

# LaRouche: U.S. Must Withdraw From Iraq, Now

by Jeffrey Steinberg

American statesman and political economist Lyndon LaRouche has called on the Bush Administration to withdraw all American troops from Iraq immediately. Such a departure would probably require the interim establishment of an American zone, into which the U.S. forces could regroup, pending the logistical plans for the pullout.

LaRouche had earlier called for a several-year American mission, radically redefined to include accelerated training of Iraqi military and security forces, and an emphasis on U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' projects, to rebuild Iraq's destroyed infrastructure, but with primary emphasis on putting Iraq's own population back to meaningful work.

However, the continuing fiasco of the U.S. military engagement prompted LaRouche to revise his proposals. There is no longer any viable basis for a continued American presence, he recently told colleagues. The continued presence of the U.S. and other international occupation forces is only making things worse, and foreclosing any prospects of a viable governing arrangement among the Iraqis themselves.

## **‘Operation Matador’ a Failure**

U.S. military sources, just returned from fact-finding tours of Iraq, have reported to Pentagon officials that the situation on the ground in Iraq is hopeless for American forces. The insurgents are operating in 70% of the country; American troops have been forced to mostly remain in the barracks, to avoid politically unacceptable levels of casualties. When they go out on patrols, they must travel in larger units, to be able to counter enemy attacks, and thus, the ability to cover major portions of the country is lost.

As one senior U.S. intelligence official told *EIR*: “We have 150,000 troops on the ground in Iraq, and the largest contingent of spies anywhere in the world, and we still don’t know who the insurgents are.”

Operation Matador, the just-concluded military counter-insurgency operation in western Iraq, near the Syrian border, has been hailed by the Pentagon as a total success. However, well-informed senior U.S. military officials say that, even though insurgents were routed from several villages after intense fighting, the U.S. has no force to leave behind to secure the area, and within days or weeks, the insurgents will be back.

One official told *EIR* that in one particularly heavy fire-fight in a village in al-Anbar province, American troops were



*U.S. soldiers on patrol in Baghdad in February this year. U.S. military sources have reported to Pentagon officials that the situation on the ground in Iraq is hopeless for American forces. LaRouche is calling on the Bush Administration to withdraw all American troops from Iraq immediately.*

fired upon inside a house believed to be a rebel headquarters. Two American soldiers were killed and others injured, and the GIs could not determine where the shots were coming from. It later turned out that insurgents were hiding in the crawl space underneath the house and had special cement-piercing ammunition.

The source said the incident typified the kind of difficulties that the American forces are encountering, in dealing with an asymmetric warfare campaign, conducted by an insurgency dominated by former Iraqi military personnel, who were well-trained and combat experienced—unlike many of the U.S. Reserve and National Guard soldiers, who make up over half of the U.S. contingent in Iraq.

Gen. Barry McCaffrey (U.S. Army-ret.) has warned that the U.S. Army is near the breaking point, as the result of the Iraq war. He has harshly criticized Defense Secretary Rumsfeld for failing to provide enough troops to carry out the occupation mission in Iraq, and is now preparing an article drawing out the larger consequences of the depletion of the Army and the collapse of recruitment.

According to one senior retired U.S. Army officer, there is talk within the military about a pullout from Iraq, beginning at the end of the year. However, the source cautioned that the Bush Administration is putting out the word that one key reason that a pullout will be possible is the anticipated collapse of the Iranian regime, and its replacement by a pro-Western reform-minded government. This, the source warned, is the most dangerous kind of fantasy, the kind circulated by neo-cons at the American Enterprise Institute.

## ‘Vietnamization’ and ‘Lebanonization’

Two leading regional specialists, Col. W. Patrick Lang (U.S. Army-ret.) and Phebe Marr, recently spoke at a conference in Washington, sponsored by the Jamestown Foundation. They offered their stark assessments of the state of affairs in Iraq. Lang, the former Defense Intelligence Officer for the Near East, equated the present disaster with the “Vietnamization” scheme, that was the American cover for the pullout of Vietnam. Then, the U.S. government claimed that the South Vietnamese forces were reaching the point that they could defeat the insurgency on their own. Everyone at the time knew that this was a hoax, aimed at avoiding the admission that the United States had gotten into the wrong war, at the wrong time, in the wrong place—and could not win.

Phebe Marr, a former CIA analyst and National Defense University scholar, equated the present mess in Iraq with the 1975-91 Lebanon civil war. Iraq and Lebanon at one time had a thriving middle class, a secular government, and a sense of national identity that was pervasive. In Lebanon, as the middle class was destroyed by civil war and other sectarian strife, the sense of national identity was lost, and the country fell apart. Dr. Marr warned that this is precisely what is now happening in Iraq, with Shi’ite, Sunni, and Kurdish interests trumping what had formerly been a strong sense of Iraqi nationalism.

Put the two phenomena together—“Vietnamization” and “Lebanonization”—and you have a recipe for a failed state—courtesy of the Bush Administration’s insane obsession with the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

## LaRouche Doctrine Revisited

One year ago, LaRouche published a “LaRouche Doctrine for Southwest Asia,” which spelled out a detailed plan for the salvation of Iraq as a sovereign state, after Saddam Hussein, through regional economic cooperation and other emergency stability operations.

LaRouche prophetically began that document, “U.S. Interest in Southwest Asia,” by warning: “Neither the cause, nor remedy for the present quagmire of boiling asymmetric warfare in Iraq can be found within the bounds of the present configuration of conflicting forces within Iraq itself. There could be no competent moral or military reason for maintaining a policy of keeping our forces within the territory of Iraq. We must, therefore, extricate our troops safely, and quickly, from Iraq itself. However, this can not be done without creating a larger strategic framework in which a workable solution could be brought into existence.”

Exactly 13 months to the day since LaRouche issued that policy guidance on April 17, 2004, the United States has dug itself deeper into the very quagmire LaRouche warned about. With rampant insanity still the order of the day at the White House and within the civilian bureaucracy at the Pentagon, any further delay in withdrawing all American forces from Iraq would only assure an even more horrific outcome.