

LaRouche Brings Hope As Iraq War Worsens

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

As soon as the LaRouche Doctrine was issued internationally, on April 17, Arab intellectuals and political figures rallied to express their support for the initiative, and to seek the ways and means of implementing it. Prof. Mohammed Selim, Director of the Center for Asian Studies at the University of Cairo, declared: "I fully subscribe to this idea." One senior Arab diplomat in Europe characterized the document as "wonderful," and offered concrete proposals regarding what forces inside Iraq should be approached about the LaRouche Doctrine.

In response to the LaRouche initiative, another Egyptian activist, based in Europe, insisted it was crucial to get the U.S. out, and bring the United Nations into Iraq, "not under American command, but completely." He proposed replacing American troops stationed there, with troops from Arab and Muslim nations. He emphasized that "LaRouche had warned from the outset," that the Iraq adventure would turn into a disaster. Also, on the need for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as stated in the document, he said the relevant UN resolutions had never been implemented, and that, unless a change in U.S. policy direction were effected, as proposed by LaRouche, there would be decades more of bloodshed, and Israel would be destroyed in 5-10 years. He summed up his appreciation of the Democratic Party hopeful's Southwest Asia policy, saying, "If Mr. LaRouche makes these three points, forcefully, on Iraq, on the Israel-Palestine solution, and on the new Bretton Woods, he will go down in history as a great man." LaRouche, he agreed, is "the only American politician we can trust."

For a leading Lebanese media figure, who is politically well-connected in the region, one important aspect of LaRouche's approach, is his emphasis on the role of leading nations in Southwest Asia, specifically Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Egypt, to which he added Saudi Arabia. These five governments have engaged in several meetings over the recent period, precisely to coordinate policies on Iraq. Such regional coordination, particularly involving Arab-Turkish cooperation, is seen as a breakthrough. As this person noted, the visit by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to Turkey recently, was the first such in 50 years, and paved the way for the five-power meetings. The U.S. Administration, according to this Beirut source, had reacted hysterically to these

developments, and the White House's amorous embrace of Ariel Sharon's so-called "disengagement" plan was the fruit of this hysteria. In the course of discussions with these and other Arab figures, great interest was shown in generating massive media exposure for the LaRouche Doctrine and the man who drafted it.

Time Is Running Out

The LaRouche Doctrine came not one minute too soon. As the resistance war against the U.S.-led occupation increases in intensity, sophistication, and breadth, U.S. casualties have been mounting, and the only response from Cheney and Bush has been to call for more troops.

On the ground, U.S.-led coalition troops continue to be stuck, unable to seize control of key strongholds of the resistance, like the city of Fallujah in the "Sunni Triangle," or to remove insurgent figureheads, like the radical Shi'ite militiaman Moqtadar al-Sadr, in Najaf. If the Marines were to make good on their threat to enter Fallujah, to disarm the resistance fighters by force, they would find themselves engaged in precisely the house-to-house, man-to-man guerrilla conflict with uncertain outcome, and high casualties, that they have been trying to avoid. Were they to storm al-Sadr's headquarters, near the holy shrine of Imam Ali, they would unleash hostilities throughout the Islamic world. As Iranian President Mohammed Khatami warned on April 22, Najaf is "a holy place for us and everything should be done to prevent the provocation of an American attack." Speaking to journalists following a cabinet meeting, he said, "Such an attack would be equal to committing suicide for the U.S.-led coalition, and would mobilize all [sentiments] in the Islamic world against the occupiers."

Thus, the U.S.-led occupying forces are damned if they do, and damned if they don't—unless they adopt LaRouche's plan.

In addition, the relationship between the occupation and those Iraqis who are officially cooperating, has become strained to the breaking point. According to an April 22 BBC report, the would-be "new" Iraqi police force has been significantly infiltrated by resistance forces. Maj. Gen. Martin Dempsey stated that "about 50% of the security forces that we built over the past year stood tall and stood firm," while "about 40% of them walked off the job because they were intimidated and about 10% actually worked against us." Continuing attacks against Iraqi police stations and policemen, by resistance fighters or other forces, serve only to reinforce the trend towards desertion.

The ferocity of the insurgency has forced the U.S. Administration to rethink their policy of purging anyone and everyone associated with the Ba'ath Party. This includes not only the 11,000 teachers and hundreds of university professors who were fired after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, but also former Iraqi military. As reported by the *Washington*

Post on April 22, the U.S. made a sudden reversal in policy, by deciding to rehire these professionals, who come from the Sunni minority, in an attempt to weaken support for the resistance. Two American generals, Maj. Gen. John R.S. Baptiste and Brig. Gen. Carter F. Ham, were quoted in the April 21 *New York Times* saying that barring 200,000 Iraqis from employment because of their party affiliation, had prevented doctors, teachers, and nurses from contributing to reconstruction.

Anyone familiar with Iraq knows that the military constituted a trained and tested force, which had all the qualifications for defending the nation. As emphasized by one Lebanese source, cited earlier, there would be no need for foreign troops whatsoever in a sovereign Iraq. "Let the Sunni, Shi'ite, Kurdish, and other organic leaders of Iraq come together, and they can deal with it," he said. The leading Iraq expert in Germany, Aziz Alkazaz, has repeatedly emphasized that the way to solve the problem of Iraq's security, is to rehabilitate the mainstream elements of the Iraqi military, including high-level officers who are true Iraqi nationalists. Now, the U.S. military is recognizing the fact that the entire de-Ba'athification program, and the dismantling of the military, have been a total failure. If those elements closely associated with the former regime are to be excluded from their positions, it is the Iraqis who must determine who these individuals are. As General Baptiste stated, "These are proud officers with enormous energy and capability. If we harness their capability, it'd be a good thing."

U.S. 'Allies' Deserting

The urgent need to reconstitute a genuine, national military force, is underlined by the rapid unravelling of the so-called "coalition of the willing." The decisive blow came on April 19, when Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announced he would withdraw Spain's 1,300 troops from Iraq. Zapatero wasted no time. Within 24 hours of his having assumed office, and just hours after his defense minister was sworn in, Zapatero announced: "This morning, once the defense minister was sworn in, I gave him the order to make the necessary arrangement for the Spanish troops stationed in Iraq to return home in the shortest time, and with the greatest security possible." Referring to his election campaign pledge of March 2003, he stated, "I said then that in the event of my being elected prime minister by citizens, I would order the return of the Spanish troops from Iraq if the UN did not take charge of the political and military situation. With the information we have available and which we have gathered in the course of recent weeks, it is not foreseeable that a UN resolution will be adopted that matches the content on which our presence in Iraq was made conditional." This referred to discreet talks that Defense Minister Bono had held in Washington, with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, which made clear to him, that the U.S. was not

intending to seek a UN resolution handing over authority to that body.

Zapatero added, "The government, inspired by the deepest democratic convictions, does not want, cannot, and will not act against or in disregard for the will of Spaniards. . . . The decision also reflects the aim of contributing to the fight which the international community is carrying out against terrorism on the basis of the strictest respect for international law." He added that Spain would continue to work for democratization of Iraq, and would "promote whatever actions by the United Nations and the European Union offer a framework of international cooperation that contributes effectively to Iraqis regaining their sovereignty, and being able to organize their elections freely and democratically in order to build their own future in peace, independence, and security."

Following the announcement, Spaniards streamed into the streets of Madrid, in an impromptu demonstration of support. Meanwhile, other governments began to rethink the wisdom of deploying against Iraqis. Portuguese Interior Minister Figueiredo Lopes told public radio a day earlier, "If the conflict were to deteriorate, and the GNR [National Guard] did not have what it required to carry out its mission, the only solution would be to withdraw."

At a meeting in Kiev over the same weekend, the defense ministers of Ukraine and Poland decided that their troops in Iraq should be confined to strictly peace-keeping operations and not take part in any offensive military activities. They confirmed that they would continue the pull-out of troops from several cities under the control of the al-Sadr militias—which was ordered at the peak of armed clashes two weeks earlier—within the Polish zone where the two nations have their troops. The Kiev decree was seen as a prelude to accelerated troop withdrawal, as a debate is coming up in the national parliament of Ukraine soon, on the nature of Ukrainian interests in the world.

Honduras and the Dominican Republic followed Spain's lead, while doubts were being voiced in Thailand regarding deployments. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said on April 19, that the 400 Thai medical and engineering troops in Iraq would have to be withdrawn if the situation there were to become so dangerous that they were unable to carry out their mission. "The safety of Thai troops in Iraq is my first priority, followed by their humanitarian mission," he told reporters. "If we are able to administer medicine or help in rebuilding we will maintain our presence, but we will return if we cannot carry out our duty." Defense Minister Chettha Thanajaro said on April 20 that Thaksin, who announced earlier this month that Thailand was reconsidering its deployment to Iraq, would make a decision on the issue. The Thai troops are based at Camp Lima in the holy city of Kerbala.

And, in the United States, families of soldiers are organizing to withdraw the troops. The LaRouche Doctrine provides the framework for the only way this can be accomplished.