
Documentation

Growing international opposition to Iraq war

United Nations

Secretary General Kofi Annan, interview with BBC, Feb. 10:

Annan urged the United Kingdom and United States to avoid “humiliating” Iraq, and cautioned against military action. The Iraqi leaders, he said, have “painted themselves in a corner and we need to work with them to get them to back down, but I think we should not insist on humiliating them. . . . I think we all need to think through very carefully the consequences of [military] action and what we do afterwards. If we maintain fundamentalist positions all around, or purist positions all around, we will not find a solution, and I appeal for that kind of courage, that kind of wisdom, that will allow us to make the kinds of judgments that will allow us to get out of this.”

United States

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, former commander of Coalition military forces during Operation Desert Storm, 1991, now a military analyst for NBC-TV, speaking with Tim Russert on “Meet the Press,” Feb. 8:

Asked what an air attack against Iraq would accomplish, and what would happen if it did not succeed, Schwarzkopf replied, “We run the risk of doing the same thing we did in North Vietnam. We escalated the bombing, and every time they survived it, they kind of came out and brushed themselves off and said, ‘Wow, we survived,’ and it toughened their resolve, so that’s one of the risks that you have when you go ahead and embark upon this type of military operation.”

Russert: “Is it a risk worth taking?”

Schwarzkopf: “That’s not my judgment to make. That’s a judgment that has to be made by the national command authority, I think, and the United Nations.

“But it is definitely a risk, and I think it’s something that has to be considered. A lot of people are asking the question, ‘What after that?’ and that’s a very good question to ask, because we’re not in a position to launch ground forces. We don’t have the ground forces there to do so. It would take a very long time to build up to that level.”

Russert: “Should we expand the mission and try to eliminate Saddam Hussein once and for all?”

Schwarzkopf: “Well, that’s easy to say, hard to do. You

know, you’re not going to eliminate Saddam Hussein unless you know exactly where he is, you know, a given time, place, location certain, and with no intelligence apparatus to work with and not having that knowledge, you know, it’s easy to say, ‘Let’s go get Saddam Hussein,’ but it’s a very, very tough thing to do. . . .

“[Saddam] wants the sanctions lifted, and if the coalition fractures, then he has a good chance of having the sanctions lifted. So therefore, you know, he may not mind a big strike. He may say, ‘It’s worth taking a big strike if I can get the sanctions lifted.’ ”

David Hackworth, decorated Vietnam War hero, commentary posted on the Internet, “Bluster and Bombs Don’t Win Wars,” Feb. 11:

Hackworth wrote that “there’s no one more dangerous than a fiftyish draft dodger turned Hawk.” He leveled his remarks at Democrats and Republicans alike, beginning with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. “When Trent Lott was in his early 20s, dying age during the Vietnam War, do you think the man ever led a rifle platoon across a bullet-swept field in Southeast Asia? No way. He was too busy leading cheers at Old Miss! Now the Republican Senate leader foams at the mouth with war talk and wants the United States to bomb Iraq into a sandy waffle. He has become the ultimate cheerleader of death and destruction.”

“The White House, from Clinton to his chief of staff to his national security adviser, all are members of the same we-never-served-our-country-in-the-trenches club. In fact, most senior White House advisers belong to the same cozy anti-war elite. . . . And that applies to Newt Gingrich and most of the Congressional baby boomers now chanting bomb, bomb, bomb as well. Only 9% of today’s members of Congress have seen combat duty. Nor does a single one have a son or a daughter on a ship, in an aircraft or in a foxhole in the Gulf.”

Hackworth itemized the parallels between the Vietnam fiasco, and the Gulf War, take two, that Clinton is now contemplating. First, he noted that the United States has never won a war by a bombing campaign, from World War II, to Korea, to Vietnam and Desert Storm I. A massive bombing campaign would do nothing to defeat Saddam Hussein. Second, there is no clearly defined objective to a military action against Saddam. Third, Hackworth warned that the U.S. is preparing Desert Storm II using the same flawed tactics used in the last effort, and this time, probably, without even the involvement of ground forces. And, ultimately, there is no way to “win.” “You need to be smart, skillful and lucky to win. And anyone with a lick of commonsense doesn’t get into a fight that he surely can’t win. . . . As with Vietnam, Congressional bluster will not cause Saddam to change spots. Neither will airpower destroy all of Iraq’s WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. Lott and his war chorus

should chill out and spend an evening reading Sun Tzu to understand his bottom line: "The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or ruin. . . ."

Europe, Russia

Massimo D'Alema, Italy, general secretary of the PDS party (the largest coalition partner in the Italian government), as quoted in *La Repubblica*, Feb. 7:

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is "the only head of government in the world who favors a military strike" against Iraq, said D'Alema. He revealed that he had written a letter to Tony Blair, in agreement with Premier Romano Prodi, asking Blair to hold off. "It is a letter that says WAIT [in English in the original—ed.], *calma*. Before war, it is necessary to explore all means of diplomacy . . . to declare war against a country that prohibits inspectors to enter, seems to me an overreaction. The use of strength is sometimes a painful necessity, but this does not seem to me to be the case." D'Alema turns to Blair not only as chairman of the European Union, but also as executive member of the European Socialist Party, of which D'Alema is also a member.

Italy and Russia, joint declaration during Boris Yeltsin's visit to Rome Feb. 9-11:

The statement warns President Clinton against the "unpredictable consequences" of an intervention against Iraq, while stating that it is "indispensable to keep the diplomatic way open" and indicating that it is UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who could carry out such mediation.

Ten bishops of the Church of England, open letter published in *The Independent*, Feb. 11:

An American-British attack on Iraq would not be a just war, the letter said. "Any action that will involve large-scale civilian casualties in Iraq leaves the Western nations in a weak moral position. What is more, military intervention by Western nations is likely to reinforce the already deep Muslim mistrust of the West.

"The goals of military intervention remain unclear. The risk of widespread collateral damage must be pondered. Previous action reduced Iraq to a state in which the firm government of a ruthless tyrant seemed more than ever the only alternative to total social collapse.

"Just war theory requires a reasonable calculation of success in attaining clearly defined objectives, once all other avenues have been exhausted. We are not convinced that this applies here.

"We raise these points on the basis of the Christian conviction that innocent citizens have the right not to become the target of threats and violence, and that the building of trust between peoples is the overriding priority for policy in such circumstances."

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, Germany, interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Feb. 12:

"Everything, really everything has to be done to achieve a diplomatic solution to the Iraq crisis," Kinkel said. There is still potential for a non-military solution, in the diplomatic efforts launched by countries that have influence on the Iraqi leaders, such as Russia, France, and Turkey. Germany particularly backs the French efforts, Kinkel said.

He reaffirmed Chancellor Helmut Kohl's statement, at the Wehrkunde Meeting on Feb. 7, about "solidarity with the United States," but added that this is meant as "political solidarity," and not as anything implying direct military aid for the Americans: no money, no troops, no military equipment, not as in 1991. As for the U.S. airbases in Germany, the German government thinks there will not be a necessity to use them, and the Germans have not received any formal request from the States, either, to date.

Mideast

Al Ahram, Egyptian government newspaper, editorial, Feb. 10:

A U.S. attack on Iraq would be catastrophic for the United States, the newspaper said. "Only waves upon waves of hatred can come out of the U.S. assault. U.S. world hegemony will be rejected. It will be seen as an arrogant superpower adopting a policy of dual standards in dealing with world affairs, a policy as unwise as it is unsuitable for a big power. Should the U.S. seek to cultivate international respect, should it care to maintain its position as an international power for the longest possible duration, it should be willing to deal impartially and wisely with countries, people, and crises, all over the world. The current Iraq crisis would be a good place to start."

Jordan Times, Feb. 11:

Qatar has joined the ranks of those opposing military action against Iraq. During U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen's visit there, the Qatar government declined to hold a joint press conference with him. This also reportedly occurred in the **United Arab Emirates**.

The **Gulf Coordination Council** also met to discuss the matter and to coordinate the posture of the member states, which are all the Gulf states except Iraq and Iran. Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani told the press, "The Gulf Coordination Council states, including Qatar, do not welcome and do not want to see Iraq being hit and bombed again. We care for the Iraqi people."

Hurriyet, Turkey, Feb. 10:

The statement by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook last week, that Britain would welcome the breakup of Iraq in the aftermath of U.S. bombing raids, has "shocked Turkish government officials," the Turkish daily reports.

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, Turkey, press conference on Feb. 11, quoted by the *Turkish Daily News*, Feb. 12:

Ecevit charged that Britain is manipulating the United States on behalf of its policy of fragmenting Iraq. Ecevit's press conference follows charges he made on Feb. 9, that the U.S. and Britain were plotting to create a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, which would threaten Turkish national security.

Following the interview, the U.S. ambassador to Turkey protested that that is not U.S. policy.

Asked about this U.S. response, Ecevit said that whatever the consequence of the coming military action may be, it will further the partition of Iraq, and make its reintegration more difficult. He added, "They [the U.S. government] may be sincere. Americans are frank people. I take their word seriously. But they can themselves be manipulated. England is the closest ally of the U.S. They do whatever the U.S. asks them to do. At the same time, they can manipulate the U.S. in the direction of their own will, and drag them into games and set ups."

Ecevit added that the main problem is that the United States has no real policy toward Iraq, and has no idea what to do in the aftermath of a military strike. "It is of course worrying us. This would mean a superpower like the United States is entering a war, without predicting its consequences. It is a grave situation if true. That poses dangerous consequences for our part."

To deal with this problem, Ecevit called on the United States to "make its Iraq policies with Turkey."

President Suleyman Demirel, Turkey, quoted by Anatolia News Agency Feb. 10:

President Demirel said that Turkey's support for U.S. air strikes is not guaranteed. "Let nobody say that Turkey is in anybody's pocket," he added.

China

Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, telephone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Feb. 5, reported by Xinhua:

Qian told Albright that President Jiang Zemin "is deeply concerned" about the crisis over Iraq. He told Albright of China's support for active, ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, and emphasized that China does not favor the use of force against Iraq.

While calling on Iraq to "fully cooperate with the special UN committee," Qian Qichen also said that Iraq's state sovereignty, national dignity, and security concerns must be respected appropriately. Qian Qichen said that he had also sent a verbal message, via China's UN ambassador, to Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, asking Iraq to agree to negotiations.

Secessionists pose serious threat to Italy

by Claudio Celani

The Italian Parliament will soon be called upon to vote on whether to lift the immunity of Umberto Bossi and other leaders of the separatist Northern League, clearing the way for them to be prosecuted for an "attempt against the national state." The allegation refers to the League's open secessionist program and actions, including the establishment of a government and a parliament of the imaginary northern Italian state of Padania, as well as the staging of military training exercises in the context of organizing secession. The request to lift immunity was made at the end of January by Verona Prosecutor Guido Papalia, who concluded an almost two-year investigation of the League and its paramilitary organization, the Padania National Guard (GNP), also called the "Green Shirts," with a request for the indictment of Bossi and 40 other leaders of the League and the GNP. Under Italian law, the crime for which Bossi and company are accused, is punishable by life imprisonment.

Indicating the seriousness of the allegations, Prosecutor Papalia declared in an interview that the League's paramilitary GNP organization is comparable to the neo-fascist National Front, a subversive organization active in the 1970s, whose members were also part of the Armed Nuclei for the Defense of the State, a secret and illegal section of the NATO "Stay Behind" operation known by the codename "Gladio." In the past, Papalia himself had conducted an investigation of the National Front, which was involved in several terrorist acts, including an aborted military coup.

British control

What Papalia did not say, is that the National Front was controlled by British intelligence. The same is true of the hard-core secessionist structure. Not by chance, many League leaders, and especially those responsible for the paramilitary League organization, have a similar neo-fascist background: many come from the same circles as the National Front neo-fascists, and sometimes they are former members of the National Front. Enzo Flego, general commander of the GNP, is also leader of the "Padan Right," a right-wing current inside the League. Inside the GNP itself, which is organized along territorial sections, Flego is the commander of the "Campaign for Liberty," based in Verona,