

Russia Already Sees Confrontation From Bush

by Our Special Correspondent

While official Russian diplomacy with the new Bush Administration is still in its opening paces, the Russian press—including the official government newspaper—is already reporting a new adversary relationship being provoked by Bush's headlong charges. This is occurring just when U.S.-Russian cooperation is essential to enable the world to come through the global financial crash.

The combination of Bush's senseless rush to bomb Iraq's capital, and his spokesmen's bragging about targetting China, India, and Russia with a (non-existent!) "national missile defense" capability, marked the Bush Administration as a phenomenon well described by Lyndon LaRouche in a Feb. 17 statement: "An administration which has no future," he said, "which is on a short fuse to destruction—self-destruction. But it has a large explosive charge, and when it blows up—which will be soon—anything standing near it, in most parts of the world, can be severely injured." Though Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov is only scheduled to come to the United States in the last week of February, the actions of the Bush White House toward Eurasia are already being seen as provocations.

'The Target Was Moscow'

Rossiskaya Gazeta, the government newspaper, charged on Feb. 19 that the bombing of Baghdad three days earlier was aimed directly at Russia, threatening it with "a small hot war accompanied by a new Cold War." The author, Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, who once wrote for the Soviet Communist Party daily *Pravda*, compared the U.S.-British attack on Baghdad to the bombing of Hiroshima, "in the sense that while hitting Baghdad, the political target was Moscow." As President Truman's Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings were connected to Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain speech" in Fulton, Missouri 55 years ago, in a British-U.S. drive to intimidate Moscow into accepting world government, Ovchinnikov ties the Bush Administration's immediate assault on Baghdad to National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice's public attacks on Russia as a threat to the West and to Europe in particular.

"Once the narrow circle of strategic balance is broken," warned Ovchinnikov, "this would not just free the hands of Washington, but also of Moscow. Moscow could then sell

whatever technologies it wanted, including missile and nuclear technologies, to anyone it wanted. . . . Faced with a real threat from the outside, the Russian people would be ready for sacrifices which would be unthinkable for Westerners. Remember the words of the Great Helmsman of Beijing, 'the richer a country, the more it has to fear from a nuclear war.' Whoever decides to destroy the strategic balance, should remember those words of Mao."

Missile Tests 'Answer to NMD'

While Ovchinnikov's warnings do not purport to represent the policy of the Russian government, representatives of the Russian military command are talking publicly about potential Russian responses to the Bush Administration's loud claims that the United States will now develop national and theater missile defenses. As reported on the semi-official Russian government Internet page Strana.ru, General Staff deputy chief Gen. Lt. Valeri Manilov pointed to the Feb. 13-16 series of ballistic missile tests by the Russian Armed Forces, as an "answer to the U.S. NMD plans." Northern Fleet submarine launched ballistic missiles were combined with firing of the new land-based Topol missiles from Kamchatka, and launches of ballistic missiles from Tu-22 and Tu-95 aircraft.

Manilov was quoted stating, "These launchings of ballistic missiles from air, sea, and land bases, demonstrated that Russia is able to overcome any anti-missile defense system."

The same website carried an interview with Vladimir Dvorkin, an official of the Defense Ministry's division in charge of planning for strategic nuclear war-fighting. Dvorkin warned that a U.S. national missile defense would radically change U.S.-Russian relations. Russia could respond, he said, by "sharply upgrading the ability of Russian missile forces to penetrate defenses," "completion of the sea-based missile RSM-54" and upgrading of the Topol-M ICBMs. These new deployments, warned Dvorkin, would involve "certain corrections in the structure of our rocket forces," "increasing the number of warheads and anti-missile countermeasures" carried by missiles. These moves to swamp the firepower of the NMD system the Bush team is bragging about, would collapse the START nuclear-arms reduction treaties negotiated in the 1980s between the United States and Soviet Union.

All these statements have the character of unusually frank warnings from military officials and commentators in government sources. They are the immediate fruit of the sudden Bush bombing of Iraq, combined with evident U.S. preparations for a spreading Mideast war. The bombing was clearly a calculated opening assault of the new administration in order to send out aggressive threats and signals—and it is clear that these first provocations have already strongly registered on the Russian side. The Bush White House, as LaRouche noted, is charging ahead toward a quick and early disaster.