

Bush Shows Signs of Serious Mental Strain at APEC Summit

by Michele Steinberg

The most significant development at the Oct. 23-26 APEC summit (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum) of 21 Asian and American heads of state and government, at Los Cabos, Mexico, was the obvious sign that President George W. Bush displayed, of suffering serious mental problems. When a President of the United States demonstrates the kind of stressed-out state of mind that Bush showed at Los Cabos, it is a matter of strategic concern. And while it may not have struck the President, the countries he subjected to his bizarre behavior in Mexico, are the same ones that he needs in order to “build a coalition” against Iraq.

By Oct. 31, at the United Nations in New York, the effects of Bush’s Mexico antics spilled over into the 15-member Security Council proceedings, leaving the situation “jammed up.” Despite daily pressure, threats, press conferences, and special emissaries from the “war party” in Washington to get support for the U.S. resolution giving the green light for military action, France, Russia, and China continued their opposition to war language. German Foreign Minister Joscha Fischer reiterated Germany’s stand against an Iraq war, while reminding Washington that Germany still has troops committed to the “war against terrorism” that Bush rallied against Afghanistan—and now, apparently, wants to exit, unfinished. Making matters worse for the increasingly insecure Bush, new Security Council members, including Mexico, joined the opposition to the U.S. resolution, and supported a two-phase process, first giving the inspectors’ mission a chance to succeed. In short, the UN Security Council members are *refusing* to pass a U.S. resolution that would violate the UN charter and international laws.

It is as if the UN is—diplomatically—implementing the advice offered by Lyndon LaRouche, when he declared on Oct. 4, in a Presidential campaign press release: “By their pattern of bizarre behavior, the President—and the Vice-Pres-

ident—of the United States, have shown themselves to be insane. . . . Therefore, the United Nations Security Council must recognize this fact, and it should suspend its current debate and negotiations over the insane demands being made by the President of the United States. Stop negotiating over the demands of a madman! The United Nations should declare that the President of the United States is insane, and then proceed from that standpoint.” LaRouche didn’t leave it at that, but called for urgent bipartisan action to help him in bringing sanity to the White House. In an Oct. 19 interview with *The LaRouche Show*, broadcast on the Internet, he said: “Nov. 5th is coming up. Wherever we can, around the country, build up, around the Democrats, or Republicans who are sane, and get them in; change the composition of the Congress, shake up the machinery, and get rid of, and weaken, this bunch of draft-dodging Chicken-hawks who want to make war everywhere. And if we do that, we can change the country. . . . [T]he objective, my objective, is, as soon as possible, to be able to get a bunch of people to walk into the White House, and say, ‘Mr. President, we’ll save your Presidency, and you’ll be a success if you do what we tell you. But you’ve got to get rid of these bums. And we’ll come in here and straighten this thing out, and you’ll be a success.’ That’s the objective.”

What Happened in Mexico

Events since that Oct. 19 statement show such intervention to free Bush from the neo-conservative “bums” to be more urgent than ever. The latest victim of Bush’s erratic and bizarre behavior, and the wrath of the neo-cons, is the government of Mexican President Vicente Fox. Mexican leaders stood in amazement as Bush rambled, sometimes incoherently, during the APEC summit. The *Washington Post* reported on Oct. 28, “a Mexican official who asked not to be identified,” told them that “Bush . . . is today a different per-



President Bush, in consternation throughout the APEC summit meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico, had National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, on Oct. 26, attempt to explain things to him—his reverses on Iraq war policy, perhaps?

son than he was when he met Fox in Guanajuato and at the White House—visits that now seem a lifetime ago.”

None of the leaders of this “economic” summit could get a word out of Bush about the economic disasters facing the world financial system—from the meltdown of the world’s three largest banking systems (the United States, Japan, and Europe), to the collapse of world trade, to the coming bankruptcy of the International Monetary Fund. Fox tried to focus the President on a follow-up meeting on free trade—once a banner Bush issue—only to get the terse response, “We may be at war,” according to the London *Guardian*. Fox retorted, “But you are not at war now,” which elicited a confused look on Bush’s face, said the *Guardian*.

The *Washington Post* accounts were graphic, indicating that Bush displayed such impatience that it bordered on a major diplomatic breach. The Oct. 27 *Post* story reported: “Bush has little patience with ceremony and has always kept his visits to international gatherings as brief as possible. With other leaders not rushing to embrace his plans, he did not conceal his testiness today. The only time he spoke to reporters was during a photo session with Fox, and he glowered during Fox’s windup and looked annoyed at the unruliness of the camera crews. The last straw was when a cell phone went off, which infuriates Bush. . . . In a breach of protocol, Bush cut off the translator before Fox’s answers could be rendered in English, and the White House transcript ignored Fox’s words, saying simply, ‘Answered in Spanish.’ ”

The Oct. 28 *Post* noted that “the man who once made Mexicans feel relaxed and welcome now makes them nervous and often irritated. The Mexicans . . . say they are puzzled over the administration’s seeming inability to pay attention to more than one foreign policy issue at a time;” and that

Administration officials say privately that they wonder “why Mexico cannot be more understanding of the international and domestic pressures Bush is under, and the enormous security concerns he has to deal with.”

Coalition? What Coalition?

By Oct. 29, it became obvious to Mexico, how Bush’s “handlers” use the President’s confusion to jack him up into a war mode. The neo-cons’ *modus operandi* showed in an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, “Our Friends at the UN: Saddam’s Amigos South of the Border,” which virtually declared war on Mexico and its pro-free trade, pro-Bush President, for taking a stand at the UN Security Council against the U.S. war resolution. The *Journal* said, “The Mexican stiff-arm on Iraq” meant Republicans will see Mexico as “more useful as political piñatas than as partners. . . . It is one thing for a Mexican President to cede

his foreign policy to the left for some blather about global poverty. But helping the French block the U.S. in the Security Council, and on a matter of vital national interest, is something Americans won’t soon forget.”

This is the same newspaper that called one year ago, on Oct. 30, 2001, on Bush to launch war against Saudi Arabia, surfacing a scenario for U.S. takeover of the Saudi oil fields. Now the *Journal*, voice of America’s sunken stock markets, virtually declared war on the whole world in its diatribe against Mexico, saying, “President Bush repeated yesterday that the U.S. and its real friends will proceed in Iraq with or without the UN’s blessing. That little league of nations is going to have to decide whose side it’s on.”

What real friends? is the question for an Administration that doesn’t collaborate, but threatens. More than 80 countries opposed the Iraq war in statements before the UN Security Council. Germany, with the largest NATO basing in the world, will not participate; Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, which bore the brunt of the cost of the 1991 Gulf War, support a diplomatic solution. That leaves only Britain—where deep rifts in the oligarchic establishment surface almost daily over the Bush adventure—and Israel, whose government coalition fell apart on Oct. 30, in no small part due to the disaster of Bush’s Middle East policy.

And, while peddling utopian rhetoric about “a U.S.-led coalition” to support his policy, Bush stiff-armed another friend of the U.S. on Oct. 31, when he refused to meet with Germany’s Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who was visiting Washington. Fischer met Secretary of State Colin Powell, and then told several interviewers that Germany still has military forces committed—at Bush’s request—in Afghanistan! He was voicing the concern that many other nations have:

Bush Offers APEC Worse Than Nothing

Despite its name, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the APEC heads of state summit in Los Cabos, Mexico on Oct. 23-26 was preoccupied with terrorism, while President Bush ignored the pleas for serious discussion of the global economic crisis and its impact in Asia.

The two “results” of the APEC forum were a counter-terrorism agreement, and an offer from the United States to allow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to beg for a free-trade pact, but only if they agree to follow globalization dictates. The “Secure Trade in the APEC Region” (STAR) initiative, introduced by President Bush, is “designed to enhance security while increasing trade,” a White House statement said. “The STAR initiative commits APEC economies to accelerate

action on screening people and cargo for security before transit, increasing security on ships and airplanes while en route, and enhancing security in airports and seaports.” Bush’s efforts to get support for an Iraq war, or stiff demands on North Korea in regard to their nuclear program, were not successful, however.

Bush’s offer to the ten Southeast Asian nations to apply for Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the United States—called the “Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative”—has the smell of a corpse inviting guests into the coffin. According to the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, which praised the plan as a “crucial step forward,” the deal allows those countries “that are committed to market liberalization and market-oriented reform” to apply to the U.S. Trade Representative for a bilateral FTA.

Any serious discussion of Asian responses to the global financial-economic collapse will have to wait for the ASEAN+3 heads-of-state meeting (the ASEAN nations plus China, Japan and South Korea) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Nov. 4-5. —Michael Billington

What happened to the U.S. “war on terrorism,” in Afghanistan?

Bush is left with the unpleasant reality that bullying hasn’t worked, and he might have to move *unilaterally* to war. The Associated Press reported on Oct. 31, “For seven weeks, American diplomats have been unable to swing France, Russia, and China, [which] . . . have veto powers, behind the U.S.-British draft.” That day, in a South Dakota campaign swing, Bush lectured the UN, “you need to do your job” or “we will lead a coalition of nations” to do it without you. With the President in this mode, the unfortunate Colin Powell was reduced to telling the press that the UN cannot “handcuff” the United States. But recent polls—loaded and unreliable as they are—indicate that UN constraints on Bush’s recklessness, are just what the American people may want.

The Boy Emperor

An Oct. 28 poll put out by the Pew Research Center, reported that 73% of Americans polled *oppose unilateral military action* by the United States. Overall, the poll showed that support for war against Iraq plummeted by 9% since mid-September, despite Bush and the neo-cons’ unrelenting war propaganda. Though 55% of Americans polled still support war on Iraq, that figure was close to 70% in August! And it 55% drops to 27%, if the United States starts a war without allies.

Will the Utopians eventually declare war on the American people by police-state measures? Some American critics think Bush may be *that far* “off the deep end.” On Sept. 30, syndicated columnist Arianna Huffington, a former neo-con

insider, wrote, “People under stress often regress to earlier stages of development. It appears that Bush is so intent on getting Saddam, so obsessively tightly gripped by a need to succeed where his war hero dad failed, so determined to lay the murderous 9/11 assault at Baghdad’s door, that he’s regressed to that level of childhood development where fantasy, reality and wish fulfillment are all mixed up. . . . Now, I’m no psychologist, but I believe there is a clinical term for this condition: going off the deep end.”

Then, on Oct. 20, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Maureen Dowd skewered Bush and Richard Perle in a *New York Times* piece. “The Boy Emperor picked up the morning paper and, stunned, dropped his Juicy Juice box with the little straw attached,” wrote Dowd. “‘Oh, man,’ he wailed. ‘North Korea’s got nukes. Sheriff Musharraf was helping them. Al Qaeda’s blowing stuff up again. The Pentagon’s speculating that the sniper might really be Qaeda decoy teams trying to distract the law while they plan a bio-blitzkrieg or a dirty bomb attack on the capital. Tenet’s broken out in hives about the next 9/11. Powell spends all his time kissing up to the Frenchies. Saddam’s ranting about a river of American blood. Jebbie’s in a world of hurt. The economy’s cratering. . . . This is not the way my new doctrine was supposed to work. We are supposed to decide who we pre-empt and when we pre-empt them. . . . Condi and Rummy said once we finished off Saddam, nobody would mess with America again. . . . Some people are actually talking about my doctrine leading to World War III!!! Karl says that would be bad.’ ”

Dowd ended with the horrified Boy Emperor calling for the comfort of Nanny Rice.