

UN Iraq Resolution Sign of a Global Change

by Our Special Correspondent

The agreement to UN resolution 1441 by the Security Council on Nov. 8, and by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Nov. 13, reflected agreements reached before the U.S. elections on Nov. 5, and a changed global situation in the aftermath of those elections. The deal may have been a dirty one—given the openings remaining for the Anglo-American and Israeli factions that want war, to provoke war—but it opens the potential to avert war as global politics increasingly becomes the politics of undeniable economic crisis.

“The election is over. The intent to go to war is over,” was the way 2004 Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche put it in a comment on Nov. 13; though he warned that the imperial “chicken-hawk” faction in the United States, while pinned down for now, still wants to force a war in the Middle East, including its component of Israeli aggression and forced transfer of Palestinians. But the current, post-Election Day intent of the Bush Presidency is not to go to war.

A deal struck just prior to Nov. 5 among the United States, Russia, France, and other nations involved in the United Nations Security Council, concluded a months-long fight by many nations which finally pinned down the U.S. warhawks—in the phrase of Mexico’s Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda—like Gulliver restrained by the combined efforts of the Lilliputians. The deal involved leaving harsh and peremptory language in the resolution—to be repeated in speech after speech by President Bush and others—while removing the “automatic trigger” by which the United States and Britain could have launched war without going back to the Security Council.

LaRouche himself, wielding considerable international influence and with his campaign mass-leafletting the United States against the war continuously since last Summer, played a crucial role in “jamming up” the attack on Iraq demanded by Dick Cheney’s chicken-hawks. But LaRouche also stressed, that the politics of election 2004—dominated by the ongoing economic and fiscal collapse—are now what counts, “And a war is not in the President’s interests for the year 2004.”

Administration Official’s Characterization

“There were three elements really in [President Bush’s Sept. 12 UN] speech,” a senior Bush Administration official told reporters on Nov. 8, “and those three elements drove all of the negotiations that we had been involved in for the past seven weeks. One, a clear statement of the problem . . . re-



The U.S. imperial warhawk faction was pinned down, in the metaphor of Mexico’s Foreign Minister, like Gulliver through the combined efforts of many nations—and equally importantly, by a changed post-election U.S. political situation. Plenty of danger of war remains, but a new policy dynamic has the potential to stop it.

peated violations over 11 years of UN resolutions. Secondly, the President laid out what would have to be done to get Iraq out of violation, or for Iraq to get itself out of violation—a strong inspection regime and satisfaction on the various resolutions. And the third element, which made this effort different from all other efforts, there had to be consequences. . . . And the President left no doubt that those consequences would be a military operation to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction and to change the regime.”

But, the official added, concerning the Russian, French, and others’ concerns over “automaticity” of a U.S. military response, “Let me just say that they [the Russians] were intent on making sure that there was not automaticity in there that we would somehow grab something and immediately take it to conflict. . . . I think they saw that we were serious about this, that our goal was disarmament,” the official said. “Within the last 48 hours, it became clear to me that we had to do a little more work to satisfy them. President Bush spoke to President Putin yesterday. And I’ve been in constant contact with Foreign Minister Ivanov. . . . Yesterday afternoon when we consummated the final deal with the French, I called Foreign Minister Ivanov and told him of that change in language. And he considered that to be a breakthrough that he wanted to take to President Putin right away.”

In fact, U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Negroponte and Chinese Ambassador Zhang Yishan—who was chairman of the Security Council session—characterized the resolution in very similar ways after it had passed 15-0. Zhang said, “China supports the two-staged approach. The Chinese delegation has actively participated in all stages of the consultations on the draft resolution and put forward its views and suggestions in a constructive manner. We are pleased to note that after

many rounds of consultations, the co-sponsors of the draft resolution accommodated our concerns, and the Council members have finally reached consensus. . . . As the cosponsors [United States and Britain] pointed out in their statements some moments ago, the purpose of the resolution is to achieve the disarmament of Iraq through effective inspections. The text no longer includes automaticity for authorizing the use of force.”

French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte was also pleased with the resolution, on which the French had exerted considerable effort. “We requested that accordingly a two-stage approach be approved and complied with, so that the Security Council would keep control of the process at each stage. This objective has been attained,” he said. Russian UN ambassador Sergei Lavrov was of a similar mind:

“The wording in the resolution is not the ideal, and the sponsors themselves acknowledge this. But this just reflects the very complicated nature of the compromise that was arrived at. The Russian Federation made a choice on principle to support the resolution, guided by its special responsibility as a permanent member of the council for the maintenance of international peace and security. What is important is that the resolution deflects the direct threat of war and opens up the road to further work in the interests of a political, diplomatic settlement.”

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, in a TV interview on Nov. 12, also indicated a shift had been made on the strident U.S. demand for “regime change” in Iraq. “We inherited that policy,” Powell noted. “We thought it was a good policy and it remains our policy to this day. We will see whether, in the area of disarmament with this resolution, we find a regime that is changing itself, that has decided to cooperate with the international community.”

Resolution 1441 was a “diplomatic compromise” in the extreme. Dubbed by some in the Bush Administration as a masterpiece of “creative ambiguity,” the text allows all sides to interpret it as they choose; but it could have been far worse. The Russians and French, who managed to stall passage of a new resolution more than eight weeks, succeeded in eliminating the clauses they deemed most dangerous, especially that “all necessary means” would be deployed—effectively automatically—in case of Iraqi non-compliance. And, they managed to force through reference to a “second stage” of “discussion” in the Security Council in case of violations. Iraq’s “sovereignty and territorial integrity” were also explicitly guaranteed.

Lesser of Two Evils

In their statements at the final vote, representatives of Russia, France, China, and Syria declared that they had received “assurances” from the co-sponsors, the United States and Britain, that there was no “automatism” for military action in the resolution. Syria added that Russia and France had confirmed such assurances. What the assurances will mean in

practice, remains to be seen.

At the same time, hard-liners in Washington trumpet that the final text calls Iraq in “material breach” of earlier resolutions. In addition, it does not establish the need for a second UN Security Council resolution—mandating the use of military force—in the event of non-compliance. As one senior Bush Administration official was quoted in the London *Sunday Telegraph* on Nov. 10: “The United States will be part of those [further] discussions, but the President has not lost any of his authority at some point to say, ‘I’ve got to act, and who wants to act with us?’ We have got everything we wanted . . . and we don’t need the Security Council’s permission to go to war with Iraq.’ ”

Those nations who wanted to require a second resolution, compromised rather than risk radicalization in Washington. As one French diplomat, cited in the *Telegraph*, said: “We wanted to tie the United States into a multilateral process as far as was possible. But if we pushed it too far, we risked sacrificing [Secretary of State] Powell to the Washington hawks and losing all influence instead of gaining more. So we settled.”

The League of Arab States, in a meeting on Nov. 10, took a similar approach: to urge Iraqi compliance as a means of avoiding war, while reiterating strict opposition to the use of military means. Had the original text been pushed through, Iraq would not have been able to accept it.

Now, France, Germany, and Russia are working in tandem with the Arab League, in an effort to guarantee that inspections be carried out properly—and transparently—and that no provocations be orchestrated to sabotage their work, as in 1997, which would trigger war. The Arab League foreign ministers’ final declaration “called on the permanent Security Council members who presented Syria with assurances, to commit to what they presented, that the resolution is not used as an excuse to wage war on Iraq and does not constitute automatic military action.” The document demanded “the continuation of UN-Iraq cooperation to solve all standing issues peacefully in preparation for the lifting of sanctions and the end of the [UN] embargo as well as the suffering of the Iraqi people.” The Arab position was “absolute rejection” of any military actions, which would jeopardize the security of all Arab nations. The document called on the UN Security Council to demand that Israel get rid of its weapons of mass destruction because they “constitute a serious threat to Arab and international peace and security.”

Syrian Foreign Minister al-Sharaa made public that he had received a letter from Powell “in which he stressed that there is nothing in the resolution to allow it to be used as a pretext to launch a war on Iraq, and that if the U.S. administration had any intention of resorting to military action, this resolution wouldn’t have taken seven weeks.” (Israeli military commentator Ze’ev Schiff wrote in the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz* on Nov. 13, that Powell had also stated that if Iraq

complied, there would be no “regime change.”)

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak also made public his understanding that the United States would play fair. On Nov. 12, Mubarak, who has been in constant contact with Baghdad and Washington, said, “Anyone who thinks that attacking Iraq will strike fear into other Arab nations is wrong and is ignorant of the character of the region’s people.” Mubarak said it was “vital that Iraq recognizes the seriousness of the situation and accepts the new Security Council resolution to allow inspectors unrestricted access.”

Most importantly, Mubarak said, “When the international community is convinced that there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, then the American President will listen.” In the original Arabic, Mubarak’s statement indicated he had received assurances to this effect.

Chicken-Hawks Ruffled

One senior intelligence source close to the Saudis and Syrians told *EIR* on Nov. 13, that he shared the view that war may have been averted. The problem, in his view, is the Washington war party, including influentials such as Paul Wolfowitz, Doug Feith, and Richard Perle. “They know if this war is not launched, their careers are finished,” he said, adding that the Sharon and Netanyahu factions in Israel desperately want the war as well.

Perle provided proof positive of this, also on Nov. 13, in a hysterical interview in the London *Guardian*. Launching “an extraordinary tirade against Europe,” Perle blasted Germany, France, and UN inspector Hans Blix as softies on Iraq. After fiercely denouncing German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder for “unilateral pacifism,” Perle was asked whether France had shown signs of moral fibre, and fumed, “I have seen diplomatic maneuver, but not moral fibre.” British Prime Minister Blair was the only European who escaped his wrath.

Fearing (at that point) an Iraqi acceptance of the resolution, Perle lashed out at Hans Blix, head of the UN inspections team, for having voiced skepticism about the feasibility of implementing the clause regarding interrogations of Iraqis outside the country. Blix had said, “We see some practical difficulties in implementing this authority unless the Iraqis go along with it.” Perle, in response, insisted no such problems existed, even with large Iraqi families. “It is vital,” he told the *Guardian*, “that the inspectors can take people who have the knowledge and their families to safe places outside Iraq. . . . If it were up to me, on the strength of his previous record, I wouldn’t have chosen Hans Blix.”

Perle said he did not think inspections would work, and also displayed a clear concept of how they could be sabotaged. “We will know it clearly,” he said, “when the inspectors bump against locked doors, or when an individual Iraqi with specific knowledge refuses to meet them or has passed away or has been killed in an automobile crash.” This, in fact, is a real and dangerous possibility. As some Arabs have noted, a traffic

jam in busy downtown Baghdad, which held up a UN inspections vehicle, could be construed as “non-compliance.” If Iraqi citizens are taken out of the country, along with family members, and interrogated, “intelligence” could be manufactured, on the basis of which non-compliance could be alleged. Finally, as past experience showed, under the UNSCOM regime of inspectors, the entire operation could be perverted, and inspections turned into espionage.

Then there are the Israelis, who, under the current political and military leadership, have been banking on war against Iraq. Once the UN resolution had gone through, and even before Iraq’s response, some Israelis appeared as ruffled as Perle. In *Ha’aretz* on Nov. 13, Zvi Bar’el issued a commentary bluntly entitled, “Saddam Could Pull a Fast One and Comply With UN Demands.” “What will happen if Saddam Hussein fulfills all the conditions set down in the UN resolution?” Bar’el worried—at great length.

Peace or War?

Whether war will be avoided, and a peaceful solution secured, will depend, first, on the progress of the inspections process. During that process, as LaRouche has emphasized, the ongoing economic and financial breakdown crisis can change the agenda completely. And, continuing popular opposition in many countries, to an act of military aggression, can effect political changes.

Saddam Hussein himself, in an interview with *Al Usbua* (*The Week*), reprinted in *Berliner Morgenpost*—said to be his first interview in 12 years—hinted that such changes could affect Britain. Asked by Egyptian journalist Said Nassar, whether time were working for or against Iraq, he answered: “Time is definitely working for us. We have to gain some more time, and the American-British alliance will break. The pressure from the street in Britain and America will take care of that.” The dramatic upheavals in the British Monarchy may indeed reflect bitter factional struggle among Britain’s establishment, around Iraq policy.

If inspections proceed normally inside Iraq, there is still the grave danger that events may be orchestrated outside the country, to force a reversal to a military approach. A massive terrorist attack, attributed to Iraq-linked elements, could alter the picture immediately. In this regard, it is important to note not only the repeated warnings of upcoming terror attacks, issued by German BND security office head Hanning, but also the sudden reappearance on Nov. 13, of none other than Osama bin Laden. As if on cue, the phantomatic terrorist boss appeared in an audio tape on Al Jazeera TV, to praise recent terrorist attacks—in Kuwait, in Bali, on the French tanker off Yemen, and in Moscow—and to issue warnings to the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Canada, Germany, and Australia.

The gist of the primitive message is: Yes, Osama bin Laden did it; yes there is an “Iraq connection”; and yes, terrorist actions will continue. Just what the war party ordered.