

# **WorldWatch**

**by David C. Grabbe**

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## **Disease**

Since August 2000, cholera has killed more than 200 people in South Africa. It has infected over 100,000, and officials say there is no end in sight to the current epidemic. "From the word go, a lot of experts were saying to us [cholera] is going to be with us for the next two to three years," said Dave McGlew, the KwaZulu-Natal health department's head of communications. In the early 1980s, South Africa's worst cholera epidemic infected more than 105,000 people and killed more than 340 people over a four-year period. Cholera attacks the intestines, causing death by severe dehydration from diarrhea.

## **Israel**

Because Prime Minister Ariel Sharon refuses to act decisively against Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, top Israeli military officials, disillusioned with Sharon, foresee a regional war breaking out between October and year's end. Their proposed scenario consists of Arafat steadily escalating the violence, but keeping it below Sharon's level of tolerance. Meanwhile, Arafat's Arab allies will rearm for a regional war against Israel. The military brass believes Iran, Iraq, the Palestinians and Hizbullah want a regional war, while Syria and Egypt are preparing for it. The officials are divided over whether Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will join such a coalition when the time comes. Mubarak has pledged to the U.S. that he will stop such a war, but the Egyptian president has been talking very tough in public.

## **Tectonic Arms**

An Azerbaijani KGB officer has disclosed that Moscow secretly conducted exotic research into tectonic arms—weapons that can cause and control earthquakes. Lt. Col. Akif Gasanov claims: "The information I received seemed fantastic. Certain scientists at the Academy of Sciences were working on problems associated with earthquakes. . . . [They] asserted that they could control and initiate earthquakes. . . . In their opinion, there were grounds to believe that a number of earthquakes that had occurred recently may well have been initiated through a remote control device or accidentally triggered directional influence on the earth's core." Gasanov also said a series of quakes in the late 1980s—occurring from India to Central Asia—were the result of tectonic weapons tests.

## **Italy**

The election of Italy's new Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi may have unusual consequences: the return of Prince Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, 64, exiled heir to the Italian throne. Although he and Berlusconi have never met, the prime minister-designate has promised to engineer the return. Polls show that almost 80% of Italians are in favor of the return of the Savoy, though Italy's constitution bans male members of the family from setting foot on Italian soil. The Savoy family ruled the country since unification in 1860 but lost credibility when Victor Emmanuel III surrendered to Benito Mussolini and approved of the dictator's racial laws against Jews. Asked whether he would like to rule Italy as King Victor Emmanuel IV, the prince answered guardedly: "That cannot be

considered for now, that depends not on us but only on the people. We will do nothing to bring it about."

## **Germany**

Everything possible should be done to stabilize relations between the Israelis and Palestinians, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer stressed after a recent visit to the Middle East. Following the June 1 bomb attack outside a Tel Aviv disco that killed a score of young Israelis, Fischer, who had arrived in Israel earlier that day, was pressed into service as an intermediary between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority. "It was a special situation," said Fischer, explaining why he took on the role of intermediary—a role he and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had previously declined for Germany. "We have a duty to do everything to secure peace. . . . We now have to intensify our common efforts." He added that the EU must engage more actively in the Middle Eastern affairs but not in competition with the US.