

## Editorial

### *The wrong signal*

Early in the morning on Sunday, June 27 (local time), U.S. forces fired 23 cruise missiles on Baghdad. The reason given was that the strike was in retaliation for the alleged Iraqi government-sanctioned plot to assassinate former President George Bush during his recent trip to Kuwait. The specific target was Iraqi intelligence headquarters. This action was an extraordinary miscalculation by a Clinton administration which seems increasingly rudderless and confused.

Outrages against international law and the most basic human rights by Serbia continue unabated, yet the U.S. government has chosen to single out Somalia and Iraq as targets against which to assert the supremacy of international law. The glaring discrepancy has not gone unnoticed, particularly in the European press, but there are graver consequences which must be faced. Notable among these are the conclusions which will be drawn by a Russian elite made increasingly desperate and bitter as dissension increases at home while the West offers no economic development aid, but the poison of "shock therapy."

Indeed, there are ominous signs of a resurgence of a faction of Russian "nationalists" who believe in Russia's imperial destiny. One instance of this is the refusal of the Black Sea Fleet to disband itself in accord with a Russian and Ukrainian government agreement; another is the rising tension between Russia and Estonia over claimed violations of the rights of Russian nationals living there. Tensions are also building dangerously between Russians living in Georgia and Georgians, and Russians and Ukrainians.

Back in 1983, Lyndon LaRouche's proposal for boxing in the Russian imperialists was the Strategic Defense Initiative, as a way to shift to Mutually Assured Survival and a new form of technological cooperation between East and West. Although this proposal was temporarily adopted by the Reagan administration, Russia's "Third Rome" ideologues rejected it outright. Meanwhile, the Kissingerian one-world malthusians proceeded to undermine the U.S. proposal, until it was nearly unrecognizable.

Yet, the very fact that President Reagan formally adopted LaRouche's SDI policy led to the Soviets em-

barking on the military buildup which they could not sustain. The economic looting of eastern Europe, in particular, which occurred as a reaction to the American SDI policy, is acknowledged today by Russian think-tankers and others as having been a primary cause for the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

Today, there are forces in the former Soviet Union, typified by the grouping which proposed cooperation on strategic defense technologies, who offer an alternative to a resurgence of Russian imperialism. The Clinton administration has, however, refused to take up the offer of such collaboration—which not only was reported in the Russian media, but was directly made to Clinton at the April summit in Vancouver.

For the imperial Russian faction, the message is clear: The United States is no longer a force to be feared. It lacks the will to take on Serbian aggression, and instead chooses weak targets which offer no serious opposition. Ironically, the Serbian fascists of dictator Slobodan Milosevic are not in themselves a dangerous military opponent. A U.S. decision to lift the embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina, combined with minimal military support from the United States such as strafing certain artillery positions held by the Serbian fascists, would change the situation dramatically by allowing Bosnia to defend itself.

President Clinton's excuse for failing to act in the Balkans remains his unwillingness to have the United States act unilaterally, but that is precisely what occurred in the bombing of Baghdad. The truth is that Clinton is unwilling to buck the opposition of the John Major government in Britain and President François Mitterrand in France. He has apparently succumbed to advice that he must appear to be a strong leader by actions such as bombing Iraq, shooting civilians in Somalia, and pressuring Haiti.

If the Clinton administration does not wake up to the enormity of the crisis brewing, and take the appropriate steps, not only militarily against Serbia but also on the economic front, then over the next three to four years a global new Dark Age is looming, like that which followed the collapse of the Roman Empire, but on a far vaster scale.