

LaRouche Drive Spreads Against Cheney's Iran War

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

If Vice President Dick Cheney's planned war against Iran is stopped, it will be as a result of the worldwide mobilization launched by U.S. Democratic leader Lyndon LaRouche. His July 27 release, on the "Cheney's 'Guns of August' Threaten the World," was the opening salvo in a series of interventions by LaRouche, his wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who is a candidate for Chancellor of the Civil Rights Solidarity (BüSo) Party in the upcoming German elections, and his movement and supporters throughout the world. By now, the release has been translated into most major languages, and has become one of the most widely discussed documents among leading circles around the world today.

Zepp-LaRouche has been campaigning virtually non-stop from Germany, since an Aug. 4 Berlin press conference inaugurating her campaign. On Aug. 12 she issued a mass leaflet entitled: "A New War Against Iran? Immediate Orderly Withdrawal of the German Army from Afghanistan."

The first significant breakthrough in Europe on the war question came on Aug. 13 and 14, two weeks after Zepp-LaRouche had launched her campaign to stop the war. On those dates, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder introduced the Iran war threat as a top political issue in his own Social Democratic Party (SPD) campaign. He did this first, in an electoral rally speech in Hanover, and then in interviews published in the Sunday edition of the mass tabloid *Bild am Sonntag* and *Superillu*. He told a cheering crowd in Hanover: "We're all concerned about the developments in Iran. We don't want nuclear weapons to proliferate further." But, he said, diplomacy was the answer.

"I've read that military options are on the table," Schröder said. "My answer is: Dear friends in Europe and America, let's develop a strong negotiating position towards Iran, but take the military option off the table. We have seen that it is

no damn good." He was referring to President Bush's statement on Aug. 12, that "all options are on the table."

In his Sunday interviews, Schroeder stated that "the situation is grave" and that a "military option is extremely dangerous." As long as he remained Chancellor, he said, he would "categorically exclude any support or participation" by Germany for military action against Iran. Iran must not have nuclear weapons, but "patient diplomacy" is the only option to achieve this. A military option would be "highly dangerous."

The fact that the Chancellor had spoken out categorically against the Bush-Cheney military option, provoked headaches among the Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union (CDU-CSU) opposition figures, who remember only too well, how Schröder's principled stance against the then-looming Iraq war in the 2002 elections, had turned out the vote for his party. Thus, after Schröder's rejection of an Iran war, CDU neo-con Wolfgang Schäuble (who would probably become Foreign Minister or a key foreign policy advisor in a CDU government under Chancellor candidate Angela Merkel) and Friedbert Pflüger (also a key foreign policy advisor of Merkel) both attacked Schröder for using the Iran issue in the election.

Schäuble, as well as other opposition figures, found themselves in a dilemma, desiring to maintain their good relations to their U.S. neo-con friends and sponsors, on the one hand, but aware of the historically shaped rejection of war in the German population. In an event in Berlin on Aug. 17, Schäuble was confronted by two BüSo activists, who raised the issue of Cheney's new war plans. His response was to stutter about how committed he has always been to "peace." He added that, when he had been in Washington recently, Bush personally had assured him that there would be no war "before Sept. 18," the date of the projected German elections. But, in



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BüSo party candidate Helga Zepp-LaRouche and fellow candidate Michael Weissbach hold up proposed new Deutschemark in front of Germany's Bundesbank. The BüSo's program emphasizes war avoidance, through global economic development and the re-assertion of national sovereignty.

an interview to the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Schäuble said that Bush had made clear to him that his main concern was precisely Iran.

At the same time, the widely read German weekly, *Der Spiegel* ran a story Aug. 8 expressing growing concern, that, on orders from Cheney, the Pentagon was working on a plan for nuclear air strikes against Iran. The *Frankfurter Rundschau* covered the issue of Cheney's war plans as well.

Opposition to such threats also surfaced in Britain. Circles opposed to a new Iran war made their voices heard through a declaration issued by a British Foreign Office spokesman, on Aug. 14: "Our position is clear and has been made very, very clear by the Foreign Secretary [Jack Straw]. We do not think there are any circumstances where military action would be justified against Iran. It does not form part of British foreign policy."

Moscow Weighs In

LaRouche's "Guns of August" alarm was picked up broadly in the Russian media, as a sampling on Aug. 14 showed: In addition to coverage of the statement on Russian-

language web sites based in Russia and Ukraine, other Russian-language websites monitored Cheney's intentions towards Iran, as well as Bush's reiterated threats. For example, MIGnews news agency reported on an interview with Fox News by Sen. John McCain, supporting Bush's threat of military action against Iran, while Regnum.ru headlined the German Chancellor's opposition, "Schröder Rules Out German Participation in a U.S. War Against Iran." Media in Latvia on Aug. 10 carried a story titled, "The Bomb, or the Peaceful Atom?" about Iran's nuclear program, which reported that Cheney's plan to hit Iran includes both conventional and nuclear weapons.

The news site Inforos.ru on Aug. 3 ran an item headlined, "War with Iran Will Be Nuclear," which repeated the story outlined in LaRouche's release, without mentioning LaRouche.

In the wake of the press coverage, and the intervention by Schröder, the Russian government made its first official declarations, blasting any such military option. On Aug. 17, Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin released a statement: "We favor further dialogue and consider the use of force in Iran counter-productive and dangerous, something which can have grave and hardly predictable consequences."

Furthermore, the statement said: "We consider that problems concerning Iran's nuclear activities should be solved through political and diplomatic means, on the basis of international law and Tehran's close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We see a solution to the problems related to the Iranian nuclear program exclusively in the field of consultations and diplomatic talks, without fanning propaganda or political confrontation."

This was followed the next day by a statement issued by a high-ranking Kremlin official, who reaffirmed Moscow's commitment to continue cooperation with Iran on its nuclear program.

Russian President Vladimir Putin intervened personally Aug. 17, with an indirect response to Washington's saber-rattling: "I think that lowering the threshold for use of nuclear arms is a dangerous trend," he said, "because somebody may feel tempted to use nuclear weapons. Speaking to journalists aboard the cruiser *Peter the Great*, while observing military exercises in the Barents Sea, Putin added: "If that happens, the next step can be taken—more powerful nuclear arms can be used, which may lead to a nuclear conflict. This extremely dangerous trend is in the back of the mind of some politicians



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BüSo youth call for pulling German troops out of Afghanistan and stopping Cheney's war on Iran.

and military officials," he said.

A more dramatic expression of Russia's rejection of any new U.S. military adventures, came in the form of highly symbolic muscle-flexing by Putin. In an unprecedented move, Putin took part personally in the opening exercises of a week-long joint Russian-Chinese military maneuver. He flew aboard a Tu-160 strategic bomber, together with Maj. Gen. Anatoly Zhikharev, deputy commander of the Strategic Air Force. During the flight cruise missiles were launched from this and one other plane. "A new, high-precision, long-range cruise missile was tested today," Putin announced, "and it hit the target. This is a good result." Prior to this spectacular event, a submarine-launched strategic missile, SSN 23, had been launched, also hitting its target in Kamchatka.

Significantly, in addition to the Defense Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, there were observers also from Pakistan, India, and *Iran*. And, in parallel, a high-level military delegation from China started an official visit to Tehran, for negotiations on developing military relations and cooperation.

Targetted Nations Respond

It is only lawful that the nations in the volatile Southwest Asian region should respond to a new war threat with highest alarm, and spread the warning issued by LaRouche wide and far. Major dailies, including official government press, carried the "Guns of August" release. There was coverage, for example, in *Al Watan* and the *Oman Daily*, both in Oman, in *All News Syria*, and in *The Arab Situation* in Egypt, as well

as Egyptian national television. The leading Arabic daily *Al Hayat* carried editorial comments three days running, on Cheney's war threat. And, on Aug. 17, LaRouche was interviewed live on the Lebanese New TV station, for a half hour, in depth on the war threat. (See interview, page 16.)

In Egypt, the issue has become the hottest political potato, largely because of the indefatigable efforts of Cairo University professor and strategic analyst, Mohammad Selim, who recently participated in a seminar with LaRouche, in Berlin. Prof. Selim is very well known in Egypt and the Arab world more broadly, as he is frequently interviewed on explosive issues. He appeared for one hour on Aug. 9, on Channel 1 of Egyptian TV, at prime time (9:45 p.m.), and denounced Cheney's war plans. After he had read out the LaRouche "Guns of August" statement, his host attempted to deny the credibility of the

report, and to claim that Iran had nuclear weapons. Selim countered this by reminding his viewers that the same line had been circulated about Iraq, which turned out not to have weapons of mass destruction. He challenged his interviewer either to present the evidence, if it existed, or to "shut up." Since this appearance, Prof. Selim has been besieged by media requests, and has continued interviews, most recently with Nile TV, on Aug. 20.

In Iran itself, the most directly endangered nation, LaRouche's "Guns of August" release spread like wildfire. It went out immediately in Farsi to the press, and this author was interviewed on three separate occasions by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), on the matter. No one in the country has any doubt that Cheney were capable of mounting a nuclear attack.

The response of the government, which is in a process of transition to a new cabinet, led by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has been firm but measured. In essence, the authorities have reiterated their commitment to avail themselves of the nuclear technologies explicitly allowed by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Iran has signed. This explains the decision to restart a uranium-conversion plant in Isfahan, and the intention to negotiate an agreement on uranium enrichment at its facility in Natanz.

In response to Bush's renewed provocations, uttered in an interview with Israeli TV on Aug. 11, in which he declared "all options" to be on the table, and recalled that he had used force once before (in Iraq), the Iranian leadership has been predictably defiant.