

Apply LaRouche Doctrine To Extinguish Flames of War

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Southwest Asia is up in flames: threatened coup d'état in Damascus; mounting casualties and political stalemate in Iraq; political in-fighting in Lebanon; instability in Israel; and, threatened military strikes against Iran. Only an empiricist fool would suggest that these are discrete phenomena, each generated by processes internal to each nation. Instead, they are parts of a forest fire sweeping the region, a fire lit by many matches, from many hands, but according to one intention. Thus, an approach for stabilizing the region as a whole, as laid out in the "LaRouche Doctrine" of April 2004, is required to quench the flames before they spread further.

The intention to ignite these fires, was laid out in the 1996 policy paper, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," drafted by a team of neo-cons under the direction of Dick Cheney, and adopted as his foreign policy by then-Israeli prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu—the same who is jockeying for power again in the post-Sharon era. "Clean Break" detailed a plan for regime change throughout the region, beginning with Iraq, and moving to Syria and Lebanon, then Iran. In 2003, the illegal war against Iraq initiated the process; in the wake of the February 2005 murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, Lebanon's political establishment was reshuffled. Under UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1559, Syria was forced to withdraw its 40,000 troops from the country, and be subjected to an international investigation regarding Hariri's death. Now, a former Syrian vice president has turned on the government of Bashar al-Assad, and openly declared his intention of overthrowing it. Simultaneously, the same neo-con junta is upping the pressure on Iran, accused of covertly developing nuclear weapons, and threatens to repeat the Iraq model, of moving from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to the

UN Security Council for sanctions, and then to unilateral military aggression.

Cheney Makes The Rounds

None other than Cheney himself put the operation in motion. After having started a tour of the region in December, visiting Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, Cheney interrupted his junket to return to D.C. to cast some tie-breaking votes in the Senate. Cheney resumed his tour in January, travelling to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Kuwait. Although, as usual, details of his mission were kept under security wraps, the official releases indicated his talks would include Iraq and Syria-Lebanon. Off the record, it was well known that his top agenda item was Iran.

What did Cheney want from his Arab partners? According to well-informed sources in the region, he sought their support for deployment of Arab and Muslim troops, as "peacekeepers" in Iraq, following some form of U.S. withdrawal, which would be desirable, for domestic political reasons, in election year 2006. Furthermore, the U.S., according to the same sources, is seeking aid in dealing with the Frankenstein monster that their war and occupation have created: the predominantly Iranian-allied Shi'ite presence in the country. The neo-cons' idea is to increase the political weight of the Sunnis in the government-to-be-formed, so as to reduce the influence of the Iranian-backed Shi'ites, grouped in the SCIRI. U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad has been working overtime, in negotiations with Iraqi political groups, to arrange for a greater Sunni representation in the government; announcement of the final results of the Dec. 30 parliamentary elections has been conveniently postponed, until such time that the horse trading will have yielded the desired results. Then, the



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SANA



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Dick Cheney sought support from Arab nations for deploying Arab and Muslim troops to Iraq to prop up the government of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani (left); he also wants the ouster of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (center), and support for a military attack on Iran. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is on the right.

election tallies will be published, presumably in support of the political arrangements reached for a government coalition. This is Iraqi democracy, American-style: first come the power-sharing deals, then the election “results.” (See “Implications of the Iraqi Elections,” by Hussein Askary, *EIR*, Jan. 6, 2006).

Regarding the Syria-Lebanon agenda item, Cheney reportedly argued for Arab pressure on the Assad regime to cooperate with the UN probe into the Hariri murder, and pressure on Lebanon to implement UNSC resolution 1559’s demand for the disarming of all militias in the country, emphatically including Hezbollah. What Cheney had to say about the coup ambitions of Syrian former Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam has not been published. But judging from subsequent U.S. moves, including the confiscation of financial assets of Assefi Shawak, brother-in-law of President al-Assad, accused of complicity in the Hariri affair, it is evident that Washington wants to tighten the noose around Assad’s neck. Here, too, the ethnic card is significant: in the U.S. neo-cons’ broader plan for resurrecting a Sunni component to offset the Shi’ites, the pretensions of Khaddam, a Sunni, to take power become interesting.

Cheney’s number one agenda item, though officially nonexistent, was Iran. According to reliable sources in the Persian Gulf region, including government circles, the U.S. neo-cons’ intention to attack Iran has been communicated to the regional governments, as “imminent and inevitable.” This reading was also discussed at a recent conference of the Gulf Research Centre in Dubai.

What form the U.S. aggression will take, is not yet carved in stone. On the official diplomatic level, one sees U.S. (and UK and French) pressures to use the Feb. 2 meeting of the board of the IAEA, to vote up a referral of Iran’s nuclear

dossier to the UNSC, in hopes of generating support for sanctions. That is the good-case scenario in discussion; the bad-case scenario foresees an abrupt military strike, and the worst-case scenario contemplates a tactical nuclear strike.

Doomed To Failure

Scenarios aside, the fact is Cheney’s plan is doomed to simply expand the war process. First, Iraq: no matter how “successful” Khalilzad may be in pasting together a government coalition with the presence of token Sunnis, unless there were effective Sunni participation (including the rehabilitation of former Baath Party forces), the resistance would continue to expand and inflict increasing casualties. Under such conditions, deployment of Arab/Muslim peacekeeping troops is out of the question; however, if the situation were to be pacified and such troops deployed, would the Iraqi people accept them? According to one well-informed Arab source, that could be the case, but only if Syria were to participate—a dim hope considering Washington’s current witch-hunt against Damascus.

Secondly, Iran. Any military attack on Iran would aggravate, if not explode, the Iraq situation. Dr. Ali Ansari, an Iran expert at the Royal Institute for International Affairs in London, who stated that military operations were indeed already in the planning phase, warned that air strikes would only “make matters a whole lot worse in the Middle East.” Col. Larry Wilkerson, the former aide to Secretary of State Colin Powell, said contingency plans for military action against Iran were already being made by the Pentagon. “We’re looking at a strategic situation that may be more dangerous than the situation we faced before we went in [to Iraq].”

And an active duty officer in Britain sounded the alarm. On Jan. 14, Britain’s First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval

Staff, Sir Alan West, stated: "The impact [of attacking Iran] could be absolutely horrendous. It is difficult to use the word inconceivable. To get involved with military action would be very silly. . . . We should not do it, the matter should be resolved some other way." Air strikes against Iranian targets—let alone a full-scale invasion—would be extremely problematic and could have "disastrous" results.

All competent military strategists have made clear that an attack against Iran, would be met by retaliatory measures, beginning with a radical shift in the Shi'ite posture in Iraq, to open resistance against the U.S. and allied forces. Shi'ite forces in other regional areas, like Bahrain and the oil-rich province of Sharqijah in Saudi Arabia, would take up arms.

This is the reason why Saudi King Abdallah and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak told Cheney not to touch Iran. One high level Saudi diplomat was quoted saying, "What happens in Iran, will be reflected in Iraq, and what happens there, has consequences for the Saudi kingdom." Not to mention the fact that Iran could retaliate with missiles aimed at Israel.

The Shi'ite backlash would also be felt in Lebanon, where the two Shi'ite parties, Hezbollah and Amal, are already at odds with the other government parties. On Jan. 18, Hezbollah leader Gen. Hassan Nasrullah called on Arab leaders to intervene, to calm down Lebanese-Syrian tensions, aware of the fact that further pressures on Damascus would ignite a crisis also in Lebanon. Again, this helps explain why Mubarak and King Abdallah may have both told Cheney to let them handle the crisis there. The Saudis reportedly have prepared a peace plan together with Egypt, in the form of a 7-point plan for a resolution to the crisis. The points reportedly include stopping the media campaigns in each country against the other, toning down provocative statements by politicians on both sides, establishing diplomatic representatives, and coordinating foreign policy.

Regional sources stress that neither Egypt nor Saudi Arabia wants to see an escalation of the crisis, or regime change in Damascus, which could have repercussions on both Riyadh and Cairo—particularly if the Muslim Brotherhood were involved.

Mubarak's and Abdallah's concerns are by no means exaggerated. Would-be coup master Khaddam has escalated his own bid for power in Damascus. In an interview to *Der Spiegel* on Jan. 16, the former Syrian vice president swore to "do everything to free [his] fatherland from this regime," and declared his intention to establish a government in exile. Khaddam, who had earlier insinuated that al-Assad was responsible for the Hariri murder, stated outright in this interview that Assad had personally issued the order to kill Hariri. He added, in reference to Assad's refusal to testify before the UN probe: "Why should a president who is a murderer, be able to plead immunity?" Asked why he was so sure of this, he answered: "I am convinced: the order came from Assad. He is a highly impulsive man, he loses nerve." Khaddam also said his plan for regime change would go smoothly: "The

overthrow of the Syrian regime will be peaceful, there will be no invasion of Americans, and no civil war." He confirmed that he was building a government in exile, and did not exclude the participation of any party, including the Muslim Brotherhood, in his scheme. The Ba'ath Party is also welcome. Asked how long Assad will stay in power, Khaddam stated: "His fall has already begun. I do not believe that his regime will last out this year. The pressure internally and internationally, through the Hariri investigation, is growing by the week."

Informed sources point to the fact that Khaddam, for all his bluster, has no political support inside Syria, especially among the key institutions of the military. However, his allusions to cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood are significant; the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in London, Ali Sadreddine Bayanouni, told the *Financial Times*, that his organization would be willing to work with elements of the Syrian regime (Khaddam), in a transitional process towards democracy.

Any emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood in a position of government power in the region, would set off alarm signals, especially in Egypt, where candidates for the party were reported to have made enormous gains in the parliamentary elections (though greatly reduced in official tallies). This explains Mubarak's aggressive diplomacy aimed at thwarting any Muslim Brotherhood seizure of power in Syria.

Enter the Great Powers

Cheney and his neo-con cabal may be the most vocal and visible actors on the scene, in the drive to implement the Clean Break doctrine, but they are not alone, and not unopposed. Cheney's leading ally in the campaign to unseat al-Assad is French President Jacques Chirac. As Lyndon LaRouche has put it, Chirac is responding to developments in the region, according to an old colonialist impulse; dreaming of the good old days of the Sykes-Picot Treaty, when France and Britain carved up the Ottoman Empire among themselves, Chirac, who has received nothing in Iraq, is aiming to re-establish a French foothold in Syria and Lebanon.

Chirac underlined his bid for superpower status, with his outrageous announcement on Jan. 19, that France would use nuclear weapons against "terrorist" nations, a clear warning to Iran. With this announcement, Chirac has put himself squarely on the side of Cheney, regarding nuclear doctrine.

Khaddam has been enjoying de facto asylum in France, reportedly residing in the swank Georges V hotel in Paris, under heavy military and police guard. Chirac's close personal and business relations with Hariri, who had bankrolled Khaddam for a while, are well known.

But the Anglo-American/French plot for the region is not unopposed. In addition to the regional forces who, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have been deploying to avoid the worst in Syria and Lebanon, superpower Russia has weighed in on the side of Syria, and, more importantly, Iran. Again, history

should teach a lesson: it was largely against the Russian Empire that the British and French divided up the remains of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of World War I. And in the Great Game over the Caucasus and Central Asia, Russia repeatedly refused to accept British control over strategically located Iran, and three times between 1907 and 1941, occupied part of Iran (in the north) to offset British occupation in the south. Russia is not likely to allow a de facto Anglo-American takeover of Iran.

The ostensible reason for the crisis over Iran, is its nuclear power generation program, which the neo-con faction in the U.S., flanked by Britain and France, assert hides a nuclear weapons program. Iran has been campaigning to win the right to access the full nuclear fuel cycle, which includes uranium enrichment—a process which could lead to production of weapons-grade fuel.

When Iran on Jan. 10 implemented its decision to restart nuclear fuel research, and had seals removed from its facilities in Natanz, the crisis heated up, as the three European governments which had been negotiating with Tehran—Great Britain, France, and Germany (the EU-3)—announced that their efforts had reached an “impasse,” and cut off all talks. Belligerent statements began to come from British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Dick Cheney, John Bolton, and President Bush himself.

A meeting on Jan. 16, of the EU-3, the United States, China, and Russia in London, ended in a split, as the Russians and Chinese refused to go along with the “automatism” of IAEA censure, followed by referral to the UNSC, and so forth.

Iran, thereupon, issued a call for talks with the Europeans to resume. Both the British and the U.S. pooh-pooed the offer, with spokesman McCormack saying it was “diplomatic fog.” Condi Rice said there was nothing to discuss.

The Russians and the Chinese came out unequivocally for continuing talks, and against any sanctions. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said sanctions were “not the best and by no means the only way to resolve international problems.” He said sanctions against Iraq had failed, and any talk of applying sanctions against Iran now, would be putting the cart before the horse. Negotiations should continue: “I don’t think that the potential of the IAEA’s Governing Board,” he said, “has been exhausted, and the European troika has the same opinion.”

As for the Chinese, Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said all the parties in London had agreed that Iran should “return to the moratorium [on enrichment activities] and to the diplomatic negotiation process.” The ministry said “all relevant sides should remain restrained and stick to solving the Iranian nuclear issue through negotiations.” The next appointment will be Feb. 2, when the IAEA board meets in Vienna.

For their part, the Iranians argued the case for their right, according to the NPT and IAEA charter, which they have endorsed, to enrichment technology. Ali Larijani, head of

the Supreme National Security Agency, gave an interview to CNN on Jan. 12, in which he defended Iran’s right to nuclear technology. Others, including President Mahmoud Ahmadi-nejad, Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki, and former President Hashemi Rafsanjani, followed suit.

In short: the Iranians stick to their demands to the right to enrichment, while the British, U.S., and French say Iran must stop all uranium-related activities, before talks can resume: stalemate.

The Russians’ Way Out

A viable solution, at least as a transitional measure, does exist, in the form of the Russian proposal for a joint Russian-Iranian enrichment plant on Russian territory. In his interview, Larijani said that this proposal by Russia, “our neighbor and friend,” was a good basis for negotiation, which would continue next month in Moscow. He stressed that Iran and Russia agreed that Iran had the right to enrichment. Thus, the idea of a joint plant is negotiable.

On Jan. 17, the Iranian Ambassador to Russia, Gholamreza Ansari, stated, “This is a good initiative to find a way out of this situation. We think that Iran and Russia should find a way out together.” He was responding to remarks by Russian President Vladimir Putin, on the proposal. Putin had said, “We have heard various points of view from our Iranian partners. The Iranian foreign ministry, notably, has said that it

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does not rule out accepting our proposal.”

Iranian sources confirmed to *EIR* that the Iranian ambassador essentially accepted the Russian proposal. Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki then stated that Iran wanted to have such enrichment facilities also on Iranian territory, but it is understood that this could be seen as a second step. The Majlis (Parliament) National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Chairman Aleddin Boroujerdi said Iran had not rejected the Russian proposal, which would be studied carefully. He said he hoped an agreement could be reached to conduct joint enrichment both in Russia and in Iran.

Then on Jan. 19, Larijani intervened again, proposing a compromise on enrichment. Speaking to *BBC*, he said Iran would be open to discuss concerns about its program, and to present guarantees. “If they want guarantees of no diversion of nuclear fuel we can reach a formula acceptable to both sides in talks,” he said, while maintaining the position that Iran would not give up its research. “They should not ask a brave nation with very good scientists to expect not to engage in nuclear research,” he said.

As *EIR* has reiterated, a compromise can be reached, as long as the Iranians’ fundamental *right* to nuclear technology be acknowledged. LaRouche, who has welcomed the Russian proposal for joint facilities as “workable,” elaborated on it in his Jan. 11 webcast. (See *EIR*, Jan. 20, 2006)

A Grand Design for Southwest Asia

If the Russian proposal is pursued, it can lead to at least a temporary solution to the crisis. But this is merely putting out the fires. To change fundamentally the adversarial relationship that has been instilled in the region through the machinations of Cheney’s war party, what is required is a grand design for the region. In April 2004, LaRouche, asked to present options for ending the Iraq catastrophe, developed his “LaRouche Doctrine” (See *EIR*, April 30, 2004). In it, he posited the need for a U.S. plan for gradual withdrawal of troops, within the context of a regional stability arrangement. This security agreement should be anchored on four key nations—Iran, Turkey, Syria and Egypt—and should be endorsed by the U.S. government. Key to stabilization of the region, LaRouche wrote, is the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, based on, again, a regional perspective for economic development, through cooperation on vast infrastructure projects (water, transportation, energy, etc.).

What LaRouche wrote two years ago is eminently appropriate to facing the current crisis. But, to make it a reality, and transform Southwest Asia from a breeding ground of violence, chaos and anarchy, into a true oasis of development, there must be a change of thinking in Washington; i.e. a change in the political constellation which is running policy. The LaRouche Doctrine is not something a Dick Cheney is likely to accept. But then, Dick Cheney’s plan for wrecking the region, is not acceptable to the peoples of the region.

Dick Cheney must go.