

More evidence shows Britain wanted war

by Mark Burdman

As the situation in the Persian Gulf moves toward war, increasing numbers of experts in Europe and in the Soviet Union have been raising a question about the origins of the conflict: Why did the American and British governments, whose intelligence services had ample evidence of Iraq's massing of troops on its border with Kuwait during the last two weeks of July, do absolutely nothing that might have deterred Iraq? The growing consensus among knowledgeable Europeans, East and West, is that little more than a harshly worded American warning, or even a small military exercise in the region, perhaps of the 82nd Airborne Division, would have sent an appropriate deterrent message.

Some, albeit not all, of the relevant experts believe that there was some Anglo-American connivance in setting up the crisis, or that the U.S. was looking for a pretext for a major confrontation in the Gulf, or both.

The first to raise such doubts publicly, was Soviet Professor Grigori Bondarevski, in an interview with the London *Guardian* Aug. 28. Bondarevski, a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, is one of the U.S.S.R.'s senior experts on the Middle East, who has advised all Soviet governments since the 1950s. Reporting Bondarevski's assessments, the *Guardian* paraphrased one of his points: "The professor finds it unbelievable that President Bush, the CIA, and 'the famous British intelligence services' were surprised by the invasion. President Saddam's intentions were well known in mid-July to those who cared to look, he says, and if the U.S. had said an emphatic 'No,' he would not have invaded."

General Schwarzkopf 'saw it coming'

The same day's *Guardian* carried a separate news item, with no direct relation to the Bondarevski discussion, reporting that the U.S. Central Command, which is running the military deployment in the Gulf, had conducted a staff exercise in July, shortly before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, to rehearse a U.S. military intervention in the Gulf. "Only last month, General Schwarzkopf devised a drill test CENTCOM officers' ability to respond to an invasion that would threaten U.S. interests in the Middle East," the *Guardian* noted. "The scenario so closely foreshadowed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that officers wondered if the Bear [the general's nickname]

saw it coming."

In an Aug. 29 interview with the Wiesbaden-based *EIR Strategic Alert* newsletter, Bondarevski repeated his concerns: "I am sure that if a kind of ultimatum, a very harsh memorandum, would have been delivered by the United States and maybe Great Britain, but especially the United States, on July 28 or 29, in Baghdad, Saddam Hussein would not have moved." Instead of doing this, he noted, U.S. State Department special envoy Richard Murphy wrote a piece in the *International Herald Tribune* July 30, calling for a dialogue with Iraq.

By the first days of September, a barrage of commentaries in France were raising blunt questions about the background to the crisis: On Sept. 2, Paul Balta, director of the Center for Modern Middle East Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris, asked, during an interview with the Spanish daily *El País*, "Why did the U.S. not launch a serious warning to Baghdad, from the moments its satellites detected the presence of Iraqi forces on the border?" On Sept. 3, commentator Albert Du Roy wrote in the influential French economic journal *Tribune de l'Expansion* that the French fear that the U.S. is not interested in limited goals, but that "Washington wants to profit from the crisis to clean out the Middle East, once and for all."

'The whole operation was pre-prepared'

In a private discussion with *EIR*, one maverick English analyst charged that the British powers-that-be were playing a very cynical game around the Gulf crisis, manipulating and orchestrating the entire crisis to restore the "bygone British Empire" in the oil-rich Gulf and to establish tighter control over Arab Gulf money. "My information is that the Kuwaiti emirs and sheikhs were already setting up the apparatus for such a money transfer, months before the Iraqis invaded, in anticipation of the crisis," he said. "The whole operation was pre-prepared. How else can you explain the smooth and orderly way in which the Kuwaiti monetary operations were taken over by London? Even in a day of fax machines and telexes and instant communications, you just can't take billions of dollars and shift it around overnight. These things take time. The investment-management aspects of this were being put in place for months, with London being the financial control center."

The source pointed to one other curious matter: On July 16, one day before Saddam Hussein launched his verbal warfare against Kuwait in earnest, there had been some kind of Iraqi-British deal, for the release of British hostage Daphne Parrish from an Iraqi jail. That deal, according to reports, was mediated by Tiny Rowland, chairman of the powerful Lonrho Corporation and often an errand-boy for the British Foreign Office and MI-6 intelligence service. After Parrish's release, the Foreign Office was effusively praising Iraq on July 16, and expressing the hope that new and durable relations would develop between Britain and Iraq.