

## Despite hostage release, all systems are 'go' for Gulf war

by William Jones

It seems that George Bush actually did not lie, when he told the press during his Chilean trip Dec. 6 that "there are no secret negotiations, direct or indirect, with Iraq . . . none—and there will be none." As things stand now, even the talks between Iraq and the United States offered by the President on Nov. 30 are not definitely scheduled.

Having been forced to agree to talks with the Iraqis in exchange for getting his authorization for use of force at the United Nations, President Bush is backtracking as rapidly as possible. He even used the occasion of the release of all hostages by Saddam Hussein, as an excuse to say that "if force is required, that's just one less worry I've got." Deployment of U.S. troops is proceeding at breakneck speed, with 24 convoys a day departing from Wiesbaden, Germany, as well as daily flights from the United States.

### Ignoring Congress

Bush's bellicose attitude, which is also being expressed by Secretary of State James Baker and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, contrasts sharply with that being expressed both by Congress and leading members of the foreign policy Establishment.

For example, Secretary Baker's threat to Congress that it had better rally behind the United Nations resolution and the increased troop deployment, expressed before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Dec. 5, failed to get support.

Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) said that the administration's decision to nearly double the U.S. troop commitment to the multinational force in the Persian Gulf region "almost takes you irresistibly down the path of going to war. Now, I cannot say to a family that loses a son or daughter in a conflict that may well take place in the next 60 to 90 days, that we exhausted every possibility for a peaceful resolution before this happened, because the sanctions option has been exhausted."

Sarbanes also noted that earlier in the month two former

chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had suggested allowing sanctions to work a year or more. A number of senators urged Baker to consider negotiations with Saddam when he was in Baghdad, a notion which Baker categorically rejected, claiming that he did not want to "reward" Saddam's aggression.

Meanwhile, House Democrats overwhelmingly (177-37) approved a resolution stipulating that President Bush cannot initiate war without congressional approval. A lawsuit filed by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), attempting to enjoin the administration from launching war without asking for a declaration from Congress, has been argued, but not yet decided by the federal courts.

### Establishment critics

Even leading Establishment figures, otherwise fully supportive of U.S. presence in the Gulf, but overwhelmed by the lunacy of the Bush rush to war and concerned about the potential social explosion in the country if bodybags start coming back from the Mideast, are distancing themselves from the Bush flight forward. Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of the architects of the "Arc of Crisis" policy in the Mideast, sounded almost rational in his testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations on Dec. 5.

Brzezinski called for a continued policy of "punitive containment," warning that Bush had gone beyond that through the "enormous deployment of American forces," and that as a result, "the United States is now pointed towards a war with Iraq that will be largely an American war, fought predominantly by Americans, in which (on our side) mostly Americans will die—and for interests that are neither equally vital nor urgent to America and which, in any case, can be and should be effectively pursued by other, less drastic and less bloody means."

Brzezinski also rejected the argument that the Iraqis were on the verge of developing nuclear weapons and therefore should be brought to their knees. Brzezinski noted that "a

comprehensive embargo on Iraq” could “impede such an acquisition.” “Unlike India or Israel,” added Brzezinski, “Iraq does permit international inspection of its nuclear facilities.”

Edward Luttwak, a senior military and strategic analyst for Georgetown University’s Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in an interview on National Public Radio on Dec. 8, ridiculed U.S. policy and capabilities in the region, denouncing the “no money, no skills, have gun will travel army.” “The industrial giants are laughing at us,” said Luttwak. “The only ones supporting us are Britain—who are the biggest losers, the biggest losers in the world in the 1990s.”

Reports have surfaced that U.S. political circles have also been collaborating with high-profile international attempts to get negotiations off the ground between Iraq and other Arab countries. Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, who has been heavily criticized by Bush administration officials for his shuttle diplomacy to Baghdad, conferred with senior U.S. politicians and think tankers before his trip to Iraq.

### The war lobby

Despite the hesitations shown by the likes of Luttwak and Brzezinski, which were similarly reflected by former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former cabinet member James Schlesinger, the foreign policy Establishment is clearly split. Those who are close to the Anglo-Zionist lobby, are taking an increasingly high profile.

The formation of a new group, inappropriately called the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf, was announced on Dec. 10. Working with money from the Saudis and as a de facto “public diplomacy” arm of the administration, the group is advocating the use of military force against Iraq to destroy its chemical, biological, and nuclear industries.

The leading spokesmen are “neo-liberal” Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) and “neo-conservative” Richard Perle. Other prominent members from Congress are Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) and Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.). Also part of the group are Tony Coelho, former Democratic Party Whip, Ann Lewis, former political director of the Democratic National Committee, former Sen. Howard Baker, former Defense Secretary and CIA head Frank Carlucci, and former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Jeane Kirkpatrick.

At its Dec. 10 press conference, the group issued a statement declaring that the United States had to do more than force Iraq’s unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. “We must also find ways to remove Saddam Hussein’s capacity to wage aggression, which now includes chemical and biological weapons and may soon include nuclear weapons as well,” the statement said.

Perle, a virtual Israeli agent, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Dec. 6. The former undersecretary of defense during the Reagan administration said:

“Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait is a beginning; it must not become the end of American policy in the Gulf. There can be no ‘political’ solution to this crisis, no ‘face-saving’ formula, no negotiated compromise in which Saddam Hussein, even if he is forced from Kuwait, is allowed to keep the military power he has used to destroy a sovereign state and threaten the destruction of others.”

### British pressure

The source of this warmongering is not only Israel (whose statements are covered in an article on page 40), but Israel’s controllers, Great Britain. As soon as Saddam Hussein announced the release of the foreign hostages, the British elite went berserk to demand that Bush not actually engage in negotiations with the Iraqis, or let the Iraqis negotiate with anyone.

The London *Sunday Express* of Dec. 10 depicted Bush in a Neville Chamberlain outfit with umbrella; the *Sunday Telegraph* observed that *Pax Americana* will not work anymore with the internal anti-war mood increasing in the United States; and the *Sunday Times* sees a general tendency of the United States to turn isolationist.

The *Express* concluded that the “world deserves a Major overhaul,” referring to the new man at No. 10 Downing Street. “It would be all too easy for Britain to revert to being a second-class power if John Major stumbles or fumbles the great test in the international arena.”

The *Telegraph*’s Peregrine Worsthorne editorialized that there should be a testing of “Major’s mettle” along the standards set by Margaret Thatcher. Worsthorne, a consistent warmonger, said that a grave test “comes from the Gulf where again the hand of Mrs. Thatcher is already sorely missed. President Bush is showing every sign of potentially disastrous vacillation towards Saddam Hussein . . . when Mrs. Thatcher was at his elbow, he stood firm. Now that she is gone, he crumbles. We do not believe this to be a coincidence. Nor do many Americans. They are the first to draw attention to the Thatcher factor.”

This pro-war opinion is openly espoused by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, who told the House of Commons Dec. 10 that war is likely after Jan. 15. Hurd was answered by former British Prime Minister Edward Heath, who told the Commons that the government was refusing to tell the British people that a Gulf war “could be the most damaging war in history, with the use of chemical and biological weapons, and the oil wells being blown up, creating the biggest fire in history, and damaging the economy of the whole of the Western world.”

Heath charged that pro-war forces are using the word “appeasement” in order to “whip up public feeling.” He urged that the Arab League put a buffer around Kuwait to prevent an attack, and that all possible measures be taken to prevent a war, whose cost would be “immensely high and could even be unsustainable.”