

And why do we assume that an attack on Iraq, that is opposed by most of the nations currently supporting our Afghan campaign, would not lead to their withdrawal of support for our increasingly unpopular operations in Afghanistan? . . .

Who Will Pay?

A few remaining questions. How much might war with Iraq cost? Who will pay for it? In the Gulf War, I note, U.S. expenditures came to \$60 billion, *every cent of which* was paid for by someone else—Saudis, \$17 billion; Emirates, \$14 billion; Kuwaitis, Japanese, \$13 billion; Germans, \$11 billion . . . and so, a billion here and a billion there, and before you know it it adds up.

Saudi Arabia, as I said, alone paid \$17 billion to the U.S. and spent an additional \$50 billion on fuel, food, equipment, facility modification, and a host of other expenses. In addition to cash transfers to the United States, much support in kind was provided by other nations in the region and farther afield, and our allies paid their own way or were paid for by others.

Kuwait paid for its own reconstruction and oversaw it. . . . The total cost of the [planned] war remains uncalculated, but it's something over \$200 billion, not the silly figures you've seen in the press recently. Is the U.S. ready, on our own, to fund a war with Iraq and the subsequent nation-building effort there? Not a bad question. And I'd add, do we have commitments in place with Saudi Arabia and other oil producers to do what they did in 1990 to 1991, which was to forgo the opportunity for windfall profits from a spike in oil prices that could have devastated the United States and the global economies? Are they going to do that again, to support an adventure they don't agree with?

Why are we so confident, I repeat, that we can transform a thugdom into a democracy? What evidence is there of Iraqi traditions of democracy similar to those of the Weimar Republic or Japan in the 1920s, that underlay our successful transformations of Germany and Japan? Who is the equivalent of the Japanese Emperor, in terms of assuring Iraqi military and civilian cooperation with a U.S. occupation, rather than resistance to it along the lines of what we now see in the Occupied Territories?

If by democracy, we mean a regime in Iraq that endorses U.S. policies and supports U.S. interest in the Middle East, including those based on our solidarity with Israel, why do we assume that such a regime would have any legitimacy in Iraq or more broadly in the region?

And finally, if an Iraqi democracy decided to build weapons of mass destruction for validly deterrent purposes, would we respect that democratic decision and support it as we have elsewhere in the region? I could raise additional questions, but it's late in the day and these should probably be about enough to get a discussion started. So I will leave it at that and thank you.

Lock-Out Shuts 29 U.S. Ports, Hits Economy

by Patricia Salisbury

With the world economy hanging by badly frayed threads, all 29 U.S. West Coast ports were shut down as of Oct. 1, when the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), representing West Coast shippers, imposed an indefinite “lock-out,” sending workers off the docks and suspending all shipments except for military, or emergency goods to locations such as Alaska. The San Francisco Federal Reserve says the strike will cost the U.S. economy \$2 billion per day. As one-third of the huge import bill of the United States passes through West Coast ports, a shut-down of any length can only further ravage the world economy.

As of this writing, both sides—the Maritime Association and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)—seem to be settling in for a prolonged battle. On Oct. 2, the lock-out’s second day, union representatives walked out of a scheduled session with Federal mediators when the Maritime Association brought armed security guards to the meeting. Among idled workers at Southern California ports, there are rumors that the shippers’ association intends to run the ports with scab labor.

Each side has pointed to the other as the cause of the lock-out. According to the shippers, the lock-out came as a defensive action after the union ran a work “slow-down.” Union spokesmen claim that work levels at the ports were too high because of increased cargo shipments due to hoarding by manufacturers and others, in anticipation of a shut-down, and that they were simply applying appropriate safety measures. However, some statements attributed to local ILWU officials have hinted that the union was fed up with the intransigent stance of the shippers, and came back from a two-day “cooling-off” during which the ports were temporarily shut over the Sept. 28-29 weekend, prepared to do battle.

Shippers Want No-Union Precedent

The confrontation between the union and the Maritime Association was already actively simmering before July, when the contract between labor and management expired. For a period, the contract was renewed on a day-to-day basis, but this arrangement broke down over the Labor Day weekend, as critical issues remained unresolved. Management spokesmen say the sticking point is the introduction of new technologies, such as optical scanners to speed the entry of trucks carrying cargo, and global positioning satellites to follow the path of cargo. The employers claim that these new



One of the ships unable to unload cargo in Seattle's port, due to the West Coast-wide lockout of union workers which began Sept. 28-30.

technologies, which are vital to lowering their costs and remaining competitive with ports elsewhere, are being resisted by the union. The union says it has agreed to accept the technology as long as the newly created jobs are designated union employment.

While it appears there are only a few hundred jobs immediately at issue, the union is resisting permitting contracting them out to non-union labor, fearing that without a fight over jurisdiction now, the entire waterfront could go non-union in a few decades. Union spokesmen who have mounted picket lines in front of the lock-out, have been quoted saying that no management bribe will tempt them to break with this basic principle, and that the shippers' unwillingness to agree to union labor means that they cannot deliver the technology package they claim to espouse. According to ILWU President Jim Spinosa, the management position amounts to an effort to buy the union out with pledges of no layoffs and other job security guarantees for the current workforce, but no guarantee of a future role for unionized workers in the industry. "Lifetime jobs without a commitment to the future is not an area we want to find ourselves," says Spinosa. "We're looking for jobs that have longevity tied to them."

No such future can be assured by a "traditional trade union fight," such as one which fails to acknowledge the reality of the economic collapse. It requires a mobilization around the LaRouche program for economic recovery from the depression. But union statements do hint at a concern beyond the immediate interest of the current workforce.

There is talk of Federal intervention under the Taft-Hartley Act. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), who had earlier called on President Bush to stay out of the talks, reversed on Oct. 2 and called for intervention, indicating the fears for the consumer-dependent economy. Panicked spokesman for the National Retailers Association have urged President Bush to reopen the ports immediately by invoking the provision for an 80-day cooling-off period. So far, Bush has said that he had not made a decision, and urged mediation. The Taft-

Hartley injunction provisions have not been invoked in a quarter-century. The dispute "is important to the economy," the President says; it is also clearly important to his war effort. The union, in an attempt to pre-empt questioning of its patriotism amid a jingoistic media barrage from the Eastern Establishment press supporting the Iraq war, has issued a statement emphasizing that the members support the national defense and are still working military cargo vessels.

Could Feed the Crash

Even without the war on Iraq under way, the U.S economy is parasitically reliant on cheap foreign imports, one-third of which pass through West Coast Customs districts. A prolonged stalemate in negotiations could feed the economic crash. A PMA study estimated a ten-day shutdown would cost \$19.4 billion.

The economic effect of a prolonged strike will further weaken the already-ravaged economy, and can immediately create chaos in those sectors where investment in storage and inventory capacity have been neglected for years, or decades, as a cost-cutting measure. Apart from empty shelves at Walmart, producers who have switched over to "just-in-time" inventory systems as part of the "New Economy" bubble, will soon be without the imported components that make up a part of nearly everything produced in the U.S.A. Foreign suppliers, especially Asian, are, of course, affected as well.

According to Robin W. Lanier, Executive Director of the West Coast Waterfront Coalition, which represents major importers, manufacturing companies will be hit much harder and quicker than some retailers who have stockpiled supplies. Lanier said that any manufacturer relying on parts from Asia, has perhaps a one- to two-week supply to keep the assembly line running.

Various experts have said that portions of the auto industry, particularly smaller auto manufacturers, will suffer greatly. A Fremont, California auto manufacturer, a joint venture of General Motors and Toyota, shut down already on Oct. 3, idling 5,500 workers, because parts had not been replenished since Sept. 28. Under current economic cost-cutting wisdom known as "just-in-time inventory management," the plant, which imports key components from Japan, runs on a normal practice of keeping only a six-hour supply of parts in inventory.

According to press reports, havoc is beginning to set in among grain shippers in southwest Washington and Portland, Oregon, which form the nation's biggest wheat export-import hub. As of Oct. 2, they report having nowhere to put new shipments arriving by barge and train. Reportedly, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad has declared an embargo on new rail shipments from inland producers to the Pacific Northwest's export docks. California's food export industry faces disruption, with exports of table grapes, now at their peak, imperilled. Canada's Vancouver port is represented by the ILWU, while Mexico's major ports lack rail infrastructure.