even so, foreign tourists have crossed between the two countries via Entekong, which is part of the Dayak people's region.

The Chinese town of Ruili on the border with Myanmar has become a major centre of business within the space of ten years. Both governments agreed to open up the frontier to develop the region away from smuggling and opium-production in the 1980s. Travel restrictions were lifted by the Chinese in 1991 and cross-border traffic was made legal in 1992, and trade tripled within three years to $346 million. Now, 60 percent of Ruili's population consist of Thais, Indians, Pakistanis and expatriate Chinese. Textiles, construction material and manufactured goods come from China. Timber, jade and agricultural goods cross from Burma.

The border between the Chinese far western province of Xinjiang and the Central Asian republics, although reopened in the 1980s, is suffering as a result of ethnic unrest in the region. The province's large Muslim Uighur population was opened up to radical Islamic ideas as well as commercial trade. Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran have invested in the area and aided its religious revival. Foreign investors in the Tarim Basin's oil industry appear to be deterred by the rioting and bombing in the area's cities. Border trade, which flourished for a few years, now seems to have abated.

Uighur separatist organisations operate in Kazakhstan (the United National Revolutionary Front of East Turkestan, UNAFRET) and Kyrgyzstan. In February, Uighurs were arrested in Bishkek for...
fomenting anti-Chinese sentiment and Islamic-inspired revolution, while other leading figures were arrested in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. More Uighur refugees are being held in the Russian city of Chita. The arrests in Bishkek coincided with a visit by Kyrgyzstan’s President Akayev to Beijing. On the Chinese side of the border, there was also a crackdown on Uighurs and Wahhabis in February.

Restive Borderland, Charles Hutzler, Associated Press, 24.11.97; Repression of Uighurs in China’s Xinjiang reported by emigre paper, BBC monitoring service 20.4.98; Borderline boom between China, Burma, Michael Hoffman, Mainichi Daily News, 22.1.98; Indonesia’s lone land gateway to Malaysia cements ties, R. Masri Sareb Putra, The Jakarta Post, 25.2.98
Global Crime: International and Regional Co-operation Among Governments and Gangs Alike

The G8 summit in Britain and the UN Drugs Conference in New York included significant new commitments to combat transnational crime. Regional co-operation among both governments and national police forces were in evidence in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America. The US Federal Bureau of Investigation is active in policing an emerging transnational border zone for global criminal and terrorist networks in Paraguay.

At the G8 meeting held in Birmingham, England, in May, world leaders endorsed a series of measures to combat organised international and transnational crime. This was the first G8 summit to address the issue of drug smuggling, money laundering, arms trafficking and computer fraud. The conference was told that international crime was spreading because of differences in national laws and police systems, the abolition of exchange controls and the growing ease of movement of people, goods and money.

The head of Britain’s National Crime Squad briefed the politicians. Roy Penrose stated that crime cost developed countries the equivalent of 2% of their GNP, and some developing countries up to 14%. He announced that $500 billion a year was laundered through the world’s financial system. G8 agreed to create a global network of measures against money laundering, easier measures for extradition and better access to cross-border access, including testimony by satellite link. A 10-point plan on fighting high-tech crime was endorsed.

President Yeltsin offered to host a conference on organised international crime in 1999. The United Nations is planning a convention on high-tech crime. In December 1997 the G8 had agreed a 10-point plan to combat cyber-crime, described as “transnational high-tech crime”.

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$500 billion a year is laundered through the world’s financial system.

In June, the United Nations drug summit adopted a statement on drugs crime and a draft action plan. The declaration called on member states and international financial institutions such as the World Bank, to co-operate on fighting the international narcotics trade. The statement explicitly linked the trade to other forms of organised crime, including transnational terrorism. A target of the year 2003 was set for reform of national legislation on drugs trafficking and money laundering and 2008 for the eliminating the production of synthetic drugs. The target for the elimination of coca, cannabis and opium plants was also set at 2008. This was to be achieved by a crop substitution programme alongside burn-and-punish tactics. The delegates from 150 countries also agreed to improve international co-ordination of judicial systems and greater sharing of intelligence. They also endorsed measures on money laundering and new standards for the openness of national financial systems.

The conference, the first of its kind held by the United Nations, was the idea of Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo.

The conference was told that the drug business is worth $400 billion a year; that there are 218 million users of illegal drugs...
world-wide. Most of these are in the developed world, but an increasing number of addicts are being found in traditional exporting countries such as Pakistan. 140 million of the 210 million are marijuana users. Critics of the conference point out that the millions already spent on trying to stop the cultivation of narcotics plants has failed to reduce the world-wide production of cocaine, heroin and opium.

**Regional Agreements against Crime**

In addition to major international announcements on global crime, there were also a number of important regional agreements in the first seven months of 1998.

In February, the Summit of Americas in Chile agreed to set up a regional law enforcement alliance along the lines of Europe’s Europol.

In April, the Arab League countries signed a declaration against terrorism at their meeting in Cairo. The 22 governments committed themselves to refusing support to groups or individuals mounting terrorist attacks against other Arab countries. They also made provisions for sharing information and easing extradition of suspects. The treaty excluded organisations struggling for liberation and self-determination, including Hamas and Hezbollah. It was aimed at groups such as Algeria’s Armed Islamic Group and Egypt’s Gamaat al-Islamiya, held responsible for the massacre of 58 tourists in Luxor in November 1997.

In May, police forces in five European countries co-ordinated simultaneous seizures of suspected Islamic ‘terrorists’. It was claimed that the network was planning to disrupt the World Cup football finals in France. A total of 76 people were arrested in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Switzerland. The authorities claim that they include senior members of the Armed Islamic Group, a splinter group from the Algerian FIS. Nationals from Tunisia and France are also on the list of suspects. Within France, raids were made in Paris, Lyon, Marseilles and Corsica; in Germany, Bonn and Cologne; in Italy, Milan; in Belgium Brussels and Charleroi.

The Second Asia-Pacific Inter-governmental Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth held a panel discussion on the globalisation of child sex abuse in June. The delegates also considered the role of computer technology in international child sex exploitation, and the growth of international child smuggling and mail-order purchase.

In July, Poland and Ukraine signed an agreement to crack down on the smuggling of prostitutes or sex slaves between the two countries. The two police forces would collaborate. A meeting between the two countries was attended by members of La Strada, a foundation created to fight the sex trade in the European Union. It is estimated that as many as 100,000 Ukrainian women have been transported to Poland and the West, many lured by false promises of a better life. Bulgarian prostitutes are reported to remain in Poland (estimated at 3,500), while those from Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus are often moved on to Western Europe after arriving from Poland.

After the G8 conference, Japan and China announced that they would co-operate more on transnational crime. Initial contacts between the countries’ two police forces began in 1997. The areas discussed between the Japanese Home Minister and his Chinese counterpart included drugs, arms and money-laundering.

One area of successful co-operation is in crime syndicate smuggling of immigrants between China and Japan via Hong Kong. A joint police operation resulted in many
arrests in May and June. Another area of concern is drug-trafficking. Since the early 1990s China has become a major centre of the production of synthetic drugs, often smuggled by gangs via Hong Kong and Taiwan. The Chinese authorities identify criminal organisations operating from outside China as the source of the problem.

In Japan, the police are alarmed by the increase in the number of foreigners arrested for criminal offences. Numbers rose by 16.8% to over 30,000 between 1996 and 1997. Chinese accounted for 43% of the arrests.

In May, the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced that it would join police forces from Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay in a crackdown on international criminals operating in the border region between the three South American countries. The FBI recognise the need for regional co-operation on crime-fighting to combat transnational criminal organisations. FBI officers in Argentina are co-operating with local authorities on the investigation into bombings against Jewish targets in 1992 and 1994. Among the suspects are Argentine police officers and terrorists from the Middle East, which the FBI claims are sheltering in Argentina’s immigrant communities.

Ciudad del Este: global crime haven

The FBI and national police forces are focusing their efforts on the Ciudad del Este region of Paraguay. Details of the alleged haven for global criminal networks were provided by Sebastian Rotella in two articles published by the Los Angeles Times. Lying inside Paraguay but close to Brazil and Argentina, the area is identified as a centre for drugs, arms, stolen cars, money laundering and pirated video and cassette tapes. It is said that criminals from Asia, the Middle East and South America concentrate in the border region. There are reports of individuals connected to the Cantonese mafia, Japanese yakuza, and Colombian drug cartels being located there. There are also suspicions that international terrorist organisations, including the Hezbollah, are based in Ciudad del Este.

Cocaine is smuggled from Bolivia and Colombia into Argentina and Brazil via Paraguay. Paraguayan-grown marijuana takes the same route. Argentina supplies the chemicals for Paraguayan cocaine refining. Guns from the USA are smuggled into Brazil, while cars stolen in Brazil and Argentina taken to Paraguay, and then to Bolivia and beyond.
and the ease of international travel and communication have subsequently transformed the region into a transnational criminal node. The criminals exploit the poor co-ordination between the police forces and border authorities of the three countries. The FBI aims to provide the forces with improved computer and surveillance equipment, and training for specialised squads. Paraguayan police personnel have also visited Taiwan to learn how to deal with Asian gangs.

In 1997 the USA de-certified Paraguay’s anti-drugs policy on the grounds of its extensive corruption. Disney Co. has withdrawn its products from the country in protest at the level of cassette, CD and video piracy, estimated at $150 million. The Brazilian authorities calculate that there are over 100 secret airstrips in the Paraguay border region, used for smuggling goods worth over $1.5 billion a year. But among the smugglers ferrying cartons of cigarettes into Brazil are many small operators alongside organised syndicates.

The highway from Paraguay’s capital Asunción to Curitiba in Brazil crosses the river Paraná, which forms the international boundary. Each day more than 40,000 people cross the bridge across the river, most of them unchecked by the authorities. The trade in goods of all sorts has attracted merchants from abroad, including Taiwanese and Lebanese. Ciudad del Este has a Taiwanese community of 8,000. Foz do Iguaçu, in Brazil, has a substantial Arab community. Entrepreneurs have opened factories making toys and cheap manufactures, taking advantage of the tariff and tax differences between Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.

Criminals meet in France

Law-enforcement agencies are not the only organisations capable of international co-operation. The Times (of London) reported on a meeting of international criminals held in Beaune, France, in March. At a hotel in Burgundiy, representatives of organised crime from Russia, China, Japan, Italy and Colombia met to discuss how to manage crime in Europe. According to French intelligence, a similar convention was held in Beaune in 1994 as well as two meetings on yachts in the Mediterranean.

The 1998 meeting was the first to be attended by delegates from the Russian mafia. It is claimed that there are over 8,000 organised crime groups in Russia, 200 with ties abroad. Their interests include extortion, prostitution and fraud in Germany, Belgium, Italy and Holland. A member of New York’s Gambino clan represented the Italian mafia. Also present were members of the Sun Yee On triad from Hong Kong, active in Britain, Belgium, France and Holland, and the Japanese Yakuza.

The crime bosses discussed the geographical organisation of crime, dividing cities and rural areas between them. The police also think that the conference made arrangements for avoiding the duplication of drug smuggling routes.

Leaders prepare to announce an agreement to fight computer crime, BBC 11.12.97; Crime Kings meet to carve up Europe, Andrew Alderson and Carey Scott, Times of London 29.3.98; Arab League states sign treaty to combat terrorism, John Daniszewski, Los Angeles Times 23.4.98; New global war on drugs tackles a losing battle 27 world leaders set to sign U.N. pledge next month, Stephen Handelman, Toronto Star 4.5.98; FBI to join crackdown on Latin America crime, Sebastian Rotella, Los Angeles Times 13.5.98; Police chief urges leaders to declare joint war on global crime: G8 summit, Michael Binyon, The Times of London 18.5.98; G8 leaders stand together against international crime, Financial Post 19.5.98; European police hold 76 suspects in World Cup anti-terrorism swoop, John Lichfield, Independent 27.5.98; Child sex abuse now a global issue, Anjira Assavanonda, Bangkok Post 2.6.98; Main points of declarations at UN drugs summit, Agence France Presse English Wire 11.6.98; Tremble, Medellin,
tremble, The Economist 13.6.98; Crime-fighting brings Japan and China closer together, Eiji Hotopp Furukawa, Nikkei Weekly 15.6.98; Former Soviet states unite to fight sex slave industry, Piotr Bazylko, Reuters 16.7.98; Jungle hub for world’s outlaws, Sebastian Rotella, Los Angeles Times 24.8.98

Kosovo: Overseas Albanians Send Recruits, Arms and Money

As fighting in the Serb province of Kosovo intensified through April, May and June, members of the Albanian diaspora provided support. But in both Kosovo itself and in the overseas community, Albanians and Kosovan-Albanians are divided between moderate and militant parties.

Kosovo is a province of Serbia and therefore a part of Yugoslavia. But among the province’s ethnic Albanian majority, some 90% of the population, there are growing demands for independence and an end to Serb domination. In March Serbian police began operations against Kosovan ‘terrorists’. The leader of the armed resistance, Adem Jashari, was reportedly among those killed by the police. By April, both Kosovan Serbs and Albanians were fleeing the violence. In May the Yugoslav army moved in to restore control over parts of the country in the hands of the Kosovo Liberation Army. The troops concentrated on clearing the region along the Albanian border in order to break the KLA’s supply lines from Albania. By June, around 65,000 refugees were thought to have fled the fighting and the Yugoslav army was successful in driving the KLA away from the border, although it still held territory close to the provincial capital, Pristina.

In their struggle with Serbia, Kosovo’s Albanian community has drawn upon the support and resources of the Albanian diaspora. There are reckoned to be 600,000 Albanians in the diaspora, mostly in Germany and Switzerland, but including 65,000 in the USA (40,000 in New York alone), 30,000 in Sweden, 5,000 in Toronto and 8,000 in London. But this community is divided between moderate and militant factions, who are divided on whether peaceful negotiation or armed resistance is the way forward.

Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LKD) has strong support from the US Albanian community, which is rooted in small business classes. Rugova was born in Kosovo and studied in Paris before taking up a position in Pristina University and involving himself in Kosovan nationalist politics. After the fall of Communism he founded the Democratic League of Kosovo to resist Serbian integration. But from the outset he refused to consider violent means of opposition. From 1992, the LDK began forming a shadow government, running schools and hospitals. He was elected President in the province’s unofficial elections.

Younger and more militant Kosovans are becoming more prominent across the diaspora community. They look towards Bujar Bukoshi, the German-based Kosovan leader and the province’s unofficial Prime Minister. In New York
for example, KLA supporters gatecrashed LDK meetings and called for fundraising for arms. In London, there are signs of support for both factions.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK) was founded in 1992, following the refusal of Serbia to permit the province to secede. Until 1995 it was scarcely noticed, and its active members were located outside Kosovo in refugee communities across the world. In 1996 and 1997 the KLA claimed responsibility for a series of attacks on Serbs. It demands total independence for Kosovo. From a core of around 500 fighters, the KLA claimed to have 50,000 armed soldiers by June although outside observers believe that 10,000 is a more realistic figure.

Rugova was invited to participate in peace talks with Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, mediated by the USA. The KLA were not invited and criticised Rugova for attending the May talks without seeking support from the full spectrum of Kosovan opposition.

KLA fund-raising has drawn the attention of authorities in several countries. The Swedish government ordered police to investigate rumours that the KLA was raising money for weapons through a voluntary ‘tax’ on earnings, supposedly designed to fund schools and hospitals. In April the US State Department announced that there had been an increase in arms smuggling to Kosovo. The weapons are channelled through Albania and Macedonia. The KLA operates camps in and around Tropoje in northern Albania, where recruits from Europe and North America receive basic training. They obtain support from Sali Berisha, ex-President of Albania.

There are other Kosovan parties active in the province and in the diaspora. The Albanian Democratic Movement led by Rexhep Qosja, split from the LDK. Adam Demaci heads the Parliamentary Party of Kosovo, which supports the idea of Balkania, a confederation of Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

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Indonesia’s Crisis Prompts Departure of Ethnic Chinese and Expatriates

The economic and political crisis in Indonesia intensified in May, leading up to the resignation of President Suharto. In response to widespread rioting and street demonstrations, 150,000 people left the country, including ethnic Chinese and expatriate workers.

In the week before the resignation of President Suharto on May 21, the Indonesian Ministry of Justice estimated that over 150,000 people fled the country. These figures included 70,000 Indonesians and over 80,000 foreigners.

Rioting directed against ethnic Chinese continued in April and May. In the wake of big increases in food prices announced by the government in mid-May, Chinese shops and businesses were targeted by a new round of violence. In three days of rioting, 260 people died in Jakarta alone. About 3,000 buildings were destroyed in Jakarta during May’s riots, including the
famous City Hotel. Riots were also reported in Medan, Sumatra, the country’s fourth-largest city and surrounding towns. Throughout the country, Chinese Indonesians formed self-defence patrols with police approval. Others fled the country altogether. Some, unable to afford to leave, headed for the relative calm of the Hindu-dominated island of Bali. It is estimated that ethnic Chinese make up 3-4 percent of the population but control 70% of the wealth.

The country’s wealthiest Chinese tycoon, Liem Sioe Liong, head of the country’s largest company, the Salim Group, was said to have fled to Singapore or the USA. Other businessmen with close connections to the Suharto family were reported to be considering pulling out after the President’s forced resignation. The loss of so much investment capital will handicap Indonesia’s economic recovery.

Chinese entrepreneurs from across the region, particularly from Taiwan and Hong Kong, were said to be pulling out of Indonesia. Concerns about riots, political instability and the decline of the rupiah were deterring investors. The head of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Association was reported as claiming businesses would increasingly switch from Indonesia to China. Taiwan has invested $13 billion in Indonesia, and Hong Kong capital has $19 billion invested there. Hong Kong accounts for a tenth of the foreign direct investment in Indonesia. Hong Kong investors such as Li Ka-shing, the Shangri-La group and the Lippo Group have interests in textiles, lumber, cotton, telecommunications and other sectors.

Indonesia is also the second largest destination of Japanese foreign direct investment in Asia after China, totalling $30 billion in 1996. Japanese banks have $23 billion of loans outstanding in the country.

Efforts to woo Chinese investors and encourage them to return will be difficult, given the long history of distrust and violence between the two communities. The Chinese were persecuted for being associated with the Dutch colonial powers and then with Communism. Public jobs were forbidden to Chinese, who found niches in business. The use of Chinese characters in street signs was banned, while many ethnic Chinese acquired Indonesian names.

Following the resignation of President Suharto in late May and the new climate of political freedom, Indonesian Chinese announced the formation of a political party to defend their rights – the Chinese Indonesian Reform Party.

In June, Jakarta announced that it would meet one of the main demands of ethnic Chinese leaders, and scrap some of the identification documents required by foreigners and Chinese-Indonesians (known as the K1 card). The city operates a complex and bureaucratic system of identification documents for foreigners, non-Jakartans and minors. The move was described by the city’s authorities as a means of redressing discrimination against ethnic Chinese.

The intensification of unrest in May, leading up to the removal of President Suharto caused a fresh wave of departures by expatriates and foreign-owned businesses. The flight was led by Japanese, Taiwanese and Australian companies. They included Sony, Sanyo, Toshiba, Sharp, Pacific Dunlop and banking groups. Toyota, Nissan and General Motors shut their car factories. The Australian mining corporation, the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. announced that it was closing down four steel plants. Malaysia’s largest bank, Maybank, closed its Jakarta offices. IMF staff left Jakarta in May.
The USA made arrangements to airlift 11,000 expatriates out of the country, said to be one of the largest such evacuations ever attempted by the US. Large firms such as ARCO, General Motors and Mobil Oil made their own arrangements to remove personnel to safety. Among the expatriates were 6,500 Britons, advised to leave by the consulate. Australia urged its 20,000 nationals in the country to leave in May. The days immediately before the resignation of Suharto saw the greatest exodus.

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Turkey Campaigns Against Kurdish Diaspora TV

The Kurdish language satellite television channel, Med TV, broadcasts from London and Brussels throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The Turkish government has been active in employing diplomacy to block the station’s broadcasts in many European countries.

Med TV is a Kurdish satellite television channel based in London, which broadcasts around Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. It can be picked up illegally in Turkey, although soldiers in the Kurdish region of the country routinely destroy satellite dishes (Kurdish language is banned on Turkish TV). Its broadcast headquarters is in a small office on Regent’s Street in the heart of London, but the main production and management centre is in the Brussels suburb of Denderleeuw.

Started in 1995, Med TV takes it name from ancestors of the Kurds. It broadcasts for 18 hours a day, featuring news, children’s cartoons, music and cultural programmes. Programmes are produced in all three Kurdish dialects, as well as English and Turkish. Many of the staff are young Turkish Kurdish exiles. News comes either from telephone calls from contacts within Turkey, or from clandestine television crews.

Med TV enables the leader of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, to broadcast his views from exile in Syria. The station’s managers deny that they have any specific affiliation with the PKK, maintaining that it is a service for all Kurds. The significance of satellite television to the Kurdish struggle may be increasing as the Turkish army succeeds in seizing control from the country’s southeastern region from PKK forces.

The Turkish government condemns the station as the mouthpiece of the PKK and has sought to close the station down. It asked the Independent Television Commission in Britain to withdraw Med TV’s license, but failed. The British government is not supportive of station, but has been unable to discover evidence of criminal activity. Police raided their offices in London and Brussels in September 1996, on suspicion of involvement with the PKK’s arms running and money laundering activities. No such evidence was found. London has a Kurdish community of around 25,000, who is thought to be raising half a million pounds a year to support the cause.
Elsewhere, the Turkish government’s campaign has been more successful. Poland, France and Portugal have all agreed to withdraw satellite space. The authorities of the Dutch town of Sittard refused to lease warehouse space to Med TV in March. Romania denied Kurdish requests to open Med TV and a cultural centre in the country, while also stepping up its campaign against the PKK (there are estimated to be about 8,000 Kurds in Romania). Slovakia cancelled Med TV’s contract to broadcast to coincide with the visit of a Turkish Foreign Ministry official in June. On a visit to Norway in June, the speaker of the Turkish parliament, Hikmet Cetin, pressed Norway not to allow Med TV to broadcast there. Mindful of their common membership in NATO, Norway’s authorities promised to abide by the request. It is also suspected that Turkish authorities succeeded in jamming the station’s signal in summer 1997.

Turkey announced in May that it would counter Med TV by moving the headquarters of Turkish Radio Television GAP TV to Diyarbakir, which is in the south-eastern region (which Kurdish nationalists recognise as part of Kurdistan). From there GAP TV would be able to broadcast across Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Armenia. GAP TV was founded specifically for the country’s Southeast, and had been intended as a forum for the region’s culture and life. But it had been run from Ankara. The station’s managers stated that they had no immediate plans to broadcast in Kurdish language, although there would continue to be discussion on this possibility.

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Armenia: French Assembly ‘Recognises’ Genocide

France’s National Assembly voted to recognise that the Ottoman Empire was guilty of genocide against Armenians, despite objections from Turkey and Azerbaijan. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, appeals were made to the respective diaspora communities for economic assistance and support in resolving the two countries’ territorial dispute.

In May the French National Assembly passed a bill recognising the genocide of Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923. The text of the bill states that “France publicly recognises the 1915 Armenian genocide.” The measure’s supporters agree that as many 1.5 million Armenians died, disputing Turkey’s official claim that only 300,000 perished during civil war and deportations. Only 30 deputies were present for the vote.

If the French Senate supports the bill, France would join Greece, Russia and Canada as the only states officially
recognising the genocide. In 1987 the European Parliament voted along similar lines, but this vote is not binding on EU member states.

The decision was condemned by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem, who warned that it could harm relations between the two countries. Turkey is a major potential market for the French defence industry, and France has actively supported Turkey’s application to membership of the European Union. The French government quickly distanced itself from the resolution, stressing that it was an initiative of some Assembly deputies rather than the Jospin administration.

The vote was also condemned in Azerbaijan, where government officials claimed that it would encourage Armenian nationalism in the disputed enclave of Nagorno Karabakh. France is one of three co-chairs of an ad hoc group of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe charged with resolving the row between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

France’s Armenian community of 300,000 includes many descendants of the survivors of the 1915 massacres. Armenia’s ambassador to France welcomed the decision. Youri Djorkaeff, a member of France’s World Cup football side, also publicly supported it. Djorkaeff’s mother is Armenian, and the player claimed that the Assembly’s vote inspired him to score in the 2-2 draw with Morocco. A protest rally by Turks against the decision held in Paris in June was attacked by a mob of 60-80 people. A Turkish man was stabbed to death during the fighting.

**President Kocharian courts diaspora**

Inside Armenia, the country’s newly elected President, Robert Kocharian, actively courted the Armenian diaspora to help develop the economy and rebuild Nagorno Karabakh. In May the Prime Minister of Lebanon visited Armenia. Several Lebanese Armenian parliamentarians, drawn from the country’s 100,000 Armenian community accompanied Rafik al-Hariri. He looked forward to improved relations between the two countries. Carlos Menem, President of Argentina, toured Armenia in June. He also stressed the importance of Argentina’s 100,000-strong Armenian community to political and economic relations with Armenia. President Kocharian appealed to the Armenian diaspora to invest in the country, by buying homes and businesses.

Kocharian received strong backing from the 6 million members of the Armenian diaspora during the country’s presidential elections in March. He anticipates that this support will be translated into investment and financial aid, particularly from the US Armenian community, which numbers some 1.2 million. Kocharian has promised overseas Armenians dual citizenship. In 1997 remittances between the two countries totalled over $350 million and, according to the Armenian Assembly of America, many people regularly commute between the US and Armenia. One member of Kocharian’s new cabinet renounced his US citizenship in order to join the government. The overseas funding has been important in rebuilding Nagorno Karabakh and constructing a highway from the enclave to Armenia.

Azerbaijan’s President Heydar Aliyev also made an appeal to the Azeri diaspora to coincide with the second world congress of Azerbaijanis held in Washington DC in May. He asked for their help in the dispute with Armenia and declared that Azerbaijan would remain the ‘historic motherland’ of all Azeris.

Economic reformers, Karabakh hardliners enter new Armenian cabinet, Agence France Presse English Wire 20.4.98; France braves Turkish ire to recognise Armenian genocide, Henri Mamarbachi, Agence France Presse English Wire 29.5.98;
Pakistan Appeals to Overseas Communities and Workers to Offset Sanctions

In the wake of economic sanctions imposed on Pakistan in response to its nuclear weapons testing blasts, the country’s government turned to overseas Pakistani communities and migrant workers for financial support. They hope that an increase in remittances will offset the losses in foreign exchange caused by the sanctions.

A target figure of one billion dollars additional income by September was set. In the ten months before May’s nuclear tests, Pakistan received 1.2 billion US dollars of remittances. It had 1.1 billion dollars of forex reserves in June, and froze foreign currency accounts of around $10 billion to prevent the money leaving the country.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif undertook tours of Pakistani communities overseas to garner political and economic support. He visited Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Britain. The tour to the USA and Canada was cancelled. Sharif had been due to meet Pakistani community leaders in Toronto and New York. The

Minister for Overseas Pakistanis, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, accompanied him. In Britain, he toured Manchester and London, where he received enthusiastic support. He urged families to send at least £1,000 ($1,600) a month via regular banking channels rather than informal routes. Potential supporters were offered incentives such as the sale of 25,000 plots of residential land. On an earlier visit to Italy and Belgium in April, the Prime Minister had promised overseas Pakistanis with citizenship in other countries that he would arrange for new laws making it easier for them to return to Pakistan.

Reports from Saudi Arabia in June suggested that overseas Pakistanis there were responding to the call for support. The Pakistan embassy in Riyadh announced that there were substantial donations to two National Self-Reliance Funds.

PM’s Belgian trip, The Nation 27.4.98; Sharif plans western tour to muster support from overseas Pakistanis, Agence France Presse English Wire 8.6.98; Pakistani PM seeks support in Manchester, Keith Nuthall, Independent 14.6.98; Pakistani PM cancels trip to Canada, US, Allan Thompson, Toronto Star 17.6.98; Pakistan pins forex hopes on millions of nationals living abroad, A. K. Shaiikh, Agence France Presse English Wire 18.6.98; Remittances to Indian subcontinent increase substantially, Mohan Vadayar and Shahid Ali Khan, Saudi Gazette 15.6.98.

Latinos in Los Angeles: Transnational Commerce, But Local Politics

A delegation from the Salvadoran government visited Los Angeles in June to encourage greater investment from Salvadoran-Americans in their home country. Many Mexican states, including Guanajuato, operate such programme. But in the aftermath of Proposition 187, Salvadorans and Guatemalans in Los
Angeles are also becoming more active in local politics.

US-based Salvadorans send home around $1.2 billion worth of remittances every year, equivalent to a tenth of El Salvador’s GNP. During the country’s years of civil unrest, the money was a vital lifeline for many families. But, now that peace has been established, the Salvadoran government is concerned that remittances are fuelling inflation and stoking a consumer boom. The government sent a delegation of officials and entrepreneurs to Los Angeles in June for two days to discuss the alternative of productive investment in businesses. The First Business and Trade Conference El Salvador-Los Angeles was designed to increase trade between the Central American country and southern California’s 700,000-strong Salvadoran community. On offer was the chance to invest in privatised utilities in El Salvador.

The conference participants included representatives from the Los Angeles mayor’s office, the Los Angeles Salvadoran Chamber of Commerce, the Salvadoran ambassador to the US and the consul general from Los Angeles. Salvadoran businessmen from New York and Washington DC also attended.

The conference stemmed from the work of the National Competitiveness Programme, which has identified sectors for expansion. The government wants to encourage the expatriates to switch from money remittances to investment in small businesses. There are already close transnational business connections between El Salvador and Los Angeles, including courier services, real estate companies. Bravo Enterprises Inc., based in the city of Commerce in Los Angeles County, imports a powdered rice drink called ‘horchata’ from El Salvador and sells it in California. Food and drink products represent a large potential market in trade between the two places. On South Vermont Avenue, the Salvadoran supermarket chain La Tapachulteca has opened its first US branch and is looking for other locations in the region.

Guanajuato’s links with the North

The Salvadoran project is similar to schemes already operated by many Mexican states. Ricardo Sandoval, writing in the San Jose Mercury News, describes the investments made by US-based Mexicans in their home region of Guanajuato. Their money is going into garment shops, employing 200 people to make T-shirts and clothes for American stores. The investment scheme is organised by the state governor, Vicente Fox, whose administration also provides matching loans and grants. Fox has his eye on the country’s presidency, and hopes that this programme will demonstrate how rural economies can be developed successfully.

There are thought to be 250,000 migrants from Guanajuato in Texas alone, and others in California and Illinois. They, and migrants from other states, send back $6 billion worth of remittances each year, Mexico’s fourth-largest source of foreign earnings. For migrants, the advantages include not having monthly payments stolen, lost or eaten up by excessive service charges. The individual investments can be as small as $1,000, often organised among people from the same village or town. Economists calculate that each dollar invested in this way is more than doubled in value by being directed towards manufacturing rather than personal consumption.

In Los Angeles County, voter registration among Latinos has increased by 30% since 1984
At the same time that transnational commercial ties are being forged between Central American states and US-based communities, California’s Latinos show signs of deeper involvement in local and regional politics. The campaign against California Proposition 187, which aimed to withdraw many public services from undocumented immigrants, encouraged the new wave of activism. Other factors are said to include higher rates of naturalisation and local support for a school repair bond initiative on the 1997 ballot. In Los Angeles County, voter registration among Latinos has increased by 30% since 1994, which is six times the average for the County’s population.

In February, Salvadorans in Los Angeles backed a Salvadoran-American candidate for state Senate, Liz Figueroa (Fremont, Democrat). Organisations such as the newly-founded Guatemalan Unity Information Agency are aiming at achieving political representation inside the US. GUIA grew out of the ‘fraternidades’, expatriate clubs linked to hometowns or home regions in Guatemala. The Salvadoran Leadership and Education Fund was likewise founded in relation to events abroad, but is now turning to the US scene.

A new tide of Latino activism, Hector Tobar, Los Angeles Times 13.4.98; Ties that bind: El Salvador comes to town, looking for opportunity, Lee Romney, Los Angeles Times 17.6.98; Salvadorans come to L.A. to seek their countrymen’s aid, Stephen Gregory, Los Angeles Times 26.6.98; Workers in U.S. send money home to help families, towns start garment businesses, Ricardo Sandoval, San Jose Mercury News 29.6.98.

**Israel’s 50th Anniversary Prompts Surveys of the Jewish Diaspora**

Reviews of the country’s history and future as well as the position of the Jewish diaspora marked the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the state of Israel. The *Los Angeles Times* published a comprehensive survey and explored the new diversity within the region’s Jewish community. Emigration to Israel shows signs of falling.

The *Los Angeles Times* and Yedioth Ahronoth jointly commissioned an extensive survey of opinion among American and Israeli Jews. The results of the poll were published in the Los Angeles Times on April 19 and 26 as part of a series entitled ‘Debating Identity: Jews in America.’

The pollsters concluded that American and Israeli Jews were more in agreement over basic issues than in dispute. Almost nine out of every ten American Jews stated that what happened in Israel was important to them personally, and 41% had visited Israel at least once. Over a third of Israelis had journeyed to the USA, and almost three-quarters had friends or relatives in the country. In both countries, the majority thought that US and Israeli Jews will draw closer together over time, despite worsening relations between the two states in recent years. Nearly half of US Jews have made a financial contribution to Israel in some form or another.

The poll also explored opinions on the Oslo peace accord and the possibility of a Palestinian state. Just under half of both groups had an unfavourable opinion of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s efforts for peace. It also analysed different aspects of Jewish identity, including the question of who has the right to decide who is Jewish, attitudes to marriage, assimilation and children. This matter proved divisive. Only 9% of the 5.8-5.9 million American Jews are Orthodox. The Conservative and Reform majority were deeply offended by proposals from Israeli Orthodox rabbis that only they should be allowed to perform marriage ceremonies and determine who...
should be considered Jewish. Even so, among American Jews there remains a strong and significant attachment to Judaism, although the majority is observing fewer traditions and rituals than they did in the past. Six out of ten married American Jews are married to other Jews. US Jews are evenly split over whether they should assimilate or remain distinct. Younger Jews were more inclined to favour remaining distinct.

Migration to Israel (‘Aliya’) is no longer regarded as essential among US Jews. Data from Israel suggest that fewer Jews are making use of the law of return: 65,962 in 1997, compared with 70,919 in 1996 and 150-200,000 per year during the height of the Russian Jewish emigration in the early 1990s. It is thought that improvements in the quality of life in major Russian cities have encouraged more Jews to remain in the country.

Since its formation in 1929, the Jewish Agency has helped 2.5 million Jews settle in Israel. But with the decline in immigration and a fall off in contributions from the diaspora, the Agency is seen to be under threat.

**Southland’s diverse Jewish community**

As part of the same series, the Los Angeles Times published an account of the region’s Jewish population. Los Angeles’s Jewish community is second only to New York’s in the USA. It has become diverse in terms of national origins, with Jews from Israel, Russia, Central Asia, South Africa and Iran. These national communities are to some extent separate within Los Angeles. Parts of the city, including Pico-Robertson, Fairfax and West Hollywood (‘Little Odessa’) remain distinct Jewish neighbourhoods, in addition to several suburban centres. Although only 10% of US Jews are foreign-born, in Southern California the proportion is one in five. They are thought to include 50,000 Israeli Jews, and a large number of Iranian Jews who fled after the fall of the Shah in 1979. South African Jews concentrate in San Diego and Irvine, Orange County.

U.S. and Israeli Jews have many common views, some striking differences, Susan Pinkus, Los Angeles Times 19.4.98; Immigrants bring new diversity to L.A.’s Jewish communities, Patrick J. McDonnell, Los Angeles Times 22.4.98; American Jews express diverse opinions on Jewish life in the U.S., Sharon Pinkerton, Los Angeles Times 23.4.98; American Jews’ distant ‘homeland’: a shifting dream, a modern nation, Richard Scheinin, San Jose Mercury News 26.4.98; After 50 years flow of immigrants to Israel enters ”terminal decline”, Charly Wegman, Agence France Presse English Wire 24.4.98; Making connections with the homeland, Liz Warwick, Montreal Gazette 30.4.98

**Regional Co-operation and Cross-Border Trade in East and Southern Africa**

The East African Co-operation countries, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, announced that there would be delays in the implementation of a single East African Standard Travel Document. The delays were caused by problems of updating computer records in Uganda and Tanzania, for which both countries were searching for funding. The travel document is not intended to replace national passports, but will facilitate movement between the three states. The idea of a single passport was first raised in 1996, and the three countries announced that they expected to complete arrangements by September 1998.

In a related development, the Common Market for East and South African states (COMESA) announced the creation of a special project to aid women traders. COMESA agreed to set up a database and to facilitate exchanges of information among women business travellers across the region. COMESA’s Women in Business initiative has already co-operated with India, Thailand and Sri Lanka on the sharing of expertise and information. Trade in the region has been advanced by
the changing attitudes of immigration officers to women travellers, who were once often stereotyped as smugglers.

Swaziland, South Africa and Mozambique began discussions on ways of relaxing visa and border taxes between the three countries. There could be also a single visa to encourage cross-border tourism. At present, tourists wanting to visit KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and southern Mozambique require three separate visas. The initiative is part of a wider process of regional spatial development. Businesses have complained about the excessive border taxes and insurance charges between Mozambique and Swaziland. Operating joint border posts, similar to the one being developed at Komatipoort in the Maputo Development Corridor would speed up the process of crossing the border.

At the same time, the South African Development Community is discussing arrangements for the free movement of all member countries’ citizens throughout the region. In May, South African authorities moved to prevent Swazi children from crossing the border to attend schools in Mpumalanga. They also clamped down on elderly Swazis crossing illegally to collect welfare payments. Despite complaints from Swazi politicians, South African officials stressed that the movements placed heavy pressure on the country’s education and health budgets. They claimed that up to 40% of the children in some schools near the border were non-nationals. There is also resentment against well-educated Swazis taking public sector jobs in South Africa.

For many years a ‘soft border’ had operated between Swaziland and South Africa, and many Swazis have relatives on both sides of the border. Informal crossings by school children had been tolerated for several years, while many elderly Swazis had spent much of their working lives in South Africa.

East African passport runs into new hurdle, Steven Shalita, The East African 9.4.98; Project to boost women traders, Jemimah Mwakisha, The Nation (Nairobi) 19.5.98; Regional visa proposed for tourists to SA, Swaziland & Mozambique, Justin Arenstein, Africa News Service 18.3.98; Multi-national team launched to probe visas, border taxes, Justin Arenstein, Africa Eye News 14.4.98; South Africa clamps down on 'ghost' Swazi population, Africa News Service 7.6.98

**Dual Nationality for Overseas Koreans and Vietnamese?**

President Kim Dae-jung announced that Korea would consider granting dual nationality to overseas Koreans. The status would give foreign Koreans rights of property ownership, travel and inheritance, but would not require foreigners to complete military service. Overseas Koreans would be able to apply for jobs in Korea on an equal basis with Korean residents. The statement was made during Kim’s visit to Los Angeles. Korea’s justice minister met with US lawyers and representatives of the region’s Korean-American community to discuss the possible reform of citizenship.

Kim spent three years living in the USA during his exile in the 1980s. He identified Korean-Americans in first and second generations as important in relations between the two countries. Kim encouraged US Koreans to become citizens of the USA, participate in government and learn English, while not forgetting their heritage. He emphasised that multicultural and multilingual people would become essential to the Pacific economy. The new provisions would also apply to Japanese Koreans, and Kim called upon them to be more public about their ancestry.

A bill, known as the Basic Law on the Treatment of Koreans Overseas, is due to
be submitted to the National Assembly in September.

The National Assembly of Vietnam passed a new citizenship law in May. Its provisions affect the rights of the 2.5 million overseas Vietnamese, known as Viet Kieu. Although the government is wary of the possibility of enlarging the rights of opponents of the communist regime, it also wants to encourage investment from the foreign Vietnamese. The new law forbids holding citizenship of two countries at once, but includes many exceptions, making it much easier for returning Vietnamese to recover full citizenship rights.

South Korea’s President eyes benefits, San Jose Mercury News 14.6.98; Dual US-Korean Nationality nears, K. Connie Kang, Los Angeles Times 14.6.98; Overseas Ethnic Koreans to be given legal protection at home, Korea Times 12.8.98. Vietnamese Assembly passes new citizenship Law, Agence France Presse English Wire 14.5.98

Expatriate Voting Rights in Hungary and the Czech Republic

The issue of dual citizenship and voting rights for expatriates was discussed among Hungarians and Czechs at home and abroad.

In April the presidium and board of the World Federation of Hungarians made an announcement to members of the Hungarian diaspora in 52 countries. The message appealed to overseas Hungarians to consider themselves part of the nation. It also called for foreign Hungarians to be given certain rights of Hungarian citizenship, including the freedom to travel to Hungary.

The Forum’s proposal for dual citizenship was initially rejected by the leadership of the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR), on the grounds that the 1.6-million strong Hungarian-Romanian community was too large. But regional representatives of UDMR in Cluj-Napoca declared that dual citizenship would be welcome.

In 1996 Romania and Hungary signed a friendship treaty governing border issues and the rights of the Hungarian minority. The governing coalition of President Constantinescu includes representatives from ethnic Hungarian political parties. In 1997 the government passed laws enabling Hungarians to use their language in local government, schools and street signs – undoing many of the discriminatory measures of the communist regime. But the country’s upper house of parliament attempted to block further reforms, while local politicians in Cluj continue to resist the extension of minority language rights.

The chairman of Coexistence, the largest ethnic Hungarian party in Slovakia, supported the principle of dual citizenship for the country’s Hungarian minority. He stated that, should Hungary join the Schengen countries and/or the European Union, it would pose problems for ethnic Hungarians in other countries. In May, Hungary’s Foreign Minister warned Slovakia not to enforce an amendment of education law that would restrict the rights of the country’s Hungarian minority. Czech Republic rethinks citizenship

In March, the President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, voiced his support for Czech expatriates to be allowed to vote in June’s national elections. The Chamber of Deputies threw out the government’s proposed changes to electoral law, which would have introduced a measure of dual citizenship. The right to vote would affect around 30,000 expatriates. Other issues of concern to overseas Czechs include restitution payments and care for poorer members of the community.
Relations between the Czech government and Czechs abroad have been strained since the return of democracy in 1989. But in July, at a conference of overseas Czechs held in Prague, the Foreign Minister Jaroslav Sedivy praised the work of expatriate Czechs. He recognised the significant role played by Czech-Americans in lobbying for NATO membership for the Czech Republic.

Romanian ethnic Hungarian leader rejects dual citizenship idea, Hungarian radio – BBC monitoring service 10.4.98; Hungarian world forum appeals to voters to consider diaspora part of the nation, Hungarian radio – BBC monitoring service 28.4.98; Horn writes to leaders of Hungarian coalition in Slovakia, Hungary News Agency 22.5.98; Romanian Cluj branch opposes ethnic Hungarian party head on dual citizenship, Radio Timisoara – BBC monitoring service 27.4.98; Ethnic Hungarians want dual citizenship to bypass EU visa regime, Hungarian radio – BBC monitoring service 3.4.98; Magyar blues, The Economist 20.12.97; Havel supports suffrage for expatriates, Czech News Agency, 25.3.98; Czech expatriates welcome extremists’ election failure, Czech News Agency 21.6.98; Foreign Minister praises activities of Czechs abroad, Czech News Agency 2.7.98.

East Timor: Diaspora Meets in Portugal

In April a meeting of the East Timorese National Convention in Diaspora was held in Lisbon, Portugal. Addressing the delegates, a representative of Portugal’s government called on the USA to support a referendum in East Timor. Timorese from New Jersey drafted the resolution. Portugal’s government sponsored the convention and its parliament committed itself to lobbying Washington on the issue.

The convention approved a flag and anthem for East Timor, authorised by the National Council of the Timorese Resistance (CNRT). Jose Ramos Horta (Nobel peace laureate in 1996) was elected leader of the resistance outside the territory. The convention included representatives of various Timorese bodies, including the Timorese Democratic Union and the Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). There were delegates from Macao and Australia. The various parties present stressed the need for solidarity.

The Convention was criticised by pro-integration Timorese inside Indonesia, who support the All-Inclusive East Timor Dialog (AIETD) organised by the United Nations.

In June, Indonesia’s new President, B.J. Habibie met with the Bishop Carlos Belo, Nobel peace laureate and prominent in East Timor’s quest for independence. Former President Suharto had not met any of the disputed territory’s leaders in over two decades. Habibie struck a conciliatory tone, offering to withdraw troops. He arranged for 16 East Timorese prisoners to be released and offered to release resistance leader Xanana Gusmao in return for the recognition of Indonesia’s sovereign rights over the territory. But East Timorese leaders are still demanding a UN-supervised referendum on the future of the territory. The UN recognises Portugal, not Indonesia, as the sovereign authority.

Portuguese parliament wants US support for referendum in Timor, Renascena radio – BBC
Tibetan Exiles in India

Divisions among the Tibetan exile community in India between the Dalai Lama and the more radical Tibetan Youth Congress intensified following the self-immolation of a Tibetan man and India’s attempt to break up a hunger strike protest.

There are six million Tibetans in India, including 100,000 refugees from Tibet and the government-in-exile of the Dalai Lama, whose residence is in the northern town of Dharamsala.

A group of six Tibetans began a hunger strike in March to protest the Chinese occupation of their homeland. The protestors were members of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), which claims 10,000-14,000 members and is headed by Tseten Norbu. They camped out on a pavement in the capital, New Delhi. In April, in advance of the visit by a senior Chinese general, the Indian authorities detained three of the protestors in hospital. The group’s supporters accused the Indian government of caving in to Chinese diplomatic pressure. In the wake of the forced seizure, sympathisers announced that they would form a human shield around the remaining strikers.

In protest against the seizures, a Tibetan man, Thupten Ngodub, set himself on fire and died. Other protestors vowed to continue the hunger strike in place of those detained by the authorities. The Dalai Lama met with the six new protestors, but many members of the TYC are turning away from his non-violent approach. They claim that Ngodub’s death, the first such self-immolation directed against Chinese rule to take place in India, could mark a turning point in opposition. The vice-president of the Congress openly questioned whether the Dalai Lama had achieved anything since the failed anti-Chinese uprising in 1959. The government-in-exile (which is not recognised by any country) called for the hunger strike to be called off. It feared that a violent and aggressive campaign against China would weaken international support for the Tibetan cause.

The body of Thupten Ngodub was taken to Dharamsala for burial. The ceremonies were attended by up to 50,000 mourners. Many were reported to agree with the TYC that non-violence was not achieving anything. The Dalai Lama was in New York for the funeral itself, meeting with Chinese dissidents.

India cracks down on Tibetan hunger strikers ahead of Chinese visit, Agence France Presse English Wire 26.4.98; Tibetan dies after self-immolation, exiles warn of bloodshed, Agence France Presse English Wire 29.4.98; Thousands gather for Tibetan's funeral in India, Agence France Presse English Wire 30.4.98; Thousands Mourn Death of New Tibetan Martyr, Dexter Filkins and Amitbah Sharma, Los Angeles Times 1.5.98.

Expatriate Cities: Shanghai and Moscow

The quality of life and the cost of living in major cities with large expatriate communities were analysed in two recent reports. In Shanghai and Moscow, North American developers are constructing luxury suburban enclaves for expatriate clients.

According to Towers Perrin, consultants who specialise in relocation, one in six Americans sent overseas returns within a year because of the problems of adjustment and family. Even those who remain can
find substantial amounts of their time taken up with the problems of families in an alien environment. The quality of life of expatriate cities is therefore as significant to transnational companies as the cost of living.

The Corporate Resources Group (Geneva) calculated the cost of living in the world’s major cities. The calculations were based on the cost of 200 goods and services, taking New York as the standard (=100). These goods were chosen to reflect the tastes and consumption patterns of expatriates. Currency fluctuations against the dollar therefore affect the rankings.

The most expensive cities were Hong Kong, Tokyo and Beijing, with seven of the top ten coming from Asia. Cities in countries hit by the Asian economic crisis, such as Jakarta and Singapore, fell in relative expense. New York was ranked as the 21st most expensive city. Cities in Africa and the Middle East were deemed to be the least costly.

The ten most expensive cities

1) Hong Kong, China
2) Tokyo, Japan
3) Beijing, China
4) Moscow, Russia
5) Shanghai, China
6) Osaka, Japan
7) Guangzhou, China
8) Saint Petersburg, Russia
9) Dalian (China)
10) London, UK

Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), a consultancy with offices in Hong Kong and Singapore, published a survey on the quality of Asia’s cities for expatriates. Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan scored highest by their reckoning with South Korea, Vietnam and China the lowest. Four hundred expatriates were surveyed across the region, questioned on such matters as schooling, hospitals and recreation.

Taiwan’s improvement over 1997 was put down to the perceived decline in crime. Korea suffered from traffic, communications problems and cultural unfamiliarity. Indonesia was rated as having the worst health care, while Malaysia scored highly for affordable housing. Singapore did well for safety, cleanliness, health care and education, but was criticised by expats for poor TV and press censorship. Singapore was generally reckoned safe but boring.

Expats in Shanghai and Moscow

Maggie Farley reported on expatriate life in Shanghai for The Los Angeles Times and Malcolm Gray described Moscow’s new suburbs for the Windsor Star. In the suburbs of both cities, North American style luxury communities have been created, complete with lawns, two-car garages, ranch-style homes and golf courses. Shanghai Links, one such development, is only six minutes from Shanghai’s new international airport. Jack Niklaus designed its golf course, and its homes have a view of the Yangtze river entering the South China Sea. Pine Forest Estates is found outside Moscow in the pine forests surrounding the capital.

In both developments, North American construction workers were flown in to build the houses. In the Moscow suburbs, the entire three-bedroom house was prefabricated in Canada.

Shanghai Links is a $500 million development, owned mainly by North American banks and pension funds. Houses are leased by multinationals for their employees. The development company plans 15 or more similar projects in ‘emerging markets’. The risk is that, as
companies switch from expensive expatriate labour to cheaper, trained local managers, the demand for such sumptuous enclaves will diminish. Even in Shanghai Links, some firms are scaling back their investment.

The concern is that Shanghai’s Western enclaves will make expatriate adjustment to life in China even harder. There are local memories from the early century of how Europeans shut themselves away in their own concessions (districts) oblivious to the fate of the country outside.

In Pine Forest Estates the dwellings are mainly aimed not at Russians but at expatriates able to pay up to $160,000 a year rent. The Toronto-based company responsible for the project has lined up corporations such as Unilever and Coca Cola as potential clients. Similar to other developments around Moscow, the developers stress the security aspects of the planned suburbs. Perimeter fencing and guards are provided.

Currency crisis affects league table of costly cities, Agence France Presse English Wire 29.6.98; South Korea, China and Vietnam “worst in Asia” for expatriates, Agence France Presse English Wire, 4.5.98; Moscow embraces suburban living, Malcolm Gray, Windsor Star 31.1.98; Expatriate come home to West – in China, Maggie Farley, Los Angeles Times 3.8.98
UK and USA: Measures Against the ‘New’ Terrorism

The bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, followed by reprisal raids suspected terrorist facilities on Sudan and Afghanistan raised the profile of a ‘new’ terrorism. The US government introduced a new agency to deal with unconventional threats such as attacks on computer systems and biological weapons attacks on civilians. After a bomb exploded in Omagh, Northern Ireland, the UK introduced new laws against terrorism. These included a new offence of conspiracy to commit serious crimes abroad. These laws could be directed against the many transnational dissident groups with headquarters in London.

The US attack on targets in Sudan and Afghanistan in August, a reprisal for the bombing of embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, was followed by a Presidential declaration of a new emphasis in anti-terrorist policy. Henceforth, said Clinton, the US would not hesitate in retaliating against terrorists on foreign soil. The significance of these attacks lay in the fact that they were not directed against foreign governments, but against suspected terrorists present in Sudan and Afghanistan.

In May Clinton had appointed Richard Clarke, a senior advisor, to coordinate the policy on unconventional forms of attack, currently involving over 40 separate agencies. He was directed to formulate a plan to secure the country’s banking, telecommunications and utility computer systems by 2000. Both Clinton and Clarke stressed that future threats to national security may not come from the outside, but from within. The US constitution prevents regular members of the armed forces being deployed for domestic operations. This will be among the many matters that the administration intends to explore.

Clinton at the UN

President Clinton opened the session of the United Nations General Assembly in September by reiterating his government’s determination to increase its activities against terrorism. He also called for a more global effort. Clinton asked for more co-operation on extradition and prosecution, more enforcement of conventions against chemical and biological weapons and a new global anti-terror convention. The President’s remarks were supported in addresses by the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, Britain’s Prime Minister Tony Blair and the President of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Kumaratunga. Blair invited world leaders to London for a conference on ways to stop terrorist fund-raising. (London has been identified by the Sri Lankan government as one of the main centres of fund-raising for Tamil separatists – see story in this issue of Traces.)

Clinton also stressed that he did not regard the war against terrorism as part of a ‘clash of civilizations’ between the West and Islam. He spoke of the Muslim presence in the US, noting that there were over 1,200 mosques and Islamic centres in the country and around six million American Muslims.

In October the Pentagon announced the formation of a new agency, The Defense Threat Reduction Agency, designed to address the threat of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the hands of small transnational terrorist groups. The new agency replaces three existing
agencies, the Onsite Inspection Agency, the Defense Technology Security Administration and the Defense Special Weapons Agency. The move was encouraged by the fears surrounding the alleged nerve gas production facility bombed by US forces in Khartoum. The US Defense Department reckons that 25 countries either have, or may soon have, the ability to produce chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

New UK laws after Omagh atrocity

The United Kingdom also introduced new measures against terrorism. In September Parliament was recalled early in order to rush through legislation to counter terrorism. In an emergency session the Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Bill was passed in just two days. Pressure to introduce new legislation had intensified following the bomb attack on the small town of Omagh, Northern Ireland. The attack was ascribed to a breakaway organisation of the Irish Republican Army known as the Real IRA. Twenty eight people died. Similar legislation was passed by the Irish Parliament at the same time. Civil rights campaigners and many MPs charged that the legislation was hurried through without proper consideration, and that many of the provisions compromised basic legal rights.

Although the new laws were justified as a means of countering groups such as the Real IRA, those not party to the ceasefire in Northern Ireland, the Labour government added on clauses related to transnational terrorism. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, stated that “We will not let the UK be used as a base for the organisation of terrorism or other overseas crimes.” The Bill introduced a new offence of conspiracy to engage in serious crimes abroad.

Previous UK law had proscribed conspiracy to commit murder and the possession of explosives with the intent to murder. But the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, noted that the changing face of international terrorism necessitated new laws. The new laws will extend the concept of conspiracy to speech and written material, including faxes. They also proscribe fund-raising for terrorist activities. But legal commentators observed that such laws would be very difficult to enforce. In the past, the UK has been criticised for harbouring dissidents and terrorists. Complaints have come from the governments of Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that the UK shields terrorists. France and Israel have also charged London with being a haven for criminals. But in most cases, foreign governments have been unable to supply evidence of terrorist activities that would be acceptable to UK courts. The new laws may make it easier to prove.

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A further problem concerns the definition of what is criminal. The bill included a concept of ‘dual criminality’, whereby an act would be deemed unlawful if it were unlawful both according to British law and by the law of the country the action was aimed at. This would make deportation easier, the bill’s supporters claim. But at the same time, it would protect fund-raising in support of pro-democracy movements abroad, for example in Burma.

Coming so soon after the bombing of US embassies, apparently by Islamist terrorists, the extra clauses were widely interpreted as being aimed at Islamic groups. In press reports, the bill was linked with the activities of Saudi dissident, Mohammed al-Masari, and Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed, who appeared to lend public support to the
bombing of US embassies. Omar Bakri Mohammed is the head of al-Muhajiroun ('the Emigrants' or 'the Exiles'), based in London. The group is said to be working towards creating an Islamic state in Britain and has lent vocal support to the Taliban, Hamas and other militant Islamic organisations. Mohammed al-Masari heads the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia, which aims to overthrow the Saudi monarchy. Among other organisations operating in London are the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party), a mainly student organisation banned in many Arab countries, and the Front Islamique de Salvation, working to overthrow the Algerian government. Israel also thinks that London is the information headquarters of Hamas, the Palestinian organisation, because its monthly magazine and charities are based in suburban north London.

The UK became the centre of Islamic opposition and militant organisations partly because of its colonial associations with the Middle East, but also because of its asylum laws and general reputation for tolerance. London’s association with international anarchists, terrorists and dissidents stretched back to the last century. For the most part, organisations active in foreign matters were left alone or simply observed. UK security agencies believed that it was preferable to keep such activities in London, where they could be monitored. Omar Bakri Mohammed declared that London was “the centre of the entire world’s Islamic movements.”

London as anti-Saddam centre

In early August, before the embassy bombings, the Clinton administration proposed that London could become the centre of organisations dedicated to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The US Congress voted $5 million to support anti-Saddam activities, much of which may be directed towards the London-based group Indict. Indict, founded in 1997, exists to bring President Hussein and other leading Iraqi politicians to trial for war crimes. Also in London is the Iraqi National Congress, which may be funded. But whereas the Congress wants to concentrate funds on these two groups, the White House is considering backing more of the 73 known Iraqi opposition organisations. The US has already found $3 million for a ‘Radio Free Iraq’ based in Prague.

In late September, after the new laws came into effect, British police arrested seven men on suspicion of being linked with the embassy bombings in Africa and the attack on tourists in Luxor, Egypt. The arrests followed an investigation into the movements of money through London bank accounts, some connected to Osama bin Laden, the chief suspect in the embassy attacks. The men arrested may become the first people charged under the new legislation, although their supporters claimed that none were engaged in terrorist activities.

Hoffman on the ‘New Terroism’

Bruce Hoffman, the author of *Inside Terrorism* and director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at St. Andrew University, Scotland discussed the rise of the ‘New Terrorism’ in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Economist*. He stated that the attacks on the US embassies were part of an emerging trend, “the infliction of mass, indiscriminate casualties by enigmatic adversaries, striking far beyond terrorism’s traditional operational theatres in Europe and the Middle East.” In the article, and in the book “Inside Terrorism”, Hoffman emphasises the differences between the old generation of terrorist organisations such as the Red Army Faction in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy, and the new organisations. The older groups usually had clear objectives, known leaderships...
and mostly committed ‘discriminate acts of violence’ designed to maximise publicity but minimise the loss of civilian life. Furthermore, these groups operated within stable and easily identifiable regions, usually their origin country and its neighbours, or sometimes high profile international centres such as European capitals.

The new groups attacks appear to occur outside traditional areas as illustrated by the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. These groups are also harder to identify either in leadership or objectives. Attacks take the form of a more flexible terrorism, with personnel assembled in new combinations for one-off actions. Such teams leave no footprints. As a result, counter-terrorist policy will have to switch to a greater emphasis on intelligence gathering, according to Hoffman.

Hoffman also suggests that the new terrorists are not afraid of inflicting mass casualties, taking as an example the Aum Shinrikyo cult. Shoko Asahara, the cult’s founder, spoke of eradicating major cities with chemical weapons. In recent months, US security agencies have been preoccupied with the threats posed by biological agents such as anthrax, or by cyber-attacks on the country’s computer systems.

US plans anti-Saddam base, Gary Younge The Guardian 3.8.98; Extremists face British ban, David Pallister The Guardian 25.8.98; Speech to be included in new law on conspiracy, Richard Norton-Taylor, The Guardian 26.8.98; Muslims who find a haven in London, Luke Harding The Guardian 26.8.98; Britain broadens its anti-terror fight to those conspiring action abroad, Denis Hiault Agence France Presse English Wire 26.8.98; My emergency Bill is because of Omagh. And foreign crimes, Jack Straw The Guardian 2.9.98; British and Irish parliaments pass tough new N.Ireland anti-terror laws, Agence France Presse English Wire 3.9.98; People In Focus: Bakri, Moslem target of British anti-terror laws? Isabelle Ligner Agence France Presse 5.9.98; Bahrain hails UK anti-terror law, Gulf Daily News 17.9.98; Money trail in embassy blasts, Nicholas Rufford and Dipesh Gadher Sunday Times (UK) 27.9.98; The New Terrorism, The Economist 15.8.98; The New Terrorist: Mute, Unnamed, Bloodthirsty, Bruce Hoffman Los Angeles Times 16.8.98; US opens new and dangerous chapter in war on terrorism, Carole Landry Agence France Presse English Wire 21.8.98; The radical new face of world Globalization spawns a new breed of zealous religious fighters terror, Marie Colvin Toronto Star 30.8.98; Clinton Urges World Action on Terror, Barbara Crosette New York Times 22.9.98; New US agency to deal with weapons of mass destruction threat, Agence France Presse English Wire 2.10.98

The German Elections, Turkish Germans and Turkey

The German general election in September brought Gerhard Schrader to power in place of Helmut Kohl. During the campaign, German and Turkish politicians clashed over the citizenship status of the country’s large Turkish minority. Schrader’s coalition intends to reform the law. Among other things, this should please supporters of the country’s ailing football side.

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz addressed German Turks five weeks before the general election, reminding them of the European Union’s decision to exclude Turkey from the next round of applications for membership. Yilmaz blamed the ruling Christian Democratic Union-led coalition and Chancellor Kohl in person for the decision. The Bundestag’s earlier decision not to reform Germany’s citizenship laws to facilitate the acquisition of dual nationality had also annoyed Turkey. It was noted that Germany’s law was out of line with the majority of other EU countries. Yilmaz also met with representatives of Turkish associations from Germany in Ankara during July.

Relations between Kohl and Yilmaz had deteriorated badly following the latter’s
implication that Germany had not forgotten its plans for geopolitical expansion. In his campaign speeches, Chancellor Kohl stressed that foreigners were ‘guests’, and expected to behave as such. He contrasted the CDU’s stance to that taken by the Social Democratic Party. Yilmaz was publicly denounced by Theo Weigel, leader of the Christian Social Union and Finance Minister in Kohl’s government. At an election rally in Bavaria Weigel accuse the Turkish Prime Minister of stirring up German Turks against his government and improperly interfering in German politics.

Transnational Communities
Programme working paper
WPTC-99-01

Deniz Gökürk
Turkish delight- German fight: Migrant identities in transnational cinema

There are thought to be over seven million ‘guest workers’ in Germany, around 2.2 million of them from Turkey. As a result of the 1913 German citizenship law, around 10 percent of the population cannot vote. Nor can foreigners apply for jobs in teaching, the civil service and other positions.

The 1913 law was modified in 1991 to allow foreigners with 15 years’ residence to apply for German nationality, provided that they had at least six years of schooling in Germany. The applicant has to renounce any other nationality. In 1995 313,000 foreigners were nationalised, but officials reckoned that the requirement to abandon homeland nationality deterred many thousands from applying. This number included only 77,872 Turks, leaving 2,107,426 still with foreigner status, according to German Interior Ministry figures. Although the proportion of Turks taking out citizenship has increased sharply since 1990, when only 2,000 applied, only around 2.8% of Turks are citizens. By comparison, in 1995/96 409,776 foreigners from the former Soviet Union became naturalized citizens, leaving only 175,000 deemed foreign.

During the campaign, Gerhard Schroder promised to legalise dual nationality and grant automatic citizenship to children born in Germany with foreign parents. Some commentators suggested that such moves were also aimed at preventing young German Turks from supporting fundamentalist Islam. Despite taking a more liberal line on citizenship, Schroder also campaigned on promises to deport foreigners found guilty of crime and to reduce the number of refugees entering the country. The Greens support giving all foreigners in Germany citizenship provided they have been resident for a number of years. But the SPD favour restricting dual nationality to persons with either a mother or a father born in Germany.

The CDU and the Bavarian Christian Social Union feared that such moves would greatly increase the potential support for left-wing parties. In a vote earlier in the year in the Bundestag on dual nationality, the CDU had been divided. The far right German People’s Union, which did well in eastern Germany in April’s state elections, also opposed changing citizenship laws.

The elections

In September’s elections it was reported that 70 percent of the 160,000 German Turks eligible to vote gave their support to the SPD. Mesut Yilmaz welcomed the election result. Germany will assume presidency of the EU for six months in 1999 and Yilmaz anticipated an improvement in relations. But diplomats were already quietly warning Yilmaz not to assume too much or to over-estimate the
benefits of Schroder’s proposed changes to nationality law. Some members of the SPD are vocally sympathetic to the struggle for Kurdish independence and critical of Turkey’s human rights record. German foreign ministry sources indicated that there might be a trade-off between speeding Turkey’s entry to the EU and a settlement of the Kurdish question.

There were five Turkish-origin candidates in the elections, four standing for the Alliance 90/Green slate. Three were elected to the Bundestag. Cem Ozdemir won a second term as a Green deputy on the Baden Wurttemberg slate; Leyla Onur was re-elected as an SPD deputy; Ekin Deligoz became a new Green deputy.

The day after his election victory, Chancellor-elect Schroder promised to introduce dual nationality for children born of foreign parents. He said that the details of a new law were still to be decided.

One popular consequence of changing the citizenship law may be to increase the number of players eligible for the German football team. German supporters noted the contrast in the World Cup tournament between their team of ageing players and France’s successful youthful and multicultural squad. German club squads have already been successful with dual nationality players.

German coach Berti Vogts drafted in players with two passports to his squad in August, including Paulo Rink from Brazil, whose grandfather left Germany for South Africa in 1904 and who received a German passport in February. Vogts also called up Oliver Neuville, a Swiss-born player with a German father. Neither Rink nor Neuville are fluent in German. Mustafa Dogan, a German born of Turkish parents, was also in the squad, having played football in Turkey. Vogts’ new rainbow squad failed to produce results and he was sacked as national manager the following month.

In October, the Turkish national football team defeated Germany by 1-0 in a qualifying match for the 2000 European championships. It was the first Turkish victory over Germany for 47 years.

Who should be German then? The Economist 4.7.98; Germany and its Turks, Bridge or Barrier? Turkish Probe 2.8.98; Remember Luxembourg, Turkey's PM tells Turkish voters in Germany, Agence France Presse English Wire 18.8.98; Germany's 'guests' fight for the vote, Imre Karacs Independent 23.9.98; German angst over foreigners plays out in election campaigns, Paul Geitner 24.9.98; Weigel to Yilmaz: 'Mind your own business', Turkish Daily News 26.9.98; Germany elections Reds, Yellows, Greens and the Turks, Turkish Probe 28.9.98; After the German elections: Too early for a springtime in Turkish-German relations? Turkish Daily News 29.9.98; Turkey pins EU hopes on new German leader, Amberin Zaman Daily Telegraph 30.9.98; New German government promises dual nationality, Claire Gallen Agence France Presse English Wire 2.10.98; Turco-German Ties in Germany's Election Aftermath, Turkish Probe 4.10.98; German revival backed by rainbow coalition, Agence France Presse English Wire 18.8.98

India Seeks Financial Help From Overseas Indians

India launched a Resurgent India Bond aimed at persuading patriotic overseas Indians to invest in their homeland. In just one month, the government raised $4 billion. But the finances of the bond issue may cause problems when it comes to repaying in five years time.

As a result of their underground nuclear tests, both India and Pakistan were subject to economic sanctions. These coincided with an existing economic crisis in Pakistan. Both countries require greater foreign investment and foreign exchange. In response to the situation, the Indian government chose to launch a new state...
bond aimed at overseas Indians. First available on August 5th, the Resurgent Indian Bonds (RIBs) raised over $4 billion within the first weeks.

The bonds were launched by the State Bank of India (SBI). They were issued for five years in US, German, and British currencies. The bonds can also be redeemed in these currencies. The interest rates varied from 7.75% in the US (2% higher than US Treasury Bonds), 8.0% in Britain and 6.65% in Germany. They are free from Indian wealth and income taxes. The minimum investment is $2,000, £1,000 or DM3,000. They are sold at branches of the SBI and at some Citibank branches, and are exclusively available to overseas Indians.

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**Resurgent Indian Bonds raised over $4 billion within the first weeks**

The SBI targeted 150,000 subscribers. The existing pattern of remittances suggested that NRIs in the Middle East and Asia had been much more active in investing in India than the more professional Indians of North America. A survey of overseas Indians published by *India Today* found that over half of respondents said that they would be willing to invest in the bonds. The government announced that the funds would be directed towards infrastructure projects, including roads and telecommunications.

The SBI hired Adfactors Advertising to produce a global marketing campaign for the bonds. The company claimed to have identified a target population of 3 million Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) within a fortnight. In addition to newspaper advertisements and direct mailing, the agency employed the Internet to sell the bonds. Application forms could be downloaded from the Internet. Adverts were sent to the websites of over 1,000 Indian overseas associations. In the UK, the message was relayed to the Indian press as well as via Zee TV. To find the market, Adfactors used government records to identify the 22 countries with more than 50,000 people of Indian origin. National census databases were then used to locate NRI communities within each country. To increase the reach, the agency targeted workers at Indian software companies abroad, shipping companies and seafarers and Air India workers. Adfactors also approached resident Indians identified as key opinion-formers, including such professions as chartered accountants and financial consultants likely to be in touch with NRIs.

Officials from the State Bank and the governing BJP visited Indian communities in various parts of the world to drum up support for the bonds. In New York, where over 200,000 Indians live, bank officials appeared in the India Day Parade in Manhattan in August. They hope that the supposed upsurge in patriotic fervour among Indian communities following the nuclear testing will encourage investors. But support for the tests was not universal among US Indians. To accompany the campaign, the Indian government produced patriotic music videos for worldwide distribution.

Within the first two weeks of launching the bond $2 billion were raised. By late August more than $4.1 billion had been raised from over 74,000 subscribers. The figures exceeded government expectations. More than 65% of investors came from the Middle East and South East Asia, as expected. The money raised will be held overseas and only introduced into the Indian economy gradually.

A similar exercise in 1991, called India Development Bonds, raised $1.6 billion from 56,000 investors. Investment by overseas Indians rose sharply after
FY1993, but peaked at just over $700 million in FY1996.

As a result of large-scale borrowing to purchase bonds, banks in countries with sizeable communities of Indian overseas workers reported marked declines in deposits. The flow of remittances from regions such as the Gulf was reduced.

The RIBs represent a risk for the Indian government. They were issued in foreign currencies at a time when the Indian rupee has been depreciating quickly, by 19% between July 1997 and July 1998. In 1997 India received $4.7 billion of foreign direct investment. But the government’s credit rating was downgraded by Moody’s in June, making foreign currency loans harder to obtain. The first budget of the new BJP-led government in June included no new incentives directed towards foreign investors. Critics of the government accuse the BJP of trying to rely too much on the patriotic sentiments among overseas Indians, where it has a good degree of support. Under such circumstances, the RIB looked like an attractive, though risky, alternative.

Later in August the Indian government announced that it would change the regulations governing NRI investments to make them easier. Non-Resident Indians and Overseas Corporate Bodies would be able to invest in unlisted companies on the same terms as listed companies. They would also be allowed to invest in the health sector. In October the Reserve Bank of India announced a further relaxation of the regulations concerning NRI investment. The new regulations allowed NRIs and Overseas Corporate Bodies to invest in Indian companies without having to receive permission from the Bank first.

Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee was scheduled to inaugurate a ‘Global Indian Entrepreneurs Conference’ in New Delhi in November. The theme of the meeting is intended to be the Indian diaspora and the promotion of investment flows. The conference is being organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the India Investment Centre.

In late September, Vajpayee stated that the Indian government was seriously considering providing for dual citizenship for NRIs. He was addressing a meeting in New York at the time.

The Chief Minister of Kerala (in southern India) demanded that his state receive its fair share of the revenue from the RBI. He stated that half the funds raised had come from the Middle East, where Keralite expatriates represented over half the population.

India's top bank floats sanction-busting bond in bid to raise 4bn dlls, Agence France Presse English Wire 5.8.98; Resurgent India Bond - Will it rake in mega bucks?, Business Line 6.8.98; Selling resurgent India a massive marketing effort, Kripa Raman Business Line 7.8.98; Investment procedure for NRIs eased, The Hindu 7.8.98; India Taps Into Its Diaspora; Expatriates Buy Bonds for Love of Country, and 7.75% Interest, Somini Sengupta New York Times 19.8.98; India's 'sanctions-busting' bonds raise 3.44 billion dollars, Agence France Presse 24.8.98; India's 'sanctions-busting' bonds raise 4.16 billion dollars Agence France Presse English Wire 25.8.98; PM to inaugurate global Indian entrepreneurs' meet, Business line 4.10.98; India Norms for NRI investments relaxed, Business Line 4.10.98; India may give dual citizenship to Non-Resident Indians, Asia Pulse 29.9.98; Nayanar demands Kerala’s ‘due’ share in RIB heap, Business Line 5.9.98

Kosovo: the KLA and the Albanian Diaspora

Despite setbacks in the struggle for independence in Kosovo, members of the Albanian and Kosovan diaspora continued to fund the campaign. The Swiss authorities froze Kosovan exile bank accounts, as pressure was brought to bear
against militant separatists by members of the international Contact Group. The origins of the Kosovan Liberation Army are described in a lengthy account in *The Guardian* newspaper.

Fighting between Kosovan separatists and the mainly Serbian army escalated in July, as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) claimed that it was about to take the capital, Pristina. But by August the Serbian/Yugoslavian army had recovered much of the ground lost earlier, inflicting serious defeats on the KLA. By September, the Contact Group in association with the United Nations and NATO were threatening military action against Serbia unless a ceasefire and withdrawal of Serbian forces was achieved.

Albanians across Europe sent money to help the Kosovo Liberation Army and refugees displaced by the conflict. In Berlin, a spokesman stated that donations have risen to $1 million a month. Of the 400,000 Albanians thought to be living in Germany, 150,000 are from Kosovo. The US government asked Germany to try to stem the flow, claiming that the weapons purchased by the KLA may obstruct a diplomatic solution.

It is estimated that 180,000 Albanians reside in Switzerland, where the Kosovo government in exile is based. The Swiss authorities are concerned that Albanian remittances are being diverted into the drugs and weapons trade. The authorities claim that 90% of the country’s heroin trade is in the hands of Albanians. They assert that heroin is being sold to finance the procurement of weapons.

In August, Swiss police raided the Kosovo information centre in Geneva and froze two bank accounts, one worth $5.3 million. The authorities alleged that the accounts were linked to supplying arms to the KLA. They stated that the action was in response to requests from the Contact Group to end the arms trade to Kosovo. One account in Olten, northern Switzerland belonged to an organisation called The Homeland Calls. A spokesman for the Kosovo popular movement stated that the funds were used for humanitarian aid and not weapons. It was expected that Germany might also move against Kosovan bank accounts.

In the absence of foreign media and with the Yugoslav press tightly controlled, Kosovan and Serbian groups are using the Internet to disseminate information. The KLA has a site, as does the government in exile from its Geneva base. The Serbian Ministry of Information maintains a counter-propaganda site detailing the activities of the KLA and denouncing violence against the province’s Serbian minority. The recently completed fibre-optic link between Pristina and Belgrade is controlled by the Yugoslav government, which has denied access to the Kosovan daily newspaper *The Daily Times*. Less than 1,000 people in Kosovo itself are online and there are no servers in the province.

**Conflict among Kosovans - the history**

The conflict among the various parties representing Kosovans at home and abroad continued (see *Traces* no. 2). In August, Kosovan Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova announced the formation of a team to negotiate with Serbia that did not include representatives of the KLA. The KLA denounced the team as collaborators. According to some reports, Rugova’s local supporters among the Democratic League of Kosovo were deserting to the KLA. In recognition of the changing situation, US diplomats began meeting with KLA representatives in Geneva.

In a long article published in *The Guardian* (UK), Tim Juddah describes the origins of
the Kosovo Liberation Army. Arising from student protests in the 1980s and spread abroad by Albanian migrant workers, the idea that a Kosovar republic could be brought about by violence began attracting supporters. In 1982 three Kosovar militants, members of a small splinter group, were assassinated in Germany. Their colleagues founded the Popular Movement for Kosovo (LPK), organised in Serbia and abroad in secret cells. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) was founded in 1989 by Ibrahim Rugova. This followed the intensification of Serbian nationalism by Slobodan Milosevic during the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. (The battle, in which Turks defeated the Serbs, is nonetheless an important event in Serbian nationalism that links Serbians' history to the region.) Many LPK members left the underground to join the more mainstream LDK.

In 1990 a parallel government was created in exile, led by Bujar Bukoshi. The government was financed by a voluntary tax on the Albanian diaspora, mainly in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. But Rugova’s opposition to war and violence was not universally supported. The LPK were well organised in Stuttgart, Zurich and Malmo. The KLA itself was founded following secret meetings among the LPK in Macedonia and Pristina in 1993. The LPK/KLA began its own fund-raising in Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and the UK through an organisation called Homeland Calling; and they hired military advisers to train guerrillas. These activists began shooting Serbian police officers from 1993 onwards, eventually culminating in reprisals from the Serbian authorities in January 1997.

The KLA cause was aided by the Dayton accord of 1995, which left the question of Kosovo’s status untouched. The LPK then mounted a strong campaign against Rugova in Kosovo and abroad. The assault by Serbian forces on a well-known Kosovar strongman in Drenica, which left 80 people dead, was the spark to the KLA’s armed uprising. They quickly established a logistics base and recruiting centre in Tropoja, across the border in Albania. In reaction, the government in exile tried to set up its own military wing, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo, but failed.

Exiles' Donations Fund Kossovo Rebels, William Drozdiak 27.7.98; Swiss police freeze Kossovo accounts, Agence France Presse English Wire 27.7.98; Kosovo, the wired war, MSNBC 7.8.98; Kosovo Separatist Chief Picks Delegation Without Rebels, Mike O’Connor New York Times 14.8.98; War by mobile phone, donkey and Kalashnikov, Tim Juddah The Guardian Weekend 29.8.98

Latvia’s Russians Gain Citizenship

In October Latvians went to the polls and voted to support the government’s new laws granting improved access to citizenship for the country’s Russian minority. It was revealed that the package of sanctions directed against Latvia by Russia had originally been intended for Estonia.

Some 600,000 of Latvia’s population of 2.5 million are Russian. After independence, Latvia granted automatic citizenship only to those settling in the country before 1940. This excluded thousands of Russians who arrived to work in industry and the military after 1940. They were required to apply for naturalization one age cohort at a time, with requirements to learn Latvian language and history. Children born in Latvia after 1991 were also required to apply for citizenship rather than receive it automatically. Only 7,000 of the 150,000 Russians eligible for Latvian citizenship did so. Many Russian Latvians either
resisted learning the language or wanted to avoid the possibility of conscription. The Latvian authorities did little to encourage naturalization for fear of creating a large Russian-speaking electorate. Schools with large Russophone pupils are instructed to increase the amount of teaching in Latvian year by year.

Under pressure from the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as the threat of economic sanctions from Russia, the Latvian parliament voted to amend the citizenship law in June. The amendment would automatically grant citizenship to children born since 1991 and speed-up the naturalization procedure for the remaining Russians. The language proficiency requirement was kept.

The amendments were challenged by the Latvian nationalist party, Fatherland and Freedom. The party collected enough signatures to delay implementation and put the issue to a national referendum, although opinion polls show two-thirds of the population support the changes. The referendum was scheduled to coincide with the country’s general election. During campaigning, only the Fatherland and Freedom party of Prime Minister Guntars Krasts opposed the citizenship law. The two main parties, the People’s Party led by former Prime Minister Andris Skele and the Social Democratic Union welcomed the changes, as did President Guntis Ulmanis.

A week before the general election the parliament voted to postpone discussion of a new law strengthening Latvian language at the expense of Russian. Sweden announced that it would fund a language tuition programme for non-Latvians with $700,000.

In October’s election, Latvians voted to accept the citizenship law amendments, while lending strong support to the People’s Party in parliamentary elections. Fifty three percent backed the changes. The result was welcomed by the EU and the OSCE as a sign that Latvia was prepared for eventual membership of these organisations and NATO. Russia also hailed the decision as an improvement in relations between the two countries. In September, Russia closed the last of its military bases in the three Baltic states, a radar station in Skrunda, Latvia.

During the Russian Duma’s discussion of the sanctions bill against Latvia it was revealed that the package of restrictions on trade and business was initially intended as a punishment against Estonia. A third of Estonia’s population belongs to the Russian-speaking minority, among whom there are widespread complaints about the denial of civil and political rights.

Estonian World Council meets

The Estonian World Council met in Tallinn in September. Representatives from USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Latvia and Australia met to discuss how Estonians abroad could aid the country’s development. They were joined by delegates representing Estonian societies from Moscow, St Petersburg and the Ukraine. The conference agreed that overseas Estonians should lobby their respective national governments on matters relevant to Baltic states, including NATO membership for example.

Latvia’s Russians: Outsiders Wanting In, Daniel Williams Washington Post 24.7.98; Latvian nationalists on course for citizenship referendum, Agence France Presse English Wire 18.8.98; Latvians opt to hold citizenship referendum, Agence France Presse English Wire 19.8.98; Ex-premier Skele set for comeback in Latvian elections, Agence France Presse English Wire 24.9.98; Last Russian military site in Baltics to close, Richard Lein Agence France Presse English Wire 27.8.98; Parliament fails to adopt controversial language law Agence France Presse English Wire 28.9.98; Latvians back moves to give Russian minority citizenship rights, Agence France Presse English Wire 4.10.98; Russia’s Latvian
sanctions originally planned against Estonia, Baltic News Service 3.9.98; Estonian expatriate organizations meet in Tallinn, Baltic News Service 18.9.98

Turkey’s Foreign Relations and the Kurdish Question

Relations between Turkey and several other countries, including Italy, Libya and Syria, were affected by the activities of the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK). Towards the end of September, relations between Syria and Turkey grew steadily worse. The PKK appeared to indicate that it might accept regional autonomy in place of full independence.

The Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) is attempting to present a more respectable front in European cities, distancing itself from its alleged past involvement with bombing, kidnapping and extortion. These moves are being countered by Turkey, which is leading to strained diplomatic relations between Turkey and several European and Middle East countries. In June 80,000 Kurdish expatriates attended a rally in Dortmund which featured open support for the PKK, despite Germany officially recognising it as a criminal organisation. In September 30,000 Kurds from across Europe attended a rally in Rotterdam, again showing some backing for the PKK as well as the Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Turkey protested to Italy about a meeting of the so-called Kurdish parliament which, it charges, is linked with the PKK. The exiles met in a room within the Italian parliament in September, and were supported by around 100 Italian MPs (mainly from opposition parties). The parliament was set up in 1984 and has previously met in The Hague, Brussels, Moscow and Vienna. Turkey threatened to pull out of defence contracts with Italy in retaliation.

Another protest from the Turkish government was directed at the Libyan government, following the participation of PKK members in a parade in the capital, Tripoli. The Turkish ambassador walked out of the ceremony, which was held to mark the Libyan revolution. He was recalled by Ankara, after which Libya recalled its own ambassador to Turkey. Libya’s Colonel Kadhafi’s has openly opposed the military agreements signed between Turkey and Israel in 1996.

The existence and activities of the PKK also led to tension between Turkey and its neighbours in the region. It is estimated that although there are 4,000 PKK fighters in Turkey, a further 3,500 are operating outside the country. A large offensive by the Turkish army in May was frustrated when Iraq allowed Turkish Kurds to retreat deep into the country. Iran and Greece are also thought to provide havens for PKK personnel.

Turkey quarrels with Syria and Iran

Throughout the year, relations between Turkey and Syria gradually worsened, in part because of the Kurdish issue. PKK guerrillas are able to escape across the border into Syria, where they are said to have several training bases. In September, the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister accused Syria and Iran of openly supporting the PKK. Turkey believes that Syria harbours the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, either in Damascus or in Syrian-controlled Lebanon.

Syria’s neighbours, Israel and Turkey have been moving closer together on military and diplomatic fronts. Mesut Yilmaz, the Turkish Prime Minister, made a state visit to Israel in early September. The warm relations between the two countries are a
cause of concern for Syria, and were condemned by the Arab League’s meeting on September 16. Syria fears that it will be caught in a trap between its northern and southern neighbours. By early October, relations between Turkey and Syria had deteriorated, with Turkey threatening to mobilise its army unless Syria stopped backing the PKK. Syria maintained its denial of the accusations.

Iran was also charged with providing bases from which PKK launches attacks into Turkey via northern Iraq. The accusations were made during a visit to Ankara by the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), representing some of Iraq’s Kurdish community. Other Iraqi Kurds are affiliated to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and the two groups have engaged in sporadic hostilities. The KDP has assisted Turkey in operations against the PKK in northern Iraq since May 1997. In return, Turkey supported the KDP against the PUK in late 1997.

The KDP visit to Ankara in early September was followed by a delegation from the PUK. Turkish officials warned PUK leaders not to challenge their operations in northern Iraq. Both KDP and PUK delegations were due to fly to Washington DC for peace talks after visiting Turkey.

In August the PKK announced and then, two weeks later, rescinded, a unilateral ceasefire in its struggle against Turkish forces. Abdullah Ocalan made the announcement on Med TV, the Kurdish satellite station broadcasting across Europe and parts of the Middle East (see *Traces* no. 2). The proposal of a ceasefire was timed to coincide with the appointment of a new commander of Turkey’s land forces, General Huseyin Kivrikoglu. Ocalan explained that the cancellation was a reaction to the failure of Turkey to reciprocate.

In announcing the truce, the PKK had offered to disband in return for a greater level of regional autonomy within Turkey. This position contrasts with previous demands for a completely independent homeland. It is also thought that the truce offer was directed towards a European audience, designed to win diplomatic support from EU governments.

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**Dual Nationality Laws May Increase the Political Influence of US Mexicans in Mexico**

Mexico’s new dual nationality laws have had a limited response from Mexicans resident in the USA. But a government commission is discussing allowing non-resident Mexicans to vote in the 2000 presidential elections. Candidates have already begun campaigning north of the border.

The new law enabling Mexicans who are citizens of other countries to take up Mexican nationality came into operation in March (see *Traces* no 1). President Zedillo held a ceremony at the National Palace in Mexico City at which he presented nationality papers to a number of applicants. Mexico has joined Colombia,
the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Ireland in offering overseas compatriots the opportunity to reclaim nationality and, in effect, to hold dual nationality with the USA. The law simply requires the applicant to produce a birth certificate and pay a $12 fee. In addition, any Mexicans taking up another citizenship after March are no longer deemed to have forfeited their Mexican nationality rights.

But in the first two months, fewer than 2,000 Mexicans resident in the USA applied for dual nationality. A further 1,700 applied in the rest of the world.

The Mexican government is considering whether to allow overseas Mexicans a say in the 2000 presidential elections. A commission is due to make its recommendations in November. It has to consider the difficult logistical questions of how an expatriate vote could be organised, as well as questions about who can legitimately contribute to campaign finances. Would ballot boxes have to be restricted to Mexican consulates, or would the US allow a foreign country to open polling stations on its soil? Would Mexico reciprocate and allow US ballot boxes in Mexico?

If voting is extended to non-resident Mexican, it could add anything between 2.5 and 7 million overseas voters to the electoral roles from the USA alone, the higher figure being equivalent to one in six of the total Mexican electorate. The expectations are that the 2000 presidential race will be a close competition between 3 or 4 strong candidates, and that the absentee vote could make all the difference.

Campaigning in the USA

In anticipation of the changes, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, the likely PRD candidate, led Chicago’s Cinco de Mayo parade in 1998. Vicente Fox, the probable PAN candidate, met with business leaders in Dallas. Critics of the proposal fear that the forthcoming presidential election will be effectively fought abroad, and that it will divide the Mexican American community. The fact that so many US Mexicans are wealthy could, they fear, distort the electoral process if there is no cap on campaign contributions.

Campaigning in the USA by politicians running for office in Mexico is already becoming common. Jose Murat, a candidate for the governorship of Oaxaca, Mexico, campaigned in Los Angeles during July. There are over 200,000 Oaxacans in southern California. He followed on the heels of Patricio Martinez, who successfully ran for the governorship of Chihuahua, and Ricardo Monreal, governor of Zacatecas, who campaigned in northern and southern California. Although candidates recognise that US Mexicans cannot yet vote in the elections, they think that US Mexicans are an important influence on friends and families back home. It is hoped that husbands in the US will influence their wives in Mexico how to vote. Migrants who send back money to their home villages and towns for civic projects are also expected to carry weight. Courting the business vote in California also goes down well in Mexico, because of the implications for investment. Candidates can also collect campaign contributions from northerners.

Emigres Call Two Nations Home, William Branigin Washington Post 31.5.98; Mexican Dual nationality law to affect about 5 million in the U.S., San Jose Mercury News 4.6.98; Globalism May Bring Mexico's Politics to American Soil, Sam Quinones Los Angeles Times 5.7.98; Candidates From Mexico Go Stumping in Southland Politics, Mary Beth Sheridan Los Angeles Times 31.7.98

Iran and Iraq Address Their Diasporas

The Iraqi government is trying to persuade exiles to return. President
Khatami made an appeal while in New York. Opposition to the regime continued, in both New York and during the World Cup finals. Iraq also addressed its 2 million exiles. In Jordan, the contribution of the Circassian diaspora was celebrated.

Up to two million Iranians are thought to reside overseas, many having left after the 1979 revolution. The Iranian government is seeking to encourage exiles to return. In July the deputy foreign minister for consular affairs, Mohammad-Ali Hadi announced that Iran would offer consular services to dissidents abroad. The government seeks the wealth and expertise of the diaspora to help build the economy.

In September, President Mohammad Khatami travelled to the USA to address the United Nations. This was the first visit to the USA by an Iranian President since 1987. At the UN building he addressed 800 members of the US Iranian community, who accorded him a warm welcome. His message to them was the need for mutual respect among Iranians and with other peoples. Khatami asked the Iranian diaspora to help end the country’s period of isolation on the international scene. He encouraged them to participate in dialogue with other nations, at home and abroad. Khatami also invited Iranian exiles to return to Iran, particularly scientists. He stated “Your country is your identity. You cannot escape from that unless you escape from yourself. Nationhood is not a piece of land. It’s in your blood.”

President Khatami later addressed the United Nations General Assembly. Observers noted that his remarks about Israel and the USA were conciliatory, and that he stressed Iran’s desire to be accepted as a law-abiding country with a good record on human rights. His text drew upon several philosophical sources, including the Koran and the New Testament. Khatami’s intent was to depict himself as a thinker open to many cultures and religions.

A crowd of 2,000 demonstrators from the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCR) gathered outside the UN to confront Khatami, whose speech was also interrupted by a protestor. The demonstrators charged Khatami with only pretending to be a moderate. The NCR claims to be a parliament in exile, and is the political wing of the National Liberation Army based in northern Iraq.

Iranians at the World Cup

During the World Cup finals in France, thousands of Iranian supporters, mostly opponents of the regime, were denied access to the country by the authorities. Despite this, the crowd for Iran’s game against the United States was filled with exiles carrying banners criticising the Iranian government. Although around 1,000 fans made the journey from Iran, they were outnumbered by approximately 30,000 supporters drawn from exile communities from around the world. When the Iranian team qualified for the finals by defeating Australia last year, thousands of football fans stormed Tehran’s national stadium to celebrate. The revellers included thousands of women.

Iraq announced that it would organise a conference for Iraqi expatriates in Baghdad in October. Over 1,500 exiles are to be invited. A similar conference in 1996 attracted 400 Iraqis from abroad. It is estimated that the Iraqi expatriates number two million.

Circassians

In September, Prince Ali of Jordan led a group of Circassians on horseback on a
journey from Jordan, through Syria, Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus. The journey was designed to symbolise the heritage and presence of Circassian people in the Middle East and to recognise their loyalty to the Jordanian crown. King Hussein of Jordan recruits Circassians to his palace guards. The riders wore traditional Circassian costume.

Circassians originated in the region between the Black Sea, the Kuban River and the Caucasus, now part of Russia. Over the centuries, war and flight dispersed Circassians across the greater region. It is estimated that 4 million Circassians now live outside the homeland, mainly in Turkey but also in Jordan, where there are 70,000.

Evil empire opponents lose chance to cheer Great Satan, The Guardian 22.6.98; Flavour of Iran too subtle for beefcakes, Richard Williams The Guardian 23.6.98; Iran to offer consular services to dissidents abroad, Agence France Presse English Wire 3.8.98; Iranian president appeals for dialogue between peoples, Agence France Presse English Wire 20.9.98; Khatami sends message to Iranian-Americans, Anwar Farqui Associated Press 20.9.98; Iranian President Paints a Picture of Peace and Moderation, Elaine Sciolino New York Times 22.9.98; Thousands demand end to ‘repressive’ Iran regime, Richard Pyle Associated Press 22.9.98; Iraq to organise expatriate conference in Baghdad, Agence France Presse English Wire 23.9.98; Jordanian prince on horseback to celebrate Circassian heritage, Jamal Halaby Associated Press 10.9.98

Leaders from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan met in Alma Ata in July for the third summit of the Central Asian countries bordering China. Previous meetings in Shanghai and Moscow had demilitarised the border zones and initiated co-operation of border security. The five nations committed themselves to partnership in their border regions. This included measures on transnational crime and drug trafficking.

At the summit China and Kazakhstan signed a treaty resolving border demarcation disputes. The two disputed territories were the Bairmuz pass and near the Sary-Chardy river region. The settlement of the border is regarded as an important prelude to further agreements over oil pipelines between Kazakhstan and China. China also plans to invest in hotels, car plants and infrastructure projects in the country. The Kazakh premier, Nurlan Balgimbayev, was also due to visit Xinjiang province, where some 1.5 million ethnic Kazakhs live. Among the other topics discussed were the activities of Xinjiang separatists.
China accuses Afghanistan’s Taliban of training terrorists for operations in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, where Muslim rebels are resisting Chinese government. Xinjiang is the border province with the former Soviet republics, Russia, India, Afghanistan and Mongolia. Its strategic importance to China has been increased by the new oil fields coming on line across Central Asia, and the need to construct pipelines from land-locked states to coastal ports. Chinese authorities estimate that Xinjiang itself may contain more significant oil fields. The influx of migrant workers associated with the oil industry has exacerbated relations with the Muslim population, which has declined from 80% of Xinjiang’s population to under 60% in 50 years. Among the migrants are people displaced by the Three Gorges Dam scheme in central China.

The Chinese authorities suspect the bordering states, notably Uzbekistan and Afghanistan of harbouring separatist rebels.

In May, Uzbekistan, Russia and Tajikistan signed an agreement to cooperate in clamping down on Islamist groups in the region. The Uzbek government accuses Pakistan of training and harbouring Islamist militants intent on bringing the government down. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan joined in the action against Islamists.

Kazakh TV reported that over 50 representatives of the Kazakh diaspora met in the country's new capital, Astana, in June. They discussed the future of the country and of the diaspora, which was numbered at 4 million (the population of Kazakhstan itself is around 8 million). The majority of diaspora Kazakhs live in China (1.5 million), Uzbekistan, Russia and Turkmenistan. The conference heard that up to 500,000 Kazakhs from Uzbekistan desire to return to the homeland. It was also stated that 164,000 had already returned between 1991 and 1997. The delegates were informed that many of Kazakhstan's larger cities were now growing only slowly or not at all, and that this presented economic problems. A target population of 25 million by 2030 has been set for the country, and the government recognises the need to include the returned diaspora in its plans.

Ethnic Kyrgyz living in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan have appealed to Kyrgyzstan government to facilitate their return to their homeland. They identified the mountainous region of Chon-Alay in Kyrgyzstan as suitable for their resettlement and their nomadic way of life. Leaders of the community declared that there were 1,600 Afghan Kyrgyz, and that they felt isolated in the Pamirs and in danger of terminal decline as a community. There are also some 3,000 Afghans in Kyrgyzstan. Representatives of the community appealed to the Kyrgyz government to organise a conference on the Afghan diaspora in the CIS, said to number 60,000, to be held in Bishkek. The leaders declared that the conference would be part of the peace process in Afghanistan.

Kazakh Premier visits China to discuss cooperation, ITAR/TASS News Agency May 07, 1998; Summit meeting of Russia, Central Asian states, and China, ITAR/TASS News Agency 11.6.98; Kazakh foreign diaspora holds conference, BBC monitoring service 22.6.98; China's Jiang arrives for "Group of Five" summit on border security, Agence France Presse English Wire 3.7.98; China, Kazakhstan sign border treaty, discuss investment projects, Agence France Presse English Wire 4.7.98; Ethnic Kyrgyz in Afghanistan want to move to Kyrgyzstan, BBC monitoring service 13.8.98; Kyrgyz Afghans propose congress of CIS ethnic Afghans, BBC monitoring service 22.9.98; Afghans accused of exporting terror to China’s far west, John Gittings The Guardian 3.9.98; Taliban trains Muslim separatists for terrorism in China, Damien McElroy Sunday Telegraph 4.10.98.
Armenia’s President Hints at Dual Citizenship

President Kocharian of Armenia suggested putting the idea of dual citizenship for Armenians to a national vote. Meanwhile, the first high level meeting to discuss Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenian and Azerbaijani politicians for several years took place in Baku.

In September the Prime Minister of Armenia, Armen Darbinyan, met with the President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev in Baku. It was the first high level meeting between the two countries for several years and was interpreted as an indication that negotiations over Nakorno-Karabakh may be making progress. Azerbaijan maintains that it is the rightful government of the territory, but Armenia continues to resist any restoration of Azerbaijan sovereignty. President Kocharian, a former leader of the territory, suggested possible alternatives based on Northern Ireland, New Caledonia, Andorra and other forms of shared or unorthodox sovereignty.

Also in September, Kocharian proposed that the constitutional prohibition against dual citizenship should be removed in order to make full advantage of the Armenian diaspora. He suggested putting the issue to the vote during the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nakorno-Karabakh Republic (NK) issued a denial that it was issuing Armenian passports to its citizens in September. It stated that NKR residents carried Soviet-type passports and could acquire special rights to visit Armenia available to all members of the Armenian diaspora.

Korea’s Dual Nationality Plans Opposed at Home and by China

The proposal to grant nationality to the 5.2 million overseas Koreans has created divisions between the country’s Justice and Foreign Ministries. The Justice Ministry favours a status almost matching that of domestic Koreans, including voting and property rights. Overseas Koreans could hold government positions, except in the areas of diplomacy, defence and justice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade expressed concern that the proposed law would lead to conflict with China, where 1.96 million overseas Koreans live. China and Russia oppose their own citizens having access to dual nationality. The Chinese authorities objected to the dual nationality law on the grounds that it would encourage separatist sentiments among the country’s Korean community.
and would damage relations between Korea and China.  
The Justice Ministry proposed a compromise, whereby Koreans from abroad would be issued a certificate of residence registration upon entering Korea only.  This would not allow overseas Koreans to hold government office and would not provide automatic voting rights.  These would depend upon length of residence in the country.

Foreign Ministry Opposed to Dual-Citizenship Law, Korea Herald 16.9.98; Legislation Plan for Overseas Koreans to Be Revised, Korea Times 9.9.98; China urges South Korea to refrain from enacting citizenship law, BBC monitoring service 21.9.98

Hungary and Romania’s Hungarians Debate Dual Nationality

Quarrels continued both within Romania and between Romania and Hungary on the question of dual citizenship for Hungarian-Romanians.

The Hungarian government announced in September that it would set up three committees to explore ways of granting citizenship to Hungarians abroad.  The announcement was made by the chairman of the Office for Hungarians Beyond the Border during a meeting with politicians in central Romania.

The possibility of Romanian Hungarians acquiring either dual citizenship or greater rights within Romania was strongly challenged by the leader of the main opposition party.  Ion Iliescu, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Romania, attacked the country’s President Emil Constantinescu and leading ethnic Hungarian politicians.  He stated that separatist sentiments among the Hungarians violated the constitution and endangered the integrity and sovereignty of the state.

Following an official visit to Romania, the chairman of the Hungarian Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee denied that the government was planning to introduce dual citizenship for Romanian Hungarians.  Istvan Szent-Ivanyi expressed a preference for all Romanian citizens to be exempt from visa requirements and to be allowed free entry to Schengen countries.  He expressed the Hungarian government’s wish that Romania should join ‘Euro-Atlantic’ structures as soon as possible.

The Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania, a member of the governing coalition, again pressed for the formation of a Hungarian-language university in Transylvania.  The proposal was strongly opposed by both opposition parties and fellow members of the coalition.  The government has said that it might consider expanding the number of courses taught in Hungarian and other languages, including German and Ukrainian.  But it resists creating an entire campus for Hungarian-speakers only.

Parties clash over ethnic university, Vera Rich Times Higher Education Supplement 17.7.98; Hungary committees on dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians abroad set up, BBC monitoring report 22.9.98; Romania government attitude to ethnic Hungarians "endangers state integrity", BBC monitoring reports 22.9.98; Dual citizenship not on agenda in Hungary - parliamentary official, BBC monitoring reports 3.10.98

Canada Fails to Reform Immigration and Citizenship Laws

A committee of the Canadian Parliament threw out the proposals to change immigration and citizenship laws.  But new provisions for reporting overseas assets and for attracting high-skilled workers are being considered.

After an extensive two-year review, the proposals to reform Canada’s immigration and citizenship laws submitted by the
Minister of Immigration were rejected by a committee of the Canadian Parliament. Lucienne Robillard's report, entitled 'Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration' was not well-received by the Liberal-dominated committee in June. She had tried to reopen the question of who should qualify for Canadian citizenship, and on what grounds. Among the policies under review was whether Canada should automatically grant citizenship to anyone born in the country. Her critics charged her with wanting to create a class of stateless children.

In July Canada's Auditor General announced that the country's offshore asset reporting laws would be changed to oblige all Canadians to reveal their assets across the world of $68,000 ($100,000 Canadian) or more. The law would not require people to pay taxes on assets held abroad, only to report them. Members of the Asian entrepreneur community strenuously criticised the new law because of its deterrence to investment by transnational businesses. Some people have predicted that it will lead to thousands of business owners leaving the country altogether. Opponents of the changes also believe that the new law wrongly implies that immigrants avoid taxes.

In a separate but related development, the Canadian Citizenship and Immigration department announced that it would consider introducing new laws to make the country more attractive to highly-skilled immigrants by granting work rights to spouses. These changes have been requested by Canada's high-technology industries, which have faced problems recruiting skilled workers from abroad. Proponents note that Australia and the USA are able to compete more strongly for such employees because of better wages and working conditions. Enabling spouses to work more easily would, they argue, encourage more skilled workers and managers to settle permanently. Critics of the proposal fear that it might lead to more Canadian-born workers being displaced from high status employment.

Robillard seeking citizenship debate 'Stateless babies' not the intent, minister says, Allan Thompson Toronto Star 13.5.98; Immigration overhaul back to Square One, Province 12.6.98; Canada's overseas tax law change angers well-heeled immigrants, Greg Heakes Vancouver Sun 2.7.98; Government to study looser rules for spouses of high-tech workers, Bert Hill Ottawa Citizen 30.7.98

Confusion at the Borders: US, Canada and Mexico

There was confusion between May and October as the deadline for new US border regulations approached. Critics of the changes in New England, Canada and Mexico feared that the tougher regulations would harm cross-border trade and movement. In the end, the US Congress voted to delay the implementation of the regulations.

In 1996 the US federal government passed a law (the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility) mandating changes to immigration and border policies to be in place by 30th September 1998. In October the US Congress voted to delay implementation of the new regulations until 2001. Although the law officially came into force on October 1, the decision meant that it would not be enforced. The delay was justified on the grounds that the Immigration and Naturalization Service lacked the funds and the technology to implement it.

The new law was aimed at controlling the US-Mexican border, but the effects would be dramatic along the Canadian border. Opponents feared that the new regulations would require Canadians to register before being able to cross the border. All foreigners would have to be identified...
entering and leaving. Critics argue that the delays at border crossings will create congestion and deter trade, tourism and business. Residents used to crossing on a daily business for shopping, socialising or business may face unacceptable delays and red tape, argue opponents.

The new law met with widespread opposition. In June, governors of New England states and premiers of eastern Canadian provinces resolved to oppose the new border controls on the grounds that they would restrict free trade. In 1997 trade between New England and the eastern provinces amounted to $11 billion; 475,000 jobs in New England are said to depend on the traffic. In 1996 13 million vehicles crossed the border in the region, using 170 points of entry. In FY 1997 there were almost 118.7 million crossings of the border by Canadians.

The plans to charge $45 for visas threatened border traffic and worried business owners along the US-Mexico border. In Nogales, Arizona, 40 percent of retail trade comes from Mexican visitors. Five million Mexicans hold free border-crossing cards, but the new regulations would have required them to acquire laser cards from October 1 1999. These cards are said to be more resistant to fraud. The current cards are good for a 72 minute visit, up to 25 miles from the border. There was relief when the Senate decided in July to delay the implementation of the scheme for five years. Existing card holders would, under the Senate’s decision, continue as before. New applicants would have to pay for the new cards, which would be obtained only from American consulates.

Much of the confusion arose from the different resolutions and amendments coming from the two houses of Congress. The Senate voted to delay the regulations in July. The House of Representatives initially suspended the law until October 1999. Finally in October, the Senate and House reconciled their bills and agreed upon a delay. Support for the bill came largely from Republican Congressional Representatives from the southern states, responding to concerns about illegal immigration from Mexico. Opposition to the bill was found mainly among northern legislators along the Canadian border.

Gulf States Try to ‘Renationalise’ Their Workforces

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states pressed ahead with their plans to replace migrant workers and expatriates with their own nationals.

Saudi Arabia has 6 million foreign workers, mainly from South Asia and the Philippines. Foreigners make up a third of the population, and over 90% of the private sector workforce. The aim is to replace 660,000 foreign workers by Saudi nationals by 2000. The Saudi Arabian government announced in July that there would be new limits on the number of expatriates permitted to work in government offices. There would be no limits for health and higher education workers. Under plans to gradually nationalise the workforce, many job categories have already been closed to foreigners and work permits reduced to one year for many professions. In August the government set a target for five percent of the private sector workforce to be Saudi
nationals by October, rising to 10 percent by 1999.

Between October and August the Saudi authorities expelled more than 750,000 foreign workers. As a result of an amnesty for illegal immigrants, a further 485,000 workers had applied for regular residence permits. Along with other Gulf states, Saudi Arabia gave illegal immigrants three months to legalise their presence or leave. The amnesty expired in October 1997.

Qatar’s amnesty for illegal immigrants ended in August, after 14,530 foreigners had either legalised their stay or agreed to be deported. Bahrain deported 40,000 migrants under their amnesty, which ended in 1997.

In September the Gulf Co-operation Council agreed to enforce a decision taken in 1994 to extend working rights to all Gulf nationals. Saudi Arabia agreed to extend rights to other Gulf nationals. The GCC includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

There are obstacles to substituting Gulf nationals for expatriate workers. Young Saudis, for example, are said not to want to do manual labour, while professionals demand higher wages than foreigners. Wages for hotel cleaning, labouring and chauffeuring are as low as $400 a month. One possibility under discussion is a minimum wage policy. The government has created training programmes for hotel workers, real estate sales people etc.. The job shortage for nationals is expected to get worse in the near future: 40 percent of the Gulf’s population are aged under 14. In the Gulf as a whole, foreign workers make up over half the workforce. They send back $22 billion a year in remittances.

Arabia repatriates 750,000 illegals, Straits Times 7.8.98; Qatari amnesty on illegal migrants ends Thursday, Agence France Presse English Wire 19.8.98; Saudi nationals must make up five percent of workforce by October, Agence France Presse English Wire 20.8.98; Saudi Arabia opens jobs to Gulf nationals, Agence France Presse English Wire 8.9.98

Overseas Chinese Protest at the Violence in Indonesia

The fear of racial violence among Indonesian Chinese resurfaced in August. Overseas Chinese throughout the Pacific protested against the earlier attacks in May, while President Habibie appealed for Indonesian Chinese to return.

In August there were simultaneous protests among the Pacific Rim’s Chinese communities over the treatment of Indonesia’s Chinese community. Demonstrations were held in Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand and the USA. The Chinese government called on Indonesia to punish those responsible for assaults on the Chinese community. The pronouncement came after a long period of unusual silence from Beijing. The Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan demanded that Indonesia protect the rights of overseas Chinese. Demonstrators gathered outside the Indonesian embassy in Beijing. The Hong Kong government announced that it would treat Chinese fleeing the violence with sympathy and make arrangements for their extended stay.

The protests were fuelled by rumours and pictures circulating through the Internet about the gang raping of Chinese women during the riots. It was said that 160 women had been raped, and that 20 had died, some as a result of suicide. The UN Development Fund for Women stated that the rapes were well-organised, although the Indonesian government denied that there was any evidence for this.
Demonstrators also claimed that the violence in May in Jakarta and central Java had been planned in advance.

During the country’s Independence Day celebrations in August many Chinese fled upon hearing rumours that there would be trouble. The rumours spread through Jakarta, Semarang, Surabaya and Solo. It was feared that painted symbols were appearing on Chinese homes and businesses marking them out for attack. Local newspapers were filled with advertisements from immigration consultants, that many believed encouraged the exodus. Immigration lawyers held seminars. The military chief of East Java province called on Chinese not to depart and investigated the source of the rumours. In Jakarta, 10,000 troops took the streets in anticipation of unrest.

Between May 14 and May 20 almost 70,000 people left Indonesia, according to Ministry of Justice figures. A further 27,000 departed between May 23 and 26. The Co-ordinating Agency for National Unity estimated that 40,000 Chinese-Indonesians left the country. The Australian embassy issued 16,000 visas between May and August.

The new government under President B.J. Habibie promised to create a commission to investigate the riots and the attacks. President Habibie appealed for Chinese Indonesians to return in August. He toured riot-torn areas of the capital, including Glodok, the Chinatown. The departure of tens of thousands of Chinese and expatriate workers has severely damaged the country’s economy. Before the unrest, Chinese Indonesians were estimated to control 70 percent of the private sector economy. While poorer Chinese cannot afford to leave, there is widespread belief that wealthy Chinese have removed fortunes from the country.

Representatives of Chinese community met with the government to request an end to laws which discriminate against Chinese, for example restrictions on university places, membership of the armed services and civil service appointments.

Treating ethnic Chinese equally, Amir Sidharta The Jakarta Post 21.7.98; China Demands Justice for Indonesia Violence, Paul Eckert Fox News Online 3.8.98; Hong Kong receives fearful Chinese fleeing Indonesia, Agence France Presse English Wire 14.8.98; Indonesian general calls on ethnic Chinese not to flee the country, Agence France Presse English Wire 11.8.98; Habibie appeals to citizens to return home, Agence France Presse English Wire 12.8.98; Sino-Thai group condemns rapes of Chinese in Indonesia, Agence France Presse English Wire 17.8.98; Resentment Still Aimed At Chinese In Indonesia, Seth Mydans New York Times 6.9.98; Chinese-Indonesians plead for end to discrimination, The Jakarta Post 17.9.98; Is migrating from RI a solution? The Jakarta Post 27.9.98

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Jeff Henderson

Uneven Crises: Institutional Foundations of East Asian Turmoil

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The Palestinian National Authority Reaches out to Diaspora

In August the Moroccan news agency announced that the Palestinian National Authority planned to launch a satellite television channel in 1999. The transmissions would be carried via an Egyptian satellite company. They would be directed towards the whole Palestinian diaspora. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) already possesses a monopoly over television and radio in its administered territories.
The PNA has begun funding Palestinian organisations in Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli and Tyre. The funds are directed towards refugee organisations, trades unions and women’s groups. Among the Palestinian diaspora there is a feeling that Arafat abandoned them after the Oslo peace accord, which left their status undetermined until 1999. Arafat now appears to want to rebuild relations with the diaspora, particularly the 400,000 Palestinians in Lebanon. But his opponents charge him with acting out of desperation given the slow progress of negotiations with Israel. Adding the refugee communities to his power base would, they believe, serve as a bargaining tool in the peace talks. Yet it appears unlikely that Israel would agree to a large-scale return of the diaspora and the best they might hope for is some kind of compensation for the loss of land and property. Other Palestinian organisations, notably the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) reject the Oslo accord (both based in Damascus).

Arafat funds his forgotten refugees, Robert Fisk Independent 6.7.98; Plans for Palestinian satellite TV channel in 1999, BBC monitoring service 4.10.98

Tamil Separatists ‘Cyber Strike’ Embassies

The Tamil separatist organisation LTTE was thought to be behind an attempt to disrupt Sri Lankan embassies communications systems. There are indications that the LTTE may have to relocate its headquarters from London following new anti-terrorist laws.

During two weeks in August, Sri Lankan embassies around the world were bombarded with e-mail messages from the Internet Black Tigers, thought to be an offshoot of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Embassies in North America, Europe and Asia were swamped with up to 800 messages a day, paralysing the system. The messages read ‘We are the Internet Black Tigers and we’re doing this to disrupt your communications.” The CIA stated that this was the first cyber attack by a known terrorist organisation.

There are around 400,000 Tamil exiles in North America and Europe, and it is estimated that 520,000 Tamils have fled the country since the 1980s. In recent years, around 17-18,000 have departed a year. Refugee remittances may be worth around $500 a year.

The Sri Lankan government tried to persuade the UK to prevent fund-raising by Tamil separatists in the country. There are thought to be around 50,000 expatriate Tamils in Britain, mostly refugees from the fighting in the 1980s. London is the LTTE’s international headquarters. The LTTE worldwide network raises about $2.75 million a month according to Murali Krishnan in the Montreal Gazette. London is also the centre of the LTTE information activities, publicising the struggle for a homeland in northern and eastern Sri Lanka.

In the USA the LTTE was listed as a terrorist organization in October, barring them from fund-raising. The Sri Lankan government hopes that the UK will follow suit. Under established UK law, there used to be no equivalent list of banned organisations and no comprehensive restriction on fund-raising. But the LTTE may be affected by the new anti-terrorist legislation introduced in September (this issue of Traces). As a result, there were rumours that the LTTE might relocate its headquarters to South Africa.

In August, the British High Commissioner in Sri Lanka called on expatriate Tamils to
return to the country and help restore peace. He made the appeal during a trip to the northern town of Jaffna. As many as 55,000 people have died in the separatist struggle since 1972. Fighting has intensified since 1995. The last week in September saw over 1,300 rebels and soldiers killed in an escalation of the fighting associated with the government’s drive to secure the main highway between Colombo, the capital, and Jaffna.

The LTTE appealed to Nelson Mandela, as head of the Non-Aligned Movement, to persuade Sri Lankan to negotiate for peace. The LTTE has sought to internationalise the conflict in order to bring pressure to bear on the Sri Lankan government.

Worldwide fundraising fills Tamil Tigers’ coffers, Murali Krishnan Montreal Gazette 22.4.98; Cyber terrorist action reported, USA Today 3.8.98; Sri Lanka: Blood and money, The Economist 8.8.98; Britain asks expatriate Sri Lankan Tamils to return home for peace, Agence France Presse English Wire 27.8.98; LTTE seeks support of Nelson Mandela, V. S. Sambandan The Hindu 30.8.98; More than 1,300 killed in Sri Lankan fighting, Donna Bryson Associated Press 30.9.98

**Globalization of Russian criminal mafia**

The activities of the Russian mafia in Russia and abroad are causing increased concern to national police forces. A conference in July organised by the Russian government attempted to achieve international co-operation against the gangs.

The head of the Russian Interior Ministry’s directorate on organised crime announced that Russian transnational criminal groups were operating in 26 countries. He listed the main centres of activity as the USA, Germany, Switzerland, Israel, Turkey and the Netherlands. The FBI reckons that Russian mafia gangs operate in more than 50 countries.

The Interior Ministry is co-operating with neighbouring states to tackle international crime. Agreements with Poland, Ukraine and Belarus are aimed at illegal alcohol production. The Ministry also organised a conference of all the organised crime departments of the CIS and Baltic states in July. Observers from Belgium, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Finland and Sweden attended. The participants agreed a widespread programme of anti-mafia efforts. They also undertook to prevent the entry of organised crime into politics throughout the region.

Russian transnational criminal organisations are now reckoned to be the equals of the Italian mafia and the Colombian drug cartels in terms of global activity. According to a report in the *Los Angeles Times*, the Russian mafia has smuggled up to $50 billion out of Russia to the rest of the world. Much of it is laundered in Switzerland, Cyprus and the Caribbean. There may be up to 6,000 mafia groups in Russia, and 200 operating in the USA. There are FBI task forces specifically directed against Russian criminals in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and San Francisco. In Los Angeles, the FBI claims that they are involved in protection rackets, false automobile and medical insurance claims and credit card fraud.

Police authorities recognise that the gangs are well-financed and well-organised, and that they cooperate with one another. In Europe, the Russian mafia is closely involved with prostitution, involving smuggling women out of the former Soviet states. In Berlin they are said to control gambling. In Israel, gambling, prostitution and money laundering are major activities.

In order to combat crime, the Russian communications agencies are discussing
the possibility of monitoring every e-mail message and internet communication. To achieve this, every Internet server would be required to install a monitoring device connected directly to the Russian security and secret police agencies.

Russian secret police want to monitor Internet, James Meek The Guardian 21.7.98; Russian police report mafia gangs increasingly active abroad, ITAR-TASS news agency via BBC monitoring service 22.7.98; A New Breed of Gangster Is Globalizing Russian Crime, Richard C. Paddock Los Angeles Times 23.9.98

France and UK Propose New Citizenship Deals for Colonies

France agreed a programme for New Caledonia’s independence, while the UK promised to grant full citizenship to 100,000 residents of its dependent territories.

In May, the French government and representatives of Kanak separatists agreed a plan leading to the colony’s independence in 2013 and 2018. In July both houses of the French Assembly passed an amendment to the constitution providing for New Caledonia’s eventual independence. The accord involved the creation of a specific New Caledonian citizenship in 1999, a gradual transfer of powers to the island and the incorporation of Kanak customary law into the island’s statutes. A referendum on the proposed changes was due to be held on the island in November.

New Caledonia, in the western Pacific, has a population of around 200,000, 44% of whom are Melanesian Kanaks. The rest are mainly settlers from the French mainland. It was seized by France in 1853, and is the world’s fourth largest producer of nickel. The government is in the hands of the pro-independence Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front, which is opposed by the loyalist Rally for Caledonia in the Republic. France will still retain nine other territories in the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian Oceans and the Caribbean Sea.

In France itself, the Socialist government’s new citizenship laws came into force in September. These replaced the measures introduced by the right wing government in 1993. Under the new conditions, all children born in France and living continuously in the country for at least five years between the ages of 11 and 18 can gain French nationality. The application may be made by parents on behalf of children, or by children themselves after the age of 16.

The UK announced that it would change the citizenship status of the majority of its remaining colonies and territories. Only the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar were to be omitted from the review. Under the proposals, the 100,000 or so residents of Britain’s Dependent Territories would be granted full British citizenship. This would include the right of residence in the UK, but the territories would not be required to reciprocate and allow all British citizens free entry in return. There are 8 territories involved, including the Caribbean island of Montserrat, that has been suffering from volcanic eruptions. The other territories are: in the Caribbean, Anguilla, the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin islands, the Turks and Caicos islands; and in the Atlantic, Bermuda and St Helena; and Pitcairn island in the Pacific. Under the plans, they are to be renamed Overseas Territories.

The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, supported the changes as part of a “modernised contract” between Britain and its colonies. The existing relationship had been widely criticised in the wake of the UK’s seeming indifference and lethargy towards the Montserratians in the aftermath of the volcanic eruptions. The plans were long resisted by the British
Home Office, alarmed at the possibility of increased immigration from former colonies.

French change constitutional to ensure New Caledonia peace, Agence France Presse English Wire 6.7.98; French minister to hold devolution talks in New Caledonia, Agence France Presse English Wire 24.8.98; New softer French citizenship laws enforced, Agence France Presse English Wire 2.9.98; Last outposts of empire brought into the fold, Ian Black The Guardian.

Soap and Beer for Pakistani Overseas Communities

A Pakistani television company announced plans for a TV soap set among Scottish Pakistanis in August. The series, to be called Des Pardes – Foreign Homeland, will be shot in 13 episodes. It will be the first soap filmed in Britain but aimed at audiences in the sub-continent. The expected audience is between 2 and 3 billion according to the makers, who are hoping that it will also be shown on British terrestrial television. The series is the creation of a Pakistani Scottish couple from Glasgow, Tasmina and Zulfkar Ahmed-Sheikh, who have experience acting in Pakistan and contacts in both British and Pakistani TV industries. The drama will involve scenes in Scottish cities such as Glasgow and Dundee, in the Highlands around Loch Ness, as well as in Pakistan itself.

The Los Angeles Times reported on the only brewery in Pakistan, the Murree Brewery Co. in Rawalpindi. Although it makes beer and spirits, its products are forbidden to Muslim Pakistanis, who make up 97% of the country’s population. The owners are worried that the government may close them down in response to demands from Muslim fundamentalists. The Company has had a monopoly on alcohol production in Pakistan since 1947, but it is forbidden to export. As a result, Murree plans to open a brewery in Salzburg, Austria, to meet the demands from the British and European markets. Murree recognises that there are a million potential customers in the UK, as well as 6,500 Indian and Pakistani restaurants where the beer might be served. If the Salzburg plant succeeds, others may follow in New York, Toronto and Los Angeles.

Curtains lift on Asian life as TV drama heads East, Gerard Seenan The Guardian 17.8.98; Lone Pakistani Brewery Tapping Overseas Markets to Stay Afloat Beverages, Dexter Filkins Los Angeles Times 25.9.98
Christians in the Middle East: Decline and Persecution

The proposed visit by the Pope to Iraq in 2000 drew attention to the decline among Christian communities throughout the Middle East. Although the causes of decline are mainly social and demographic, the US Christian persecution movement succeeded in persuading Congress to pass new laws against countries where Christians are oppressed.

Pope John Paul II announced in December that he wished to visit Iraq in 2000 to mark the millennium. He intends to journey to Ur, Abraham’s homeland. The news came amid the bombing campaign against Iraq by US and British forces. The Pope’s statement expressed solidarity with the people of Iraq, declaring that war was not a way to resolve disputes.

Across the Fertile Crescent Christian communities are shrinking, according to an article in The Economist. Throughout the region, long-established Christian monasteries and villages are being abandoned. Iraq’s Christian community numbered 750,000 in 1990, but has since fallen to 500,000. The Syrian Orthodox monastery of Mar Mitta in northern Iraq, once home to 7,000 monks, now has only two residents. Christians make up 2-4% of the population of Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza; 10% of Syria; and a third or more of the Lebanese population. But the number of Christian Jordanians has fallen by a half since 1967.

In southeastern Turkey, the Syriac Christian community is slowly fading away. Heirs to the oldest functioning monastery in the world, Mor Gabrel, Syriac Christians have abandoned their villages in the Tur Abdin region. Families have been driven away by a combination of warfare between Kurdish separatists and the Turkish army and economic hardship. They have emigrated to Sweden, Switzerland, Britain and elsewhere. Syriacs originated from southern India, from where there is still assistance for the Turkish community.

Some of Turkey’s Greek Orthodox Christians were forced to leave the country in the 1920s. But in August, the Greek town of Larisa was formerly twinned with the Cappadocian town of Urgup, from where many of the Christians came. Tourism among Orthodox Christians visiting their place of origin is increasing. The twinning came after several years of negotiation and is aimed at bringing together Greeks and Turks outside the structures of their national governments.

In Ethiopia, the Orthodox Church feels under threat from Protestant missionaries and the threat of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The decline in tourists to the religion’s monasteries, deterred by the unrest in the region, is a severe blow to the church’s finances. Monks fear that they will have to close some of the 12th and 13th century monasteries. Protestant missions have converted 11 percent of the population in recent years.

The trial of two Christian priests and 18 others on charges of planting bombs opened in Khartoum in October. The trial was conducted behind closed doors, with no press or foreign diplomats. The Catholic Church in Sudan charges the government with widespread persecution, and denounced the proceedings as a show trial. There are rumours that the government planted the bombs itself; they went off on June 30 to coincide with the anniversary of the 1989 coup which brought the National Islamic Front to power.
In Israel, the Greek Orthodox Church complains that it is losing members to the better-financed Roman Catholic congregations. Christian Arabs have protested in the streets and in meetings about the failure of Greek bishops to reverse declining fortunes. There are no Palestinian bishops. Among their complaints is the sale of church land to Israeli developers. Palestinian Christians charge the church with stealing the funds. The Greek Orthodox Church founded its first church in Jerusalem in 135 AD, but critics claim that the community could disappear altogether by early next century.

**Causes of decline**

The causes of the decline in Middle Eastern Christians may lie less in discrimination or persecution from Arabic or Islamic governments, and more from falling birth rates associated with urbanisation, education and socio-economic mobility. Christians more or less enjoy religious freedom across the region, and many have ascended to positions of authority or power. Tariq Aziz, Iraq’s deputy prime minister, is a Christian. They are often found among the wealthier classes, or able to emigrate. Middle Eastern Christian churches have held two conferences, in Cyprus and Baghdad, to address the problem of emigration and the decline of congregations.

**Christian Persecution Movement**

But US Christians are more interested in the apparent spread of persecution in Asia and Africa. The US Congress considered legislation to impose sanctions against countries that mistreat religious minorities. The House of Representatives passed the International Religious Freedom Act by a large majority in May; the Senate did so unanimously in October. A 1997 State Department reported listed 70 countries where Christians faced persecution. The passage of the Act represents a new right wing presence in human rights discourse, traditionally the preserve of the left in the USA. The bill’s sponsors picked out China, Pakistan, Sudan and Egypt as offenders. Members of the USA’s large Coptic community pressed for sanctions against Egypt, alleging widespread persecution by the authorities. Although Copts are prominent among Egypt’s business classes, they are absent from political and university hierarchies. The Coptic Christian community numbers 5 million, one in twelve of Egypt’s population.

The Christian persecution movement is growing in strength across the USA. In services, meetings and rallies, the movement is highlighting the persecution faced Christians around the world. It emerged in 1996 among evangelical churches associated with the political right wing. It is regarded as a sign of a new confidence and international outlook within the US church. Members lobby for boycotts of countries where believers are oppressed, campaign on behalf of imprisoned Christians and travel to Africa and Asia to collect testimony and evidence. On one Sunday in November, 100,000 American churches participated in an International Day of Prayer for the persecuted Church, the third such event. The participating churches came from all denominations.

Pope still hopes to visit Iraq to mark millennium, Agence France Presse English Wire 19.12.98; As bombs fall silent Christian Iraqis pray peace will last, Agence France Presse English Wire 20.12.98; Copts in Egypt, The Economist 23.5.98; Maronites in Lebanon, The Economist 23.5.98; Oldest monastery prays for a miracle, Chris Morris The Guardian 23.6.98; As Christians vanish from their cradle, The Economist 18.7.98; Fears for Church if war comes, David Gough The Guardian 25.7.98; Turkey’s heartland holds out an olive branch to the Greek enemy, Chris Morris The Guardian 3.8.98; Ancient Christian order riven by land sale to Jews, Julian Borger The Guardian 3.8.98; A rising movement cites persecution facing Christians, Laurie Goodstein New York Times 9.11.98;
Crucifixion threat to Catholic priests on trial for mystery Sudanese bombings, Karl Vick The Guardian 5.12.98.

The Seizure of Kurdish Rebel Leader Causes Rift Between Turkey and Europe

The arrest and subsequent release of Abdullah Ocalan by Italian authorities caused a diplomatic row between Turkey and Italy. Italy’s refusal to extradite the leader of the Kurdish Workers party sparked a trade boycott in Turkey. Throughout Europe there were demonstrations and violence.

(Previous reports on the PKK and Turkey appear in Traces nos. 1-3.)

Abdullah Ocalan has led the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) for 20 years. He was born in Turkey, near the Syrian border, and was first arrested for his political activities as a young student drop out in the late 1960s. Despite leading the PKK since the beginning, Ocalan lived in Syria and Lebanon for 18 years, away from the fighting.

In early November, Turkey and Syria both moved troops to their shared 880 km border as tensions heightened over the latter’s support for the PKK. The conflict also related to Turkey’s control over the headwaters of the river Euphrates. A peaceful resolution was achieved with the mediation of Egypt’s President Mubarak. The price demanded by Turkey was the expulsion of the PKK from both Syria and Syrian-controlled Lebanon. It was rumoured that Ocalan then left Syria and entered Russia via friends in Greece and Armenia.

It is thought that Russia had been offering tacit assistance to the PKK in retaliation for Turkey’s covert help to Chechen guerrillas in their fight against Moscow. Russia at first denied that Ocalan was in the country, although the Turkish press reported that he had been smuggled from a safe house in Moscow to a military base in Armenia in preparation for flight to Libya. The US State Department urged Russia to deport Ocalan, while the Russian State Duma voted to offer him political asylum. Even so, he was told to leave the country.

(Just before Moscow expelled Ocalan, Turkey signed an important deal with Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on an oil pipeline to run from Baku on the Caspian Sea to Ceyhan on Turkey’s Mediterranean coast. Although the proposed route is a very expensive one, it is thought that the USA will back it against possible rival routes because it bypasses both Iran and Russia.)

Arrested in Italy

After being thrown out by the Moscow authorities, Ocalan tried to enter Italy on a false passport and was arrested on November 12. He is on Interpol’s list of most wanted criminals. But Ocalan suggested that the Italian authorities had been tipped off by Israeli intelligence. The PKK indicated that he had not anticipated being arrested in Rome.

Turkey hailed the arrest and immediately put in a request for Ocalan’s extradition. But the Italian constitution does not allow extradition to countries which exercise the death penalty, as Turkey does. Despite pressure from Turkey and the US State Department, the Italian courts turned down the request for extradition. Although Ocalan’s trial in absentia had already begun in Turkey on October 12, the government discussed the possibility of repealing the death penalty in order to secure the extradition.
Ocalan was released but placed under house arrest. There was outrage in Turkey at the decision. In mid-December his house arrest was then lifted, but he remained under police surveillance in a villa in Ostia near Rome. The Prime Minister, Massimo D'Alema, said that he expected Ocalan to leave Italy. But the authorities had failed to find a third country willing to give him asylum. South Africa was raised as one possibility.

The diplomatic row between Italy and Turkey dragged in Germany. A warrant for Ocalan's arrest was issued in Germany in 1990 for the alleged murder of a PKK defector. Despite coming under pressure Rome and Washington, the German government decided not to request his extradition. It proposed instead a trial before a European court, although no details were provided as to what this might mean. This was interpreted as an attempt to defuse the crisis and patch up relations between the EU and Turkey. At the same time, the German government feared possible outbreaks of unrest among the German Kurdish community should Ocalan be tried there. The opposition Christian Democrats demanded that the government should try the PKK leader.

In December a French judge requested permission to interview Ocalan about the assassination of PKK opponents in France. Swedish police also travelled to Rome to interview him in connection with the assassination of former prime minister Olaf Palme.

Ocalan's supporters gather

As news of the arrest spread, Ocalan’s supporters descended on Rome. Hundreds of Kurds occupied the square outside the military hospital inside which Ocalan was detained for health reasons. Activists came from all over Europe, as well as the USA and Australia. The square became decorated with pictures of the PKK leader, as supporters began a vigil.

Demonstrations spread across Europe. Thousands of Kurdish demonstrators gathered in Bonn and Hamburg in November. In mid December, 26,000 Kurds demonstrated in Germany calling on Italy to grant asylum. There are around half a million Kurds in Germany, in addition to over 2 million non-Kurdish Turks. There may be up to 5,000 PKK activist in Germany, despite the organisation being outlawed. Buildings were set on fire in Brussels after a demonstration in the Saint Josse district. Two thousand Armenian Kurds held a rally in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia; 50 of them began a hunger strike. There are 80,000 Kurds in Armenia. In Tambov, a region in Russia, there were protests from the small Kurdish community. Two Kurds set themselves on fire in Moscow outside the parliament. Thousands of Kurds went on strike in Romania. In south east Turkey, a Kurdish woman suicide bomber exploded a bomb attached to herself outside a police station. The PKK’s senior representative in Europe threatened retaliation against Turks in Europe if the extradition went ahead.

In mid December, 26,000 Kurds demonstrated in Germany calling on Italy to grant asylum

There were pitched battles between PKK-supporters and Turkish nationalists in the streets of Istanbul. Turkish-Americans organised their own boycott of Italian goods and demonstrated in New York.

Turkey retaliates

As it became clear that Italy might not extradite Ocalan, anti-Italian sentiment spread rapidly across Turkey. Relations between the two countries had already
come under stress following the meeting of the Kurdistan parliament-in-exile in the Italian parliament in September. The event was attended by parliamentarians from Russia, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Romania and the Lebanon. The proceedings were carried on Med TV (see *Traces* #2). Turkey recalled its ambassador in protest.

Italian television was blacked out. The Defence Ministry declared that it would no longer consider a proposal to buy $4.5 billion worth of Italian helicopters. The Italian football side Juventus, delayed its European Championship fixture with the Turkish side, Galatasary, then played it under armed guard. An effective economic boycott of all Italian goods was soon in place, following a call from the Union of Chambers of Commerce. It immediately affected export orders for arms, household electricals, office equipment, tyres, alcoholic drinks and farm produce. Benetton’s Turkish partner painted the shop windows black in the country’s 171 stores. Turkey is the clothing company’s third biggest market in Europe. Turkish tour operators cancelled tours to Italy: there are on average 50,000 visits to Italy each year. The boycott of Italian goods by Turkey was met by a warning from the European Commission that the EU as a whole would retaliate.

Any prospect that Ocalan’s arrest would open the door to negotiations between the Turkish government and the Kurdish separatists was undermined by the fall of Mesut Yilmaz’s government in the middle of the proceedings. This followed allegations of corruption against senior figures, including the prime minister. The coalition government under Mesut Yilmaz and his Motherland party had lasted only 17 months. Bulent Ecevit struggled to form an interim government before the 1999 elections, adding to the sense of disarray and crisis in Ankara. In the climate of political anxiety, there was little hope of any moderation of Turkey’s line towards the PKK.

This was underlined by an increased move against Kurdish political forces within Turkey itself. Over 3000 members of a small political party favourable to the Kurdish cause, HADEP, were detained. It had been though that HADEP could play a part in any negotiations between the PKK and the government. Polls had suggested that HADEP could make strong gains in south eastern Turkey in the April 1999 local elections.

**Negotiations unlikely**

It is thought that Ocalan will use his enforced stay in Italy to try and transform himself and his movement from Marxist-inspired guerrillas and terrorists into more respectable representatives of the Kurdish cause. Even before his arrest, the PKK had been trying to court favour in European capitals by adopting a less strident and militaristic line. In this the PKK was adopting the strategy of the PLO, Sinn Fein and ETA. The parliament-in-exile meeting in Italy in September, and contacts between Ocalan and various European parliamentarians in Syria signalled a softer and more diplomatic approach. It coincided with a unilateral ceasefire announced by the PKK, and the declaration that it would accept autonomy within Turkey rather than full independence. While in Italy, Ocalan told a Saudi-owned newspaper published in London that he would welcome the intervention of the UN and EU.

But it seems very unlikely that Turkey will wish to negotiate with Ocalan and the people it labels “bloodthirsty murderers.” There have been 30,000 deaths in the long-running conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK. In November Turkish troops returned into Iraq in pursuit of PKK forces. Up to 15,000 troops supported by fighter aircraft chased 500 PKK troops forced out
of their bases in Syria after the new agreement between Syria and Turkey. The Iraqi-based Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) joined the Turkish assault. There are signs that the PKK has established closer relations with Saddam’s government in Iraq, relations which the KDP opposes. Turkey also aids the KDP in its battles with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

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Forty Years of Cuban Exile

The condition of Cuban exiles was widely reviewed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Castro’s revolution. Despite continuing hostility to the Castro regime among Cuban Americans, there are also indications of a rethinking of US policy. The FBI uncovered a Cuban spy ring in southern Florida.

Forty years after the revolution which brought Fidel Castro to power in Cuba, the Cuban exile community is spread across the world. According to a special series in the Miami Herald (‘The Cuban Journey: Forty years after Castro’) there are 1.5 -2 million Cubans living in 40 different countries. One and a quarter million live in the USA, and southern Florida contains the largest single concentration, some 600,000. There are over 150,000 in New York, 57,000 in Los Angeles, 17,000 in Dallas-Fort Worth and almost 10,000 in Washington DC.

Large Cuban populations are resident in Spain, Australia, Sweden, Venezuela and Russia. The largest European community is in Spain, numbering perhaps 10,000, while Paris is the centre for literary and artistic exiles. Others journeyed to Moscow but never returned to Cuba. In the 1990s they found their way to Sweden and Germany. Venezuela was one of the first countries of asylum in the 1960s. Peru hosts 1000 Cubans drawn form those who took refuge in the Peruvian embassy in Havana in 1980 but who were unable to make the boat journey to Florida. In Sydney and Melbourne there are communities numbered in the hundreds, dating from the 1960s and 1970s and resettled by the Australian government.

For all exiles, Miami is the focal point. Cubans resident elsewhere frequently travel there, the next best thing to being in Cuba itself. The Cuban community of southern Florida was built up in a series of waves - the first arrivals in the early 1960s, the so-called freedom flights of the 1960s and 1970s, the Mariel boatlift of 1980 and then the rafters of the 1990s.

Changes in US policy?
There are growing signs that the US policy on Cuba may be changing. After 40 years, there is a widespread feeling that the sanctions policy has not worked; Castro remains in power. Earlier attempts to thaw relations failed - Kissinger in 1975, Carter in 1980 and Clinton in 1996. The latest failure coincided with the shooting down of two aircraft flown by the exile group Brothers to the Rescue (a Cuban exile group) by Cuba. Following this, Congress passed the Helms-Burton Act which stiffened the sanctions against Cuba.

Calls for a rethink have come from such influential quarters as Henry Kissinger, the Council on Foreign Relations, The Atlantic Council, The New York Times, and The Los Angeles Times. In October, a group of Republican politicians and former State Department officials proposed the creation of a National Bipartisan Committee on the Cuba situation. In a letter to President Clinton they observed that despite the major geopolitical changes in the world since 1962 - notably the fall of the Soviet Union - the USA had never re-evaluated its policy towards Cuba. The signatories included Henry Kissinger (Nixon's Secretary of State) and other senior foreign policy advisors from the past. The letter received a mixed reaction from Cuban-Americans politicians - rejected by the Cuban-American National Foundation but not by the Cuban Committee for Democracy.

The US Chamber of Commerce organised a coalition called Americans for Humanitarian Trade With Cuba to press for the relaxation of restrictions on food and medicine. In international circles, the Pope, the European Union and Canada have all criticised the embargo policy (see Traces #1).

Opposition to any easing of sanctions is likely to be strong, coming from the Cuban American National Foundation and Republican politicians. A poll reported in the Miami Herald indicated that around 72 percent of all Cubans in Miami continued to support the sanctions. Supporters of the hard-line policy do not want to give away a potential bargaining chip in advance of any negotiations with Cuba.

A week after the letter proposing the bipartisan commission, President Castro admitted that Cuban spies had infiltrated exile groups in the USA. He denied that there was any organised spying on the US military. The announcement confirmed the FBI's allegation that they had broken up a Cuban spy ring in Miami in September - the first such action in forty years. Eight people were charged, some with monitoring flights at US military bases. Three pleaded guilty. Those arrested were accused of spying on Brothers to the Rescue (Hermanos al Rescate), the Democracy Movement, the Cuban American Pilots Association, Alpha 66, CAMACOL and the Latin American Chamber of Commerce.

In November, the Foundation for Human Rights in Miami filed suit in Spain accusing Fidel Castro of genocide, torture and terrorism and requested that the Spanish magistrates move to bring the President to trial just as they had done for General Pinochet. The suit alleges that 18,000 people have been killed or disappeared since Castro seized power in 1959. The Foundation is part of the Cuban-American National Foundation.
Dual Nationality and Overseas Voting Rights: Mexico, Japan, Australia and Italy

The Mexican government was told by a special commission that it would be feasible to extend the vote to Mexican nationals living in the USA. President Zedillo rejected the idea. Japan passed a law enabling overseas nationals to vote by post for the first time. The complex implications of dual citizenship were illustrated by the fate of an Australian Senator from the One Nation party.

The panel charged with exploring whether Mexicans living abroad might receive the right to vote reported to the Mexican government in November (see Traces #3 for background). The experts concluded that it was technically feasible for Mexicans abroad to vote in the 2000 presidential election. The decision, if introduced, could affect as many as 7 million Mexicans resident in the USA. It would not be available to Mexicans who are US citizens, even though they retain the right to Mexican nationality.

In favour of the extension it is argued that millions of economic migrants have no effective political voice, in either Mexico or the USA. US citizens abroad already receive the right to vote, as do citizens of 43 other countries resident in the USA. Opponents fear that millions of absentee votes will distort the country’s elections, amounting to perhaps as much as 15% of all votes cast. They argue that it could lead to a backlash against US Mexicans, opening them to the accusation of divided loyalties. Opposition parties see the move as a chance to break the stranglehold of the PRI on the country’s political power. Early polls suggest that support for the PRI is weaker among emigrants.

The panel calculated that there might be 8.6 million Mexican citizens resident in the USA in 2000, of whom 7.1 million would be over 18 years of age. A further 100,000 live in other countries. The logistics of voting would cost between $76 million and $350 million, although many believe that it is already too late to act before June’s vote. President Ernesto Zedillo dismissed the proposals as too expensive and complicated. The panel outlined six possible ways of conducting the vote, including opening polling stations in consulates, churches, businesses and even immigrant homes. The large number of potential voters in many US cities presents substantial problems of coordination and organisation. Alternatives might be voting by mail or by telephone. Furthermore, officials would have difficulty registering voters and producing electoral rolls. Many potential voters, perhaps as many as 2.7 million, may not have the proper immigration documents.

Venezuela’s elections

Evidence of the potential disparities between expatriate and domestic voting patterns came in December’s presidential elections in Venezuela. The election was won by a landslide by former Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chavez. In 1992 Chavez led a failed military coup against the then Venezuelan government. But the voters have rehabilitated him. In Miami, by contrast, Chavez was clearly outpolled by Henrique Salas Romer, who took three-quarters of the votes. Florida’s few thousand Venezuelans are generally
wealthy. According to Max J. Castro writing in the *Miami Herald*, such a political gap between expatriates and voters in the homeland is common — a similar pattern can be found among Puerto Ricans and Cubans.

**Japan’s overseas postal vote**

The Japanese government agreed to introduce postal voting for overseas Japanese for the first time in December. The law, which will come into force in May 2000, would open voting to citizens living on foreign cities and districts with 10,000 or more Japanese nationals. It should affect 560,000 overseas Japanese. Those living in the 29 places with Japanese consulates will be able to vote there — this includes Singapore, Hong Kong, San Francisco, New York, London, Paris, Lima and Lagos.

Opposition politicians in the Japanese Diet from the Democratic Party of Japan and the Peace and Reform Group submitted a bill to extend local voting rights to foreigners living in Japan in November. The bill was backed by the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. The campaign for local voting rights has been led by the country’s large Korean community. It received support from the President of Korea during his visit to Japan in October. Already 27 prefectures and over 1,100 municipalities, mainly those with large foreign populations, make the vote available. In 1995 the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution does not prohibit local voting rights.

On a visit to Australia, the President of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, raised the possibility of Italians overseas obtaining the right to vote by mail in Italian elections.

The potential problems arising from dual citizenship for individuals, particularly for politicians, were illustrated by two high profile cases. In Australia, the sole victorious candidate from the One Nation party in the Senate elections was faced with the possibility of losing her seat when it was discovered that she had failed to fully renounce her British nationality. No Australian can hold elected office while being a dual national. Heather Hill has lived in Australia for 26 years but only became a citizen in May 1998. It is alleged that she failed to complete the appropriate documents and relinquish her British passport. The One Nation party supports a range of right-wing measures against immigrants and foreigners. Ms Hill defeated an Asian, Bill O’Chee, in gaining her Senate seat. In retaliation, One Nation claims that seven existing members of parliament hold dual citizenship.

In Switzerland, magistrates began investigating charges of money-laundering against the former prime minister of Ukraine, Pavlo Lazarenko. He was arrested on the French-Swiss border trying to cross with a Panamanian passport. Ukrainian nationals are not permitted to hold dual citizenship.

‘Birthright Israel’ Programme for Jewish Diaspora Youth

The Israeli government announced a scheme to encourage Jewish youth to visit Israel in order to address fears of assimilation and decline among the diaspora. The scheme is backed by North American Jews. The controversy between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews over the definition of Jewishness intensified following a court ruling in Jerusalem in favour of non-Orthodox conversions.

Prime Minister Netanyahu announced the establishment of a new programme to encourage young Jews from around the world to visit Israel. Under the scheme, any Jew aged between 15 and 26 from anywhere in the world will be able to travel to the country for ten days. Called Birthright Israel, it will be funded for five years at a cost of $300 million. The funding will be shared between the Israeli government, the Council of Jewish Federations and wealthy donors from North America. The donors are led by the Wall Street financier Michael H. Steinhardt and the co-chairman of The Seagram Company in Montreal, Charles R. Bronfman. The programme was announced at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, held in Jerusalem. The first trips will take place in 2000.

The programme’s aim is to involve Jewish youngsters more with the culture of Judaism and with Israel, to address the fears of assimilation and secularism among the world’s Jewish communities. A short trip to Israel is akin to a rite of passage, the scheme’s backers claim. The World Jewish Congress has claimed that the Jewish population outside Israel will decline from 8.6 to 4.4 million within 30 years. Outmarriage and low birth rates will contribute to the decline. Prime Minister Netanyahu told the conference, “intermarriage and assimilation threatens like a centrifugal force to pull our people apart.” A closer connection with Israel will, it is hoped, help stem such a decline. The American Jewish Committee produced research in 1994 that American Jews who visit Israel are more likely to marry other Jews. Two-thirds of American Jews had never been to Israel and only around 16,000 travel there each year. The World Jewish Congress report also predicted that by 2010 there would be more Jews in Israel than in the USA.

General Assembly meets in Israel

The General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations meets annually, but 1998 was the first convention in Israel itself. It was attended by 3,000 people from North America and some 1,500 Israelis. Outside the conference hundreds of Ethiopian Jews protested against the Israeli government’s decision to cease the organised return of Jews from Ethiopia. The government took the decision in June, after 12 years of airlifts which brought over 60,000 people to Israel. The protestors claim that there are still 8,000 people waiting to enter the country. The government denies that there are any legitimate Jews remaining in the country. They argue that those left behind are Christians whose ancestors converted from Judaism. Israel closed an aid camp outside Addis Ababa that had once held Ethiopians.

The General Assembly concluded with the addition of more signatures to a Unity Covenant between the North American and Israeli Jews which committed both parties to strengthen ties between them. The Covenant was first signed in advance of the Assembly by the speaker of the Knesset and North American Jewish leaders. The document called on Israeli
and North American Jews to "rededicate ourselves to the spiritual and historic centrality of the State of Israel and to one another," and referred to "the building of dynamic Jewish communities that span the seas." The closing ceremony was held as a special Knesset session and was attended by government ministers and politicians. Jews from around the world could sign the Covenant by visiting the General Assembly’s website.

The Birthright Israel programme will have to make the difficult and controversial decision of who is Jewish. Most North American Jews belong to Reform and Conservative (non-Orthodox) strands of Judaism, while Israel is dominated by Orthodox Jews whose definition of Jewishness is more restrictive (Traces #1 for background). The issue was brought to the fore after the General Assembly by a ruling by a Jerusalem District Court judge. The Judge ruled that 23 people converted to Judaism by Reform rabbis are entitled to be registered as Jews by the Interior Ministry. The judgment was the first to recognise the validity of conversions made by non-Orthodox rabbis. Reform and Conservative rabbis in North America welcomed the ruling. Orthodox rabbis in Israel and North America condemned the decision and vowed to appeal and to press for a change in the law to prevent it ever happening.

Although celebrating victory in the courts, Reform and Conservative Jews met with defeat when the Israeli parliament (Knesset) passed the first reading of a bill that would prevent non-Orthodox Jews from sitting on local religious councils. The councils manage synagogues and provide religious services and the members are civil service appointments. The bill was opposed by Labour leader Shimon Peres but supported by religious parties and members of the governing coalition.

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Germany and Central Europe: Citizenship Across Borders

The coalition partners in Germany’s federal government appear divided on the issue of citizenship and immigration. Chancellor Schröder’s declaration that the country could take no more immigrants was criticised by Green politicians. The new government stated that it would not support claims by Sudeten Germans against the Czech government. The Czech Republic is considering dual nationality for Czechs abroad. The Hungarian government addressed Hungarians in Romania and Vojvodina.

The question of immigration and dual citizenship for foreigners continues to divide the coalition partners in the new German federal government (see Traces #3 for background on the debate). The SPD
Interior Minister Otto Schilly called for restricting immigration. His remarks were supported by Chancellor Schröder, who stated that Germany had reached its limit of immigration. Schilly stressed that the new government’s aim was to integrate foreigners already resident in the country rather than increase the number of dual nationals.

The aliens’ commissioner and Green party politician, Marieluise Beck, declared that Germany would need more immigrants. Beck noted that Germany had the lowest birthrate in Western Europe and an ageing population. She stated that foreigners made a net contribution of $60 billion a year to the economy, vital to support Germany’s pension and social security demands. By 2010 the country will need 400,000 immigrants a year to redress the effects of demographic ageing.

Germany receives around 300,000 immigrants a year, over half the total for the EU. Foreigners account for around 10% of the population, some 7.37 million. But, mindful of the possibility of a right wing backlash, Schilly said: “The threshold of Germany’s capacity to accept more immigrants has already been passed, … future quotas for foreigners must be set at zero.”

**Sudeten Germans**

On a different matter of citizenship, the new German government announced that it would not be pursuing the claims of Sudeten Germans against the Czech Republic, although it did consider their expulsion an injustice. Two and a half million Sudeten Germans were expelled from the then Czechoslovakia after World War Two, losing their property. The decrees of expulsion, named after then Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš, have never been revoked. The Union of Expellees (UdV) is demanding restitution for lost property. The UdV, which has close links with Bavaria’s Christian Social Union state government, wants to make the issue part of the negotiations for the Czech Republic’s entry to the European Union.

The Sudeten Germans have received support from the Freedom Party of Austria, which called upon the Austrian government to block the Czech Republic’s membership application to the EU. It drew comparisons with Italy’s obstruction of Slovenia’s membership because of the outstanding claims of Italians deported from Slovenia at the end of the war. The FPO’s call was backed by the regional premier of Upper Austria, speaking in Linz. The Austrian Foreign Minister, Wolfgang Schuessel, stated that the issue was a bilateral one for Germany and the Czech Republic and should not be introduced into discussions of EU membership.

**Czech Republic and Hungary**

The Czech government announced that it was considering dual citizenship for former citizens of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic (*Traces* #2 for previous story). One problem concerns Czechs who remained in the Slovak Republic after the separation of Czechoslovakia in 1993 and, by becoming Slovak citizens, thereby lost their Czech citizenship. This affects as
many as 60,000 Czechs. Slovaks remaining in the Czech Republic, thought to number 300,000, would also be eligible for dual citizenship. Another question relates to Czechs who emigrated abroad after 1968; Czech-Americans have long agitated for dual citizenship.

The raising of the issue of Sudeten Germans in the context of EU enlargement has parallels with the status of Hungarians in Romania (Traces #2 and #3). The Chairman of the far right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party, Istvan Csurka, declared that Romania’s Hungarian minority should not be sacrificed in the quest for EU membership. He was speaking on Hungarian television. Csurka demands that the Hungarian government pursue a more hardline attitude towards Romania, even though this might complicate accession to the EU.

Officials of the Hungarian government met with representatives of the Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians and the Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina in Budapest in October. The two parties have been urged to unite by the Chairman of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians in order to protect their interests within Serbia and maintain their political links with Hungary itself. The Hungarian minority fears that Serbia’s leaders would like to expel them and seize their property. (Vojvodina is a province in northern Serbia. Like Kosovo, its autonomous status was revoked in 1990. Around 17% of population are ethnic Hungarians.)

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**Chilean Exiles React to Pinochet’s Arrest**

The arrest in Britain of General Augusto Pinochet, the former dictator of Chile, sparked protests and legal proceedings across the world. Chilean exile groups in eleven countries prepared legal action against him. Similar actions were taken against Castro and Duvalier by Cuban and Haitian exiles respectively.

The arrest on October 16th was made following an application for extradition by a Spanish magistrate, Baltasar Garzon. Pinochet had been visiting Britain for medical treatment. The charges included the murder of Spanish nationals between 1973 and 1990, as well as torture, conspiracy and kidnapping. Similar suits were filed by Chilean exiles in Britain with the backing of human rights organisations, Amnesty International, Redress Trust and the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture. Chileans in Sweden, France, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Norway, Denmark and Germany also initiated legal actions related to the death or
disappearance of family members. By December, France, Switzerland and Belgium had filed formal requests for extradition.

The New Zealand government was approached by Chilean exiles but declined to request an extradition. There were also protests against Pinochet in Montreal and Toronto by exiles resident in Canada. (There are estimated to be at least 7,000 Chilean exiles in Toronto.) In London and Madrid, protestors held regular rallies denouncing Pinochet. In Chile’s capital, Santiago, the General’s supporters and opponents demonstrated frequently outside the British and Spanish embassies and in the streets.

It is calculated that during Pinochet’s regime over 3,000 people were either killed or disappeared, and between 30,000 and 52,000 Chileans went into exile around the world.

The UK’s highest court, the House of Lords, initially ruled that General Pinochet could face extradition proceedings in Britain and did not enjoy diplomatic immunity. This ruling was subsequently overturned on December 17th when it became clear that one of the five law lords charged with making the decision had undisclosed links with Amnesty International. The General’s status was therefore uncertain by the end of December.

**Moves against Castro & Duvalier**

Pinochet’s arrest sparked similar demands from other exile groups to bring political leaders to trial. The Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba, based in Miami, requested the Spanish prosecutor in charge of Pinochet’s case to demand the extradition of Fidel Castro on charged of genocide, terrorism and torture. Fidel’s brother Raul, the defence minister, the minister for tourism and the Cuban ambassador to the UN were also included in the exiles’ charges. A Haitian resident in France announced that he would file against Jean-Claude Duvalier, the former and exiled dictator of Haiti. Duvalier has lived in exile in France since his overthrow in 1986. The move to try Duvalier apparently has the backing of the current Haitian government.

New Zealand unlikely to take action against Pinochet, Agence France Presse English Wire 26.10.98; Demands for Pinochet trial spread through Europe, Agence France Presse English Wire 3.11.98; Spain leads field of four in Pinochet extradition campaign, Agence France Presse English Wire 9.12.98; Pinochet foes stage protest: Demonstrators at Chilean consulate call for ex-dictator to face justice, Darren Becker Montreal Gazette 1.11.98; We want justice, say Chilean exiles in Toronto ‘He must be held responsible for the crimes he committed’, Kerry Gillespie Toronto Star 18.10.98; Cuban exiles demand Pinochet-style arrest warrant for Castro, Roland de Courson Agence France Presse English Wire 6.11.98; Legal fight begins to bring Baby Doc to trial, Shelley Emling, Cox News Service and Edmonton Journal 18.12.98

**Emigrants Aid Countries Devastated by Hurricanes**

The destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America and Hurricane Georges in the Caribbean was followed by massive relief efforts by US-based emigrants. The US government announced it would suspend deportations of Central Americans in recognition of the severity of the disaster.

The Dominican Republic was devastated by Hurricane Georges in September. As many as 250 were killed and 110,000 made homeless. Relief in the form of donations of money and supplies poured in from Dominicans in the USA. Aid from family and friends abroad provided a vital addition to, or substitute for, official humanitarian assistance. A convoy of 1,500 cars took food, clothing and
medicine to New York’s Kennedy Airport. Wire agencies in New York reported a massive upsurge in money being sent to the country, mostly in small amounts of a few hundred dollars.

There are estimated to be 1.3 million Dominicans in the USA, including a million in New York alone. New Jersey, Boston and Miami are other major centres. In 1997 the Republic received $1.5 billion in remittances from the US. This sum is equivalent to the earnings from tourism and manufacturing exports.

In November Hurricane Mitch struck Central America, one of the most destructive storms in living memory. Initial estimates suggested that 10,000 died and as many as 2 million were made homeless. Honduras and Nicaragua were the worst hit, while El Salvador and Guatemala were also struck. In the US, some commentators feared that the damage was so severe that it would trigger another mass migration northwards, comparable in size to the refugee departures arising from the region’s civil wars in the 1980s.

Central American communities in California responded with aid in the form of money, food and supplies. Around 400,000 Central Americans live in southern California in 1990, according to official figures. This includes 250,000 Salvadorans, 127,000 Guatemalans, 34,000 Nicaraguans and 23,000 Hondurans in Los Angeles County alone. Including illegal immigrants however, the number now may be more than a million. Salvadorans from the region send $1.2 billion in remittances a year alone.

The loss of so much of the region’s communications, including telephones, left many relatives abroad without news of their families. The US press reported that added anguish arose from not being able to return home to search for relatives for fear of not being able to re-enter the country.

Even so, the Honduran consul general in Los Angeles reported a 40% increase in application for travel documents. El Rescate in Los Angeles, the Central American refugees organisation, encouraged emigrants to work and send money. Wire agencies in Los Angeles reported surges in business with money being sent home. The newspapers reported that people were sending food and clothing instead of toys and gifts at Christmas.

In recognition of the extent of the destruction and loss of life in the region, the US government announced that it would suspend deportations of people back to Honduras and Nicaragua. It judged that the hurricane’s effects had been the most severe in these countries. The 18-month moratorium affects 150,000 people working illegally in the USA or staying under temporary visas. They would receive temporary protection status, which has also been granted to residents of Montserrat in the wake of the island’s volcanic eruptions. The reprieve must, however, be applied for. Applicants will be expected to pay a fee and provide fingerprints. Immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala were not included in the scheme, but the Immigration and Naturalization Service declared that it would not be carrying out any deportations until March.
Dominican expatriates a vital lifeline for hurricane victims, Jared Kotler Associated Press 30.9.98; Dominicans in U.S. help homeland, Miami Herald 1.10.98; The emigrants rally round, The Economist 10.10.98; Storm Could Trigger Another Diaspora, Carlos A. Rosales Los Angeles Times 8.11.98; In Mitch's Wake, Worry and Help, Hugo Martin Los Angeles Times 14.11.98; Migrants in U.S. Do Without to Help Families Hit by Mitch, Lee Romney Los Angeles Times 23.12.98; Honduras, Nicaragua Deportations Delayed, Joe Mozingo Los Angeles Times 31.12.87

Dual Citizenship for Overseas Indians Considered

The Indian Prime Minister announced new regulations affecting Indians abroad in order to encourage the diaspora to invest in the country. India’s domestic industry raised objections to the possibility of dual citizenship.

In advance of legislation granting Indians abroad dual citizenship, the Indian government announced a Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) card scheme. The cards will provide visa-free entry and a number of educational and financial benefits over such things as property and income earned on dividends. The scheme would also enable overseas Indians to cut through much of the country’s tangle of regulations.

Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee launched the card scheme while addressing the Global Indian Entrepreneurs Conference in New Delhi. The issue was also raised by the Union Urban Affairs Minister, Ram Jethmalani, at the 18th International Conference of Non-Resident Indians in the same city in December. Vajpayee noted that Indians abroad had contributed over $12 billion a year in remittances for the past two years. The Resurgent Bond Issue alone raised $4.2 billion in a matter of weeks (see Traces #3). Members of the diaspora had been calling for dual nationality for a number of years.

The Prime Minister also announced in November that a dual nationality policy would be implemented early in 1999. He also called on Non-Resident Indians (NRI) to invest in India’s new highway network, while Jethmalani asked for assistance in the country’s low-cost housing sector.

These moves are regarded as part of a concerted effort by the BJP government to restore and strengthen links with Non-Resident Indians – objectives which were part of their election manifesto. They envisage not just economic links, following the success of China in tapping the overseas Chinese, but also enhancing ‘social, cultural, emotional and spiritual’ ties. They may involve reviving the NRI Consultative Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Finance, Yashwant Sinha. There may be modifications in investment rules and regulations, as well as more involvement of NRI entrepreneurs in advisory positions close to government. Some overseas figures have suggested that NRIs should be nominated to India’s Upper House of parliament.

Opposition to the proposals for dual nationality has come from Indian industry, concerned about the threat of foreign competition if NRI investors are allowed greater access to India’s markets. Among the suspicions directed towards NRIs is the question of their divided loyalty, and whether dual nationality gives too many benefits to residents abroad. Spokesmen for Indian industry question whether the desirability of opening up investment opportunities also requires granting citizenship.

Indian PM launches PIO card scheme to woo Indians abroad, Asia Pulse 12.11.98; PM Vajpayee assures dual nationality, benefits to expat Indians, Agence France Presse 12.11.98; New Delhi pledges greater emphasis on NRIs, Anand Sagar Gulf News
Conferences on Transnational Crime & Money-Laundering

The prevention of transnational crime is the focus of increasing attention at regional and international levels. The UN held regional meetings in Africa and West Asia. Asean agreed new measures. In London, a task force met to tackle international money-laundering.

The United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention (UNCIPC) held three of four regional meetings in preparation for the 10th Congress on the prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to be held in Vienna in April 2000.

The UNCIPC and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia held a meeting of 12 Western Asian countries on national and transnational crime in Beirut in November. A similar meeting was convened in Kampala in December in association with the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Representatives of 52 countries attended. Delegates discussed the fight against transnational crime, focusing on problems such as extradition and mutual legal assistance, economic and financial crimes, money-laundering, corruption, trafficking in human beings, terrorism and giving technical assistance to countries in need. The first of the four regional meetings was in Bangkok. The final conference before Vienna will be held in 1999 in San José, Costa Rica for Latin America.

The Kampala conference was told how African crime syndicates were branching out from established black market activities such as diamond, coffee and cattle smuggling. New crimes include loan and credit card fraud, and trafficking in guns, cars, drugs and people. Africa had, until recently, escaped organised drug trafficking, but it is now on the increase. West Africa is a growing port of entry for Southeast Asian heroin, where smugglers can take advantage of weakly controlled international borders. Southern Africa is the centre of a trade in stolen cars and car parts. The continent's banking system is also being used to launder money.

Also in November, senior police officials from Asean countries met in Manila to discuss the establishment of an anti-transnational crime regional centre. Asean already has programmes to co-operate on narcotics trafficking, drug education and rehabilitation and drug detection. The meeting adopted a Declaration on Transnational Crime.

In December, immigration officials from 15 Asia-Pacific countries approved the establishment of an Association of Asia-Pacific Immigration Commissioners. At a meeting in Tokyo the officials agreed to form the body as a common weapon against transnational crime, including terrorism, drug smuggling, trafficking in people and paedophilia.

The UN Secretary-General's report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea was presented to the General Assembly in November. Among other things, it noted the rise in piracy and armed robbery at sea. Representatives were urged to increase international co-operation and to assist the International Maritime Organisation to combat such crimes. The report also mentioned trafficking in illegal immigrants and drugs.
Money-laundering

In November, representatives of the 26 countries of the Financial Action Task Force met in London to debate money-laundering. The head of the IMF, Michael Camdessus, calculates that money-laundering accounts for 1-2.5 percent of global GDP, or $1,500 billion of criminal money entering the world’s financial system each year. The conference heard that the EU was making progress tackling the problem, but that it was shifting towards Eastern Europe and Russia. The Russian mafia is understood to control an ever greater amount of the business. The Italian think-tank Transcrime claims that Russians have already infiltrated the electronic transfer system of US banks and securities firms.

The Russian Interior Minister announced in December that Moscow would set up an agency to monitor money-laundering and co-operate with other countries. The declaration was made at a G7 summit of interior ministers in Moscow.

UN hosting western Asia regional meeting on crime, M2 Presswire 12.11.98; Opening its debate on sea law convention, Assembly told of increase in incidents of crime, M2 Presswire 25.11.98; Africa faced with staggering rise in crime, M2 Presswire 4.12.98; Anti-Transnational crime ASEAN centre mulled, Bernama 20.11.98; Asia Pacific immigration body to fight transnational crimes, Asia Pulse 8.12.98; Advani calls for global cooperation to check crime, Statesman 14.12.98; Dirty money is now big business, Tim Judah The Independent 23.11.98; Russia Planning Action Against Money Launderers - Minister, Interfax 15.12.98

Russian Mafia in the Caribbean

The trial in Switzerland of Sergei Mikhailov, alleged head of one of the largest Russian mafia organisations, partially exposed the extent of the involvement of Russian transnational crime in the Caribbean.

A series in the Miami Herald by Juan O. Tamayo outlined some of the details of the Russian mafia’s presence in the Caribbean and Florida. (Previous report on Russian mafia in Traces #2.)

Observers of transnational crime suspect the Russian mafia of setting up a network of businesses and properties around the Caribbean in order to conceal their financial transactions. The mafia makes use of the region’s often lax or complex systems of regulation. It is alleged that as many as 60 firms have been established in up to six Caribbean countries. They include banks, holding trusts and insurance firms. They have acquired properties such as hotels, casinos and residential developments.

Some ‘mobsters’ have collected passports from Caribbean or Central American countries, additional citizenships to facilitate travel and business. Sergei Mikhailov himself acted as Costa Rica’s honorary consul in Moscow in early 1994 and attended the inauguration of President Jose Maria Figueres in the same year. Belize states that 50 of the 278 ‘economic citizenships’ sold between 1995 and 1997 went to Russians. These passports enable holders to enter British Commonwealth countries without a visa. The Miami Herald also reports that Russians have bought 100-200 citizenships from Dominica and 50-100 from St Kitts in the past four years.

Antigua is the most favoured destination, with 7 Russian-owned banks and 13 trust and insurance companies. The government has already shut down four banks after suspecting them of acting illegally. Other financial outposts include St Vincent and the Grenadines, the Netherlands Antilles,
the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands. Analysts fear that these banks will be part of organised bank and insurance fraud – banks taking deposits and then closing without a trace. But as yet there is no indication that they are substantially involved with South American drug cartels.

The outflow of capital from Russia since 1992, calculated at between $200 billion and $300 billion, has found its way to both established and newer financial centres – London and Paris as well as Cyprus, Dubai and Latvia. Mixed in with legitimate business are the proceeds of criminal organisations. The Russian Interior Ministry in 1997 estimated that 85% of all Russian banks have mafia connections.

Miami has emerged as a key centre of Russian organised crime in the Caribbean region. The FBI counts a dozen or so gangs operating there. South Florida is the place to meet with Colombian drug cartels and to organise the purchase of banks, firms and properties throughout the region. The FBI believes that a meeting in 1993 between four top crime syndicates divided up the spoils of the area. One of those in attendance was Sergei Mikhailov. The Bureau created a Russia-Eurasia squad there in 1997, one of only six such squads in the US. But, as Tamayo records, none of the law enforcement officials on the squad speak Russian. New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia are the other major centres of the Russian mafia.

Sergei Mikhailov was arrested in Switzerland in 1996 but was released in December, acquitted of charges of belonging to a criminal organisation and falsifying documents. Mikhailov denied the accusation and insisted that he was a legitimate businessman. He was found guilty of a minor charge, but not required to serve any more time than the 26 months he had already been inside a Swiss gaol. The case collapsed because of lack of evidence. The prosecution alleged that Mikhailov was the head of the Solntsevskaya criminal organisation, one of the largest Russian mafia groups founded in Moscow. The gang was said to be linked to money-laundering, smuggling and racketeering. FBI officials gave evidence at the trial. The case involved investigators from Austria, Belgium and Israel as well. But the prosecution lawyers complained that they had insufficient resources to conduct the case.

Russian banks, firms sprouting over Caribbean, Juan O. Tamayo Miami Herald 4.7.98; ‘Redfellas’ are settling in South Florida, Juan O. Tamayo Miami Herald 5.7.98; Swiss put Russian ‘mafia boss’ on trial, Peter Capella The Guardian 1.12.98; Mikhailov crime empire stretches to Europe, US, says former FBI agent, Agence France Presse English Wire 3.12.98; Alleged Russian mafia chief walks free after Swiss trial, Agence France Presse English Wire 11.12.98

A new organisation for migrants in Russia was established by the State Duma. The Duma also debated legislation supporting Russian compatriots abroad. Associations of Germans from across the CIS met in Kazakhstan.

In December the Council of Migrants' Associations met for the first time in the Russian State Duma (the lower house of parliament). The Association was set up by Duma deputies as a consultative body for the more than 4,000,000 migrants, refugees and resettlers from the former Soviet Union currently residing in Russia. These migrants come mainly from Kazakhstan (23 percent of the total), Tajikistan (15%), Uzbekistan (14%) and the Caucasian Republics (18%). Many do not have citizenship, homes or money. The body includes representatives of 15...
migrant associations from 12 Russian regions, members of Duma committees and members of the Federation Council. It aims to become the permanent consultative council for migrants in Russia.

In November the Russian State Duma overwhelmingly passed the 3rd reading of a bill on the relations between the Russian Federation and "Compatriots Abroad". The bill was passed on to the Upper House of parliament. The legislation would require the Federation to support the civil, social, political, economic and cultural rights of Russians abroad, while also enabling them to retain a distinct Russian identity. It involves the creation of a Council of Compatriots to the Federal Assembly.

Germans meet in Kazakhstan

The third Congress of Ethnic Germans of Kazakhstan met in December in Alma-Ata. There are 240,000 Germans living in the country and 172 delegates attended the meeting, including representatives from ethnic German organisations in other CIS states. German politicians also attended. The Kazakh Prime Minister, Nurlan Balgymbayev addressed the meeting and detailed the government's actions on behalf of the diaspora - facilitating humanitarian aid from Germany (e.g. coal and flour for the winter), and programmes to preserve German language and culture. Alma-Ata has a new German cultural centre and a German department has opened at one university in the northern city of Petropalovsk.

At the Congress there was an extraordinary meeting of the Interstate Council of Germans in Independent States (meaning CIS). It addressed the problems of the decline of German communities because of natural decrease and emigration to Germany. There are over 100,000 ethnic Germans in Kyrgyzstan (1998 census) - 10,000 a year migrated to Germany between 1989 and 1996. Of Kazakhstan's German population of 900,000 in 1989, it is thought that 295,000 had left by the start of 1998. In Ukraine there are said to be only 100,000 ethnic Germans left.

The director of Kazakhstan's Agency for Migration and Demography declared that the country's population was in danger of falling within five years. A combination of low birth rates (15/000), decreasing life expectancy and emigration would spell trouble for the country. He stated that, since 1990, 2.17 million people had emigrated from Kazakhstan, mainly to Russia, and only 590,000 have entered, including 170,000 returning Kazakhs from China, Mongolia, Turkey and Afghanistan.

Meshketian Turks held a conference in Baku, Azerbaijan in November. They called to be allowed to return to their homeland in Georgia, 54 years after Stalin first deported them.

Council of migrant associations holds meeting in Duma, ITAR/TASS News Agency 5.12.98; Duma passes 3rd reading of Compatriots Bill, ITAR/TASS News Agency 13.11.98; Premier hails role of Kazakhstan's ethnic Germans, Kazakh TV on BBC Monitoring Service 10.12.98; Ethnic Germans speak of their plight in the CIS, Kazakh TV on BBC Monitoring Service 15.12.98; Kazakhstan fears population drop within five years, Agence France Presse English Wire 11.12.98; Meshkhetian Turks in Azerbaijan demand return to Georgian homeland, Turan News in Baku on the BBC Monitoring Service 23.11.98

International Agreement on Jewish Art and Property Confiscated in WW2

Forty-four countries agreed on procedures for returning art and property stolen by Nazis from Jews during the Second World War. A museum of European Jewish heritage was opened in Paris.
A conference attended by representatives from 44 countries agreed procedures for restoring Jewish art and property confiscated by Nazis during World War Two. The meeting was held in Washington DC. The 11-point plan called on museums, galleries and governments to track down stolen art and establish a single database. The agreed guidelines required any art identified as stolen to be returned to its rightful owners or heirs. The decision was welcomed by the World Jewish Congress, although it was noted that the agreement was non-binding and left room for different national legal systems to interpret it differently. There was some friction between delegates from the USA and those from France and other European countries over the return of works of art. France’s Matteoli commission on Holocaust-era assets is due to report at the end of 1999. Over 2,000 works of art have been identified in French museums as stolen by Nazis, and they have been listed on the internet. Russia responded by releasing previously classified documents relating to the stolen property of Austrian Jews. But the Vatican refused to open its archives on possible stolen art.

The World Jewish Congress estimate that there are as many as 110,000 pieces of art confiscated from Jews during the war. The conference heard that the Nazis looted 650,000 individual pieces of art during the war. The unrecovered art may be valued at between $10 billion and $30 billion. There are also thought to be outstanding life insurance claims from up to 800,000 Jewish families.

A new museum of Jewish cultural heritage in Europe opened in Paris in December at the same time as the Washington conference. The museum is located in a restored 17\textsuperscript{th} century town house in the Marais district in the city’s Jewish quarter. The collection includes works by Picasso and Utrillo stolen by Nazis during the war whose owners were never found. It also includes the video collection on Jewish history collected by film director Steven Spielberg.


Iraqi Exiles Meet in London

Iraqi exile groups met in London in November to outline a provisional government which could be established in a ‘liberated zone’ within Iraq. The meeting of 15 groups was attended by a minister from the UK Foreign Ministry and met with an official from the US State Department. The USA and Britain announced their intention to assist exile opposition organisations to overthrow the Iraqi government. Britain will provide support for broadcasting into Iraq. The US has pledged $97 million to support the opposition, but is anxious for the many groups to bury their differences. The many exile organisations have become restless and cynical about the slow pace of Western policy.

The Iraqi National Congress, one of the groups attending, announced its wish for the US and its allies to establish zones throughout the country free from the Iraqi military. From these spaces the provisional government would launch its opposition to Iraq’s government.

The other groups attending included the Iraqi Democratic Party, the Islamic Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Association of Iraqi Democrats, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, the Islamic Accord Party, the Iraqi National Record and the Turkoman National Democratic Movement. They are divided
by religious and ethnic differences and include both communists and monarchists.

Some opponents of the Iraqi government do not want to co-operate closely with the USA. The main Shiite Muslim opposition, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, is based in Tehran. Although a representative attended the London meeting, SCIRI was critical of groups close to the West. A spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Iraq also cast doubt on whether exile politicians could achieve any meaningful change.

Britain calls meeting of Iraqi opposition groups, Michael Binyon The Times 19.11.98; Iraqi groups plan provisional govt., Thomas Abraham The Hindu 24.11.98; Iraqi opposition wary of US, British support, Agence France Presse English Wire 29.11.98.

**East Timor: Prospects for Peace**

According to the UN envoy to East Timor, a peaceful solution to the conflict in the territory is close to being achieved (Traces #2 for previous story). Jamsheed Marker made the remark during a visit to the East Timor capital, Dili, in December. The UN is holding talks with Indonesia and Portugal on the future of East Timor, which are scheduled to resume in January. Indonesia has proposed giving the territory a greater level of autonomy in exchange for recognition of its sovereignty over the former Portuguese colony. The thawing of relations between Indonesia and East Timor followed the resignation of President Suharto and the establishment of a new government under B.J. Habibie.

A meeting between parties supporting and opposed to independence for East Timor held in Vienna in November failed to reach any agreement.

According to the *Jakarta Post*, the Timorese diaspora is concentrated in Portugal, where there are 4,000, and Australia, home to 20,000. Another 1,000 are scattered across the USA, Britain, South Africa and Mozambique. The territory of east Timor is home to 850,000, and in the rest of Indonesia there are some 30,000. Macau has a community of only 200 or so, but is a major centre of the Timorese resistance. The Macau Timorese Resistance Group organises escapes from the territory with the support of Macau’s governor.

Indonesia No political solution found for East Timor at meeting in Austria, BBC Monitoring International Reports 3.11.98; Macau A surprising haven for East Timorese refugees, Jakarta Post 6.12.98; UN envoy pleads for calm as East Timor peace treaty nears, Irwan Firdaus The Scotsman 20.12.98

**Divisions Among Sikh-Canadians**

The struggle between ‘moderates’ and ‘traditionalists’ in British Columbia’s Sikh community spilled over into elections for temple executives. A prominent publisher and opponent of fundamentalists was murdered.

The Sikh community in British Columbia is the largest outside India, numbering up to 150,000. Throughout 1998 it was divided by a power struggle between ‘moderates’ and more militant ‘traditionalists’ (Traces #1). The traditionalist or fundamentalist faction drew inspiration from Sikh clerics in India.

One of the leaders of the world’s 20 million Sikhs, Ranjit Singh, issued an edict against the use of tables and chairs in all temples in April. Traditionalists require congregations to sit on the floor, although established practice in Vancouver’s temples was to allow people to sit at tables. Traditionalists trace the practice of sitting on the floor back to Sikhism’s rejection of Hindu caste divisions. The moderates argue that the elderly and infirm need to sit on chairs.
Ranjit Singh excommunicated seven leading members of British Columbia’s Sikh community for opposing the edict. One of the seven, Tara Singh Hayer, was murdered on November 18. Publisher of the Indo Caribbean Times, Hayer was shot outside his house in the Vancouver suburb of Surrey in the run-up to elections for a Sikh temple executive. Hayer had survived an earlier assassination attempt in 1988, which left him wheelchair-bound.

Hayer had formerly supported the independence movement, particularly after the Amritsar massacre. But he became disillusioned by the violence of some extremists, such as the bombing of an Air India flight out of Toronto in 1985. Hayer had tried to prevent fundamentalists from broadcasting attacks on him from a radio station. He had campaigned to shut down two Punjabi-language radio stations in Surrey. The stations transmit from Surrey to Washington State in the USA, and then back into British Columbia where they can be picked up with special receivers. In this way they avoid having to obtain licences from the Canadian authorities.

In Vancouver, elections for the executives who run temples enabled the moderates to gain control – first in Surrey temple in 1996, and then in Ross Street and Abbotsford in 1998. The 1998 elections were surrounded by violence. Police shut down the Abbotsford temple following a stabbing. Efforts by the police to bring the warring factions together did not succeed.

As the more radical supporters of an independent Khalistan have begun to retreat in the Punjab and elsewhere, Vancouver has become one of the last remaining strongholds of fundamentalists. The control of temples was an important resource – Surrey’s Guru Nanak temple has assets valued at 5 million Canadian dollars. This partly accounts for the bitterness of the elections.

Although suspicion fell on Hayer’s fundamentalist opponents, the allegation was strenuously denied. Orthodox Sikhs condemned the murder, and some blamed it on interference from the Indian government aimed at dividing the Sikh community. Hayer’s supporters suspected links between this murder and the unsolved murder of his friend and fellow publisher, Tarsen Singh Purewal, in Southall, Britain in 1995. Purewal’s newspaper, Des Pardes, was critical of Sikh separatism. Purewal and Hayer had both spoken out against the International Sikh Federation and Babbar Khalsa for their supposed links to terrorism.

Publisher’s murder widens gulf Sikh community split by ongoing ideological war, Toronto Star 21.11.98; Slain publisher pursued cancellation of licences, Kim Bolan Vancouver Sun 23.11.98; Religious turbulence on two continents, Kim Bolan Edmonton Journal 23.11.98; Temple’s victorious moderates plan to take control, Kim Bolan Vancouver Sun 25.11.98; Link suspected in two Sikh killings, Kim Bolan Vancouver Sun 28.11.98; B.C. Sikhs in bitter battle Publisher’s murder cranks up tensions, Thomas Walkom Toronto Star 29.11.98; Thousands Mourn Slain Sikh Publisher, Associated Press 5.12.98; Turbulence for Sikhs in British Columbia, Greg Joyce Hamilton Spectator 26.12.98