

Disastrous Iraq War Can Still Be Stopped

by Edward Spannaus

President Bush and the Chicken-hawks in Washington are being confronted with a growing world-wide resistance to their push for a Middle East war, resistance expressed most notably through more visible American-institutional opposition, and a consolidated bloc of Europe's three major powers—Germany, France, and Russia—joined by China.

The crucial timeframe in which the war must be stopped is the two-week period between the Feb. 14 UN Security Council session, and the end of the month. With over 150,000 U.S. troops already deployed in the Persian Gulf area, and with the Bush Administration having rhetorically painted itself into a corner, most informed observers believe that the end of February will represent the point of no return, unless the Administration backs down from war by then.

Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, whose mobilization since last August has catalyzed much of the opposition now emerging, is insistent that the war can still be stopped, and identified three crucial potentials:

1. The Administration could adopt an "exit strategy" which would combine the Russia-France-Germany proposal for expanded UN inspections, and the plan for "coercive inspections"—backed by UN "blue helmet" troops—coming out of leading U.S. establishment think-tanks. The outlines of this proposal were reiterated in a Feb. 9 op-ed in the *Washington Post* by Jessica Matthews of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; the plan was developed by Matthews, Gen. Charles Boyd of the Council on Foreign Relations, and former UN chief weapons inspector Rolf Ekeus.

Given how far down the road to war the President has travelled, this plan is, in LaRouche's judgment, the last best alternative to a total fiasco.

2. The government of British Prime Minister Tony Blair could fall, leaving Bush with no significant ally in his "coalition of the willing." Blair is hanging on by a thread, with public opinion in Britain running over 80% against the Iraq war, and with a majority inside Britain's political institutions viewing the Bush war drive as "imperialism for dummies" and sure to fail. While some in the British elites would delight at the United States being drawn into a suicidal trap, none of them wishes to see Great Britain share that fate.

3. A sudden, precipitous collapse of the U.S. dollar, triggered by a pullout of foreign investors from the United States, would dampen the war drive decisively. The grossly overvalued dollar, propped up only by a continuous influx of capital from overseas, has already dropped by 20% in recent months,

and it could easily fall that much more. This would have the added advantage of forcing the President to focus his attention on the fundamental crisis that rightly should be the primary focus of his attention.

U.S. Resistance to War Drive

The popular mood in the United States against an Iraq war is well known to anyone who is paying attention. As is the case in Europe, there is simply no significant support in the U.S. population for this adventure.

Within the institutions that surround the Presidency, opposition is becoming much more visible: This is the case among the uniformed military, the intelligence community, establishment think-tanks, and the Republican Party.

Syndicated columnist Robert Novak recently pointed out that many conservative Republicans are alarmed by the Bush Administration's drive for what he called "an American imperium." Novak referenced a conservative Republican, prominent in Washington's think-tank culture, who recently e-mailed to a friend his concerns about the U.S. strategy "for remaking the entire Middle East." He said he cared little about Saddam Hussein, "but I do care that once we cross the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, we may have started down the road to a Pax Americana through an American imperium from which there is no return."

A handful of leading Democrats in Congress have also been outspoken against the war and Bush's foreign policy, including Sens. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Carl Levin (D-Mich). The strongest statement came in a Feb. 12 floor speech by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.V.), who castigated the Senate for its silence at a time that the country is planning a war which "represents a turning point in U.S. foreign policy and possibly a turning point in the recent history of the world. . . . This nation is about to embark upon the first test of a revolutionary doctrine applied in an extraordinary way at an unfortunate time," said Byrd. "The doctrine of pre-emption—the idea that the United States or any other nation can legitimately attack a nation that is not imminently threatening but may be threatening in the future—is a radical new twist on the traditional idea of self-defense. It appears to be in contravention of international law and the UN Charter, and it is being tested at a time of world-wide terrorism, making many countries . . . wonder if they will soon be on our—or some other nation's—hit list."

Six Democratic members of the House of Representatives, along with soldiers and families of servicemen, filed a suit in Federal court in Boston against President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, to block them from launching an attack on Iraq without the Congressional Declaration of War the U.S. Constitution requires. The lawsuit cites the debates in the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and one plaintiff, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich), stated: "The Founding Fathers did not establish an imperial Presidency with war-making powers. The Constitution clearly reserves that for Congress."

Intelligence Community in Revolt

There is significant opposition among the uniformed military, to the war plans being crafted by the civilians in the Pentagon. The military's concerns are generally voiced by retired officers such as Gen. Anthony Zinni, the former head of the Central Command. What has emerged over the week of Feb. 10 is increasingly outspoken opposition from within the U.S. (and British) intelligence communities.

On Feb. 12, the *International Herald Tribune* published op-eds by two former CIA officers. The first, by Graham Fuller, former vice-chairman of the CIA's National Intelligence Council, was a scathing attack on Rumsfeld for his mocking of the "old Europe." Fuller observed that the "old Europe," led by Germany and France, has put five centuries of war behind them, and has forged a union committed to peace and economic cooperation. Fuller charged that it is the United States which now represents "the old World," which "sees itself as a benign hegemon—or policeman—of the world, undercutting any and all efforts by potential rivals . . . to cast a shadow over overwhelming U.S. power."

Another op-ed, by former CIA analyst Ray McGovern, called "Wishful Thinking, Once Again, in Washington," compared what is happening today, to the willful falsification of intelligence estimates that allowed the United States to sink deeper in the quagmire of the Vietnam War. McGovern is a leader of a group of retired CIA analysts called "Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity" which wrote an open letter to President Bush opposing an Iraq war, and decrying the increasing "politicization" of intelligence.

McGovern also wrote a column on Feb. 13, denouncing CIA Director George Tenet for caving in to political pressure and for contradicting his own Agency's assessments that there is scant evidence of links between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. McGovern said that Tenet's testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Feb. 11 was "remarkable, and, for CIA analysts, demoralizing in the extreme." McGovern explained that "Tenet is fortunate that CIA's Inspector General is a reliable CIA bureaucrat and that so many CIA analysts have mortgages and kids in college. Otherwise, the outrage among analytic ranks might spell revolution."

U.S. Citizens Not 'Terrorized' Into War

In the days after the Justice Department's Feb. 8 announcement of an "orange alert" and accompanying bewildering announcements by the Homeland Security Department and the FBI, Americans resisted "Sharonization" of the nation's national security crisis—the attempt to force them to support war out of fear of terrorism, as has been done to Israelis under Ariel Sharon. While the announcements scared some into rushing to buy sheeting and duct tape to "defend" homes against chemical attack, informal media polls found 75% not responding to the "terror alert" announcements at all.

Activists with Lyndon LaRouche's movement, who distributed the Presidential pre-candidate's "Powell Apparent Victim of Hoax" broadside *en masse* in the area around Washington, D.C., have found resistance to the war policy toughening under the example of LaRouche's leadership and Europe's opposition. News of the hoax embedded in Colin Powell's Feb. 6 UN presentation, circulating nationally, was reflected in considerable anger at the Secretary of State, who only a week earlier was widely trusted on the war issue in national polls. There was even greater anger expressed against Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald "Duct Tape" Rumsfeld—as some are calling him—and particularly among Demo-

crats, against war-hawk Sen. Joseph Lieberman (Conn.).

The other clear pattern, was that even around the nation's capital and among large numbers of Federal government employees, the firm European resistance of early February to the drive for war, opened the floodgate of disgust for this "chicken-hawk" policy among Americans. Large numbers stopped to emphasize to the LaRouche organizers, "I don't want a war!" or, "I do not think we should be over in Iraq"; and demanded to know that LaRouche is totally opposed to the United States fighting in Iraq. A Belgian TV crew, out looking for "anti-European Americans" to interview, could find few.

The same resistance was displayed dramatically in a town meeting in Alexandria, Virginia on Feb. 11, held by Rep. James Moran (D). Several hundred people, ranging from senior citizens to children brought by their parents, attended the meeting, broadcast on CSPAN TV, to which Moran had invited Pentagon bigwigs, including chief spokeswoman Victoria Clarke, to "inform the public" on a potential Iraq war. "The public" wasn't buying it. As *Washington Post* columnist Courtland Milloy noted, they "listened respectfully, at first," but then "couldn't contain themselves" at the condescension and lying from the Pentagon officials. Attendees compared the Patriot II Act idea of Attorney General John Ashcroft to "George Orwell's *1984*," or "more like the Gestapo"; demanded to know what was the threat from Iraq; and became increasingly hostile. Eventually Moran, after admitting that "Congress has abdicated its responsibility" to oppose dangerous war policies, had to end the meeting early to prevent embarrassment and loss of protocol for Ms. Clarke et al.