

Bush gives green light for Moscow's bloody crackdown

by Mark Burdman

On Feb. 2, leading German newspapers carried front-page news stories reporting that the United States and Soviet Union had reached a strategic deal, whereby the Bush administration would shut its eyes to the Soviet crackdown in the Baltic states, in exchange for Soviet acquiescence toward the U.S.-led war in the Persian Gulf. "We've contracted some business," one unnamed U.S. State Department official was quoted as saying.

By Feb. 5, the reality of this dirty deal had become fully public, in respective declarations made, more or less simultaneously, by U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov. At his press conference that day, Bush expressed his support for Gorbachov, whom he described as "still in charge," and affirmed that the U.S.S.R. would "never go back, whatever happens," to a closed, authoritarian society. The London *Independent* Feb. 6 called this a "surprisingly strong endorsement" of Gorbachov. Indeed, Bush's comment was most astonishing, in view of the increasingly open police-state repression that has been unleashed in the U.S.S.R., and in view of Bush's obsessive rhetoric about opposing "dictators." Equally astonishing, is the fact that the Kremlin, virtually at that moment, was announcing a new presidential decree, declaring Lithuania's planned referendum for the Feb. 9-10 weekend "null and void," and as an attempt to "organize support for [the Lithuanian leadership's] ambitions." During the night of Feb. 5, Radio Moscow was playing Gorbachov's decree as its lead item, and Bush's affirmation of support for Gorbachov as its second item.

Various Soviet commentaries on the Gulf Feb. 5-6 reinforced the appearance of a deal. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Belonogov, arriving in Teheran Feb. 5, echoed Bush administration propaganda, singling out Iraq as unilaterally responsible for the war and saying, "Unfortu-

nately, all peace initiatives at present come up against the inflexible position of Iraq, which is still refusing to meet the demands of the world community and withdraw its troops from Kuwait." A similar analysis was put forward by Radio Moscow's commentator Yuri Solton, reversing his previous commentaries mainly critical of the U.S., for escalating the conflict beyond the level authorized by the United Nations.

The double game

But before rushing to the simplistic conclusion that Moscow has reanimated the superpower condominium on the Gulf as its primary goal, it is necessary to see Moscow's game as much more cynical, as a classical double game. It wants to use the period of the imminent ground offensive in the Gulf, as the time when it can escalate its internal crackdown against democratic and nationalist movements, while world attention is directed elsewhere. Meanwhile, those conducting the crackdown, within the structures of the KGB, the Armed Forces, and the Communist Party, are precisely those elements who are most inclined to re-direct Soviet policy into a challenge, diplomatic or military, against the U.S., when and if they see fit. Soviet military and CP influentials' warnings about the dangers of a "third world war," and of a dangerous extension of the conflict, presage such a strategic shift, especially if the Gulf war enters the domain of nuclear-weapons use.

The progress of the Soviet internal crackdown has been calibrated, almost down to the last detail, with the escalations in the Gulf. Moscow has set up the infrastructure for the crackdown with one presidential decree after another, the most spectacular one being the Gorbachov decree ratifying a joint order signed by Internal Affairs Minister Boris Pugo and Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, for joint army-police

patrols in Soviet cities. Implementation of that decree began on Feb. 1 in various areas of the U.S.S.R. Soon thereafter, on Feb. 4, Gorbachov signed a decree promoting Pugo from general-lieutenant to general-colonel. It is also more than ironic, that the Soviet news agency TASS's coverage of the patrols sounds exactly like the American command's description of "the number of sorties against Iraq." On Feb. 5, for example, TASS commented drily that "the number of patrols has been increased from 1,740 to 2,636."

Meanwhile, in a development little noticed in the West, KGB head Gen. Vladimir Kryuchkov met on Jan. 29 with the leaders of the "centrist bloc of political parties and movements," the cover name for a bunch of provocateurs and thugs who have formed what they call "a national salvation committee for the entire Soviet Union," actually the seed crystal for a proto-fascist movement throughout the U.S.S.R. This is modeled on the "national salvation committees" that have cropped up in the Baltic republics, which have served as the stalking-horses for the "Black Beret" special units who have murdered innocent persons in Lithuania and Latvia. "National Salvation Committee" spokesmen like Vladimir Voronin and Vladimir Skurlatov have made declarations reported by Soviet papers, stressing the need for a "bloodbath" in the Soviet Union, in order to preserve the empire, and to expunge the words "independence" and "separatism" from the Soviet population's mind.

'The revolution from the bottom'

But while such atrocities are being prepared, a cautionary note should be sounded. Moscow center's crackdown is going to meet with significant resistance, from different parts of the country and different social milieux. As Soviet Prof. Vyacheslav Dashchichev, a former Gorbachov intimate who is now a visiting professor in Berlin, told a meeting of the German branch of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) over the Feb. 2-3 weekend, Gorbachov will be making a big mistake if he unleashes a violent crackdown, as this will lead to "civil war" throughout the U.S.S.R. A long-time Soviet-watcher in Europe puts it this way: "There will be a combined revolution and counter-revolution unleashed by Moscow from the center. But at the same time, there will be another revolution, from the bottom, against the center. The two revolutions will collide, and the least that one can say, is it will be very bloody."

Taking Lithuania as one case, the fact is that the population has the will and determination to resist. Since the "Bloody Sunday" of Jan. 13, citizen volunteers have constantly maintained watch patrols and guards outside the Parliament building. One Lithuanian emigré affirms that, in contrast to two years ago, when the nationalist mood of resistance was basically restricted to the activists of the Sajudis political movement, today it is near-universal in the population. Lithuanian President (and Sajudis leader) Vytautas Landsbergis spoke for this mood, when he attacked the latest Gorbachov

decree as "reflecting an old tradition of the Soviet Union, according to which law and government arise not from the will of the people expressed by free vote, but are formed by the decrees of autocratic rulers."

Moscow is aware of this popular mood, also prevalent in Latvia, Georgia, Ukraine, and other non-Russian republics, as well as areas of Russia itself. The evidence is that Moscow is preparing a protracted crackdown, first probing at weak flanks, where there are strong pro-Moscow Russian-population enclaves, such as Abkhazia and Ossetia in Georgia, Klaipeda in Lithuania, and others. A recent rigged referendum in Crimea, declaring it an "autonomous region" and separating it from Ukraine, is indicative of the tactic. At the same time, within Russia, various anti-Gorbachov figures, such as Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, will be subjected to campaigns of defamation and death threats.

Also, Moscow will put increased military and political pressure on other parts of Europe, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, and eastern Germany, with the danger that Europe will become the target of destabilization and confrontation somewhere down the line. Highest-level Baltic, Polish, Czech, and other spokesmen have issued urgent warnings to this effect. Some had even begged Bush not to launch war so soon in the Gulf, since this would work to Moscow's advantage. But Bush, who has no time for "non-Gulf issues," didn't bother to listen. The blood that will be flowing, will be on his hands.

Documentation

A dose of reality from the Soviet military

by Rachel Douglas

George Bush's rampage in the Persian Gulf is premised on the approval of the Soviet leadership under Mikhail Gorbachov and the non-involvement of Soviet Armed Forces. After all, it was Gorbachov who, in his Dec. 7, 1988 speech to the United Nations General Assembly, proclaimed the advent of a "new world order," dedicated to the proposition that industrial and scientific progress is to be halted—the very New World Order, in the name of which Bush has now gone to war. In his Jan. 29 State of the Union speech, delivered by Bush as if to a war rally, "President Gorbachov" was the first of the heads of state to whose pre-war diplomatic efforts he paid due. At a Feb. 5 press conference, Bush opined that Gorbachov was "still in

charge" and that the Soviet Union would "never go back, whatever happens," on Gorbachov's reforms.

The political disappearance of the key Soviet figures who had pledged and negotiated Soviet support for the New World Order, including the Gulf deployments, did not faze the Bush administration. Upon the abrupt resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze as Soviet foreign minister, Secretary of State James Baker III reacted, "We are pleased that President Gorbachov has said that there will be no change in Soviet foreign policy. Since the United States-Soviet partnership serves the interest of peace internationally, and the process of reform domestically, we expect that to be the case."

But then columnists Evans and Novak reported, Jan. 30, that the Soviet Armed Forces leadership considered all agreements contracted by Shevardnadze to be defunct. What they said brought to mind the warning of a deputy at the Congress of People's Deputies last December, that one day soon, people looking for Gorbachov would not see him, but only the backs of the men in uniform, military men who had completely encircled him.

"Instructed to ask Marshal [sic] Mikhail Moiseyev last month why his Soviet general staff was blocking troop reductions imposed by the Conventional Forces Europe treaty," wrote Evans and Novak, "Ambassador Jack Matlock was told that because the Foreign Ministry, then headed by Eduard Shevardnadze, had negotiated it, the treaty had no standing with the military. The chief of staff's claim to be exempt from solemn agreements made by the Soviet government stunned the Bush administration. . . . Days later, dropping a second shoe, the marshal had his strategic arms negotiators repudiate a major part of the START treaty all but agreed to by Shevardnadze and Secretary of State James A. Baker III in Houston."

This is the same General of the Army Mikhail Moiseyev, chief of the General Staff, who on Sept. 26 warned about the Persian Gulf buildup, "The First World War in 1914 also started because of some minor thing. . . . In case of some military actions, Iran will join the Iraqi side. This would not be simply some kind of conflict; this would be world war."

The following dossier provides just some of what Soviet military representatives have been saying about the conflict, which it is folly to ignore.

The military officers

Every morning, Scott Shane of the *Baltimore Sun* reported Feb. 1, Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Dmitri Yazov gets his briefing: "Early every morning, Soviet military experts prepare a map of operations in the Gulf and a report on the latest events, giving it to Defense Minister Dmitri T. Yazov by 6:30 a.m., said Gen. Maj. Viktor P. Shevchenko, who directs the group. The report also goes to President Mikhail Gorbachov. . . . Sitting in the white stone Defense Ministry headquarters in downtown Moscow, General Shevchenko receives moment-by-moment reports from the scene.

'Comrade general, four B-52 bombers have taken off from the base at Diego Garcia. Their target is sites on Iraqi territory. Time of take-off, 12:30,' one of a steady stream of reporting officers told him during" an interview Shevchenko gave to a Soviet reporter.

Jan. 10. Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, former Chief of Staff and now military adviser to Gorbachov, warned that in the event of war in the Gulf, "most of the Arabs will be with Saddam Hussein," and that "if the war breaks out, it will not be a local or limited conflict, but a generalized one." Interviewed by the Soviet news agency TASS, Akhromeyev stated that in such a war, "all the Arabs will be involved, and the ground will burn under the feet of the people; it will be a scorched earth."

Jan. 21. Akhromeyev told *Pravda* that it was "deeply regrettable that all possibilities for a peaceful solution of the conflict had not been exhausted," as a result of which, "war broke out in this dangerous region." Akhromeyev warned that what was happening in the Gulf had to be seen in the broader context of U.S. military strategy, and from the reality that the U.S. and NATO were still committed to a hostile posture vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. The U.S., he stated, had "not entirely abandoned the goal of achieving military superiority over us, and we have to acknowledge frankly that the U.S. will not renounce that policy in the foreseeable future."

Jan. 28. Gen. Maj. Ivan Vorobyov, a retired officer whose expertise is the influence on strategy of new battlefield technologies and tactics, wrote in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, that Operation Desert Storm showed the necessity of reviving an offensive military doctrine. According to a report in the German press, General Vorobyov characterized the present military doctrine as too defensive and too much of a constraint on the capability of the Soviet Union to conduct a war. He said that political leaders would be "blind and deaf," if they did not realize that "a huge number of foreign military bases has been established on the borders of the Soviet Union," and that "close to our southern border, the flames of a war under the name Desert Storm are burning." The reform of military strategy proclaimed in recent years, cautioned Vorobyov, had been argued for on the grounds that modern states would no longer launch wars outside their own borders, so that only defensive armed forces were required. But this emphasis on defensive operations, he concluded, was a mistake leading to a loss of the capability for military initiatives.

Jan. 29. Marshal Akhromeyev spoke again, this time in an interview with the German communist newspaper, *Neues Deutschland*. "Saddam Hussein has not yet been beaten and defeated," said Akhromeyev, "He is obviously not going to surrender as demanded by the anti-Iraq coalition." He forecast that if the war were not stopped by United Nations mediation, it would become increasingly harsh, especially as the anti-Iraq coalition would be obliged to use their ground forces. "I do not think that an Army that has nine years of war experience can be paralyzed simply by air attacks," said

Akhromeyev, "The conflict will drag on rather long." It will also take on greater dimensions, he said, warning that "the entire Near and Middle East region" could "go up in flames" if Israel entered the war.

Jan. 30. Radio Moscow quoted Gen. S. Petrov of the Soviet Chemical Troops, who told *Izvestia* that "hitting targets of this kind is not the best way to prevent chemical and biological warfare," but had dangerous implications, which Radio Moscow said could affect "hundreds of millions of people."

Jan. 31. Gen. Maj. Sergei Bogdanov, head of the Soviet General Staff's Operations Research Center, told the Soviet military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* that the anti-Iraqi coalition could pay dearly for underestimating Iraqi military capabilities. He said that a victory against Iraq would not be easy, that the losses of men and materiel on the coalition's side could grow immensely, and that the United Nations had never given a mandate for the complete destruction of Iraq's military and industrial infrastructure. More ominously, General Bogdanov warned that nuclear weapons could be used soon, and that the territory of the Soviet Union itself could be affected by the spreading conflict.

Asked whether he thought the war would pose a "direct threat" to the U.S.S.R., Bogdanov responded, "At the moment, there is no reason to talk of a direct threat, but one cannot forget that the war is going on a few hundred kilometers from our borders. So there is cause for a certain anxiety, especially in view of the growing likelihood that the scale of the war will increase, that other countries will be drawn in, and that both sides will use weapons of mass destruction." According to Bogdanov, the U.S. and its allies have "1,000 low-yield nuclear weapons" in the war theater. He stated that "certain Western specialists" have told him that the U.S. planned to use them at a certain point. "Even if we discount the idea of an intentional nuclear strike, one cannot exclude a simple accident, a computer error, or sabotage. There is no guarantee that in such circumstances the situation can be kept under control." Soviet Azerbaidzhan, he pointed out, is only 250 kilometers from Iraq.

Jan. 31. Gen. Lt. German Starodubov, deputy chief of a main directorate at the Soviet General Staff, told the Soviet weekly *Glasnost* that the United States was underestimating Iraqi war-fighting potentials. "The Americans obviously underestimated Saddam Hussein. They supposed that after the first bombings, he would either capitulate or throw himself headlong into some sort of adventure," stated Starodubov. "But you could hardly expect that of an opponent who had just spent eight years fighting in the desert." Concerning U.S. hopes for a victory through air power alone, Starodubov commented, "Aviation is aviation, but until an infantryman has put his foot on the ground, it's too early to speak of any kind of real achievement of the goals that have been set. To fight in the desert is tough. There are reports that the Americans are having quite a few equipment problems."

Jan. 31. Col. Viktor Alksnis, who heads the parliamentary caucus *Soyuz* (Union) and has become a mouthpiece for the Army-KGB-Russian nationalist political axis in Moscow, said in a newspaper interview, that in view of the large Islamic population in the Soviet Union, the U.S.S.R. must not only abstain from any military action against Iraq, but fight on the side of the jihad (holy war) against the West, instead of with the West against Islam.

The military press

Jan. 18. The military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* commented, "The U.S. should have demonstrated more tolerance and restraint to prevent the death of innocents."

Jan. 18. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, the Communist Party-dominated Russian daily, editorially demanded, "Is Iraq alone to be blamed for this war? Why is world opinion and Soviet opinion not demanding the destruction of another aggressor, Israel? Why is the world community not punishing the United States for the attacks on Grenada and Panama?"

Jan. 21. Radio Moscow's commentator Yuri Solton led a shift in Soviet coverage of the Gulf war, with his statement that the people of the region were "paying with blood" for the U.S. attacks. The purpose of the multinational coalition against Iraq was to act against aggression, he said, but "the extreme measures used are appalling." Solton warned about the "risks of using weapons of mass destruction," and asked, "How long will they continue to raze to the ground Iraq and Kuwait with the excuse of justice?"

Jan. 24. *Krasnaya Zvezda* regular columnist Col. M. Ponomaryov observed that the Persian Gulf conflict has "much in common" with Vietnam, "namely counting on the ability to solve difficult international problems exclusively through the use of force," which "threatens to destroy hundreds and hundreds of people, without guaranteeing a solution of the conflict."

Jan. 25. *Krasnaya Zvezda* reported a statement by Gregor Gysi, the communist party chief of former East Germany, that while Iraq had "committed a crime" by occupying Kuwait, "The United States and its allies have also chosen a criminal path, by relying on force and war from the very beginning."

In an interview in the same issue of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Soviet Gen. Col. of Aviation Ye. Shaposhnikov prefaced an analysis of the air battles, with his expression of "deep regret, that the war was not averted." He added, "The greatest suffering will fall to the lot of the peoples. The number of civilian casualties is rising. . . . This is worthy of condemnation."

Jan. 29. *Krasnaya Zvezda* author L. Medvedko wrote, "One cannot now help feeling great anxiety in the face of the unpredictable nature of the further development of events. In the modern interconnected and interdependent world, it is necessary to do not only 'everything conceivable' but also 'everything possible' to prevent the new 'hot war' from esca-

Palestinian food situation critical

A special guest contribution by Mr. Hanna Siniora, editor of the Jerusalem Arabic newspaper Al-Fajr.

Since bombs began raining down on Baghdad on Jan. 17, Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and some areas of East Jerusalem have been effectively under house arrest in the strictest curfew since the Israeli occupation began in 1967. Untold damage in food supplies, agriculture, and medical services is reported, as well as escalation in numbers of human rights violations.

The newly organized Coordinating Committee of International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), in a press conference Jan. 24, charged that the situation as of that date was already critical and appeared to be worsening as the days passed.

The ad hoc committee, as well as residents all over the Occupied Territories reachable by phone, confirm that definite shortages in foodstuffs exist in the Occupied Territories. Some areas, such as Nablus, report a shortage in staple items such as flour, sugar, salt, baby milk, and vegetables.

Since the imposition of the curfew, in some areas even days before the war in the Gulf broke out, there has been no means of re-stocking stores. This means that when the curfew is lifted in towns and refugee camps for a few hours to allow residents to purchase food, the stores are jammed with customers, but no food is available for purchase.

All Palestinian factories are shut down under the curfew and thus no new canned goods, dairy products, and the like are being produced. With the Occupied Territories declared a closed military area, no Israeli-manufactured goods are reaching the market either.

Curfew imposes unemployment

The problem is further compounded by the fact that a good percentage of manpower in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are day laborers, dependent on a daily wage to feed their families. Many have not been to work now in two weeks, meaning their income in some cases is completely gone. Local charitable societies are closed during the curfew, and the families are turning for help to international NGOs based in Jerusalem whom they can reach by phone.

UNRWA [U.N. Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] began emergency distribution of food to some of its refugee camps several days after the crisis started, and said it expected more supplies in the coming few days.

The Palestinian agricultural sector is also reported to be at a standstill. Farmers are not being allowed to tend their crops which are dying in the fields and livestock have no feed. The ad hoc committee warned that if the situation persisted, "this season's harvest will be completely lost" and the animals "face starvation."

Najat, a Nablus resident, speaking to *Al-Fajr*, reported that residents old enough to remember the days before the Israeli occupation claim they have never witnessed a stricter curfew. "For the first time, Ittihad hospital now lacks food and medical personnel," she said. She said that the available hospital staff are now on 24-hour shifts.

She told *Al-Fajr* that the Israeli soldiers are harassing

lating into a global storm. Otherwise it could take the form of an as yet unknown kind of 'regional war' with global consequences, of something that will later be called a 'sub-world war.' Before 'Desert Storm' causes a chain reaction of landslides accompanied by a tornado of devastation and an inundation of ecological disasters, it must be not just localized but stopped."

Jan. 31. Sovetskaya Rossiya accused the United States of "gunboat diplomacy" and genocide, with a commentary charging that "every bomb that falls over the peaceful people of Iraq is destroying the myth of the just character of this war. Every bomb confirms that we are facing in the Gulf a massacre, a genocide against the Iraqi people. . . . We do not question the necessity to free Kuwait. But after Aug. 2, rather than looking for a political solution, only the demand for the unconditional capitulation of the enemy has been dictated."

Soviet hardware

Jan. 8. The BBC reported that the Soviet government had formally protested the detention in the Red Sea, by U.S. and Spanish naval vessels, of a Soviet ship carrying military spare parts, which the Soviets insisted were for Jordan, not Iraq.

Jan. 17. TASS announced that Soviet military forces in southern Russia were on a high state of alert, because of the war in the Persian Gulf.

Jan. 26. The French weekly *Le Point* featured an intelligence leak: "You don't know that one piece of information, more than any others, preoccupies Western authorities. American observation satellites have detected 400 Soviet trucks on route toward Iraq across Iran. It is thought that they are filled with ammunition. And people are asking themselves: Does this move come from Gorbachov or from the Soviet Army, which could have taken the initiative by itself?"

ambulances sent by the Red Crescent Society and preventing them from reaching their destinations. No one dares to break curfew, she said, except in dire emergencies.

Najat says that Israeli troops are constantly patrolling the streets and warning residents that they will risk their lives if they step outdoors. She said that one youth, Ra'ed al-Sakhleh, was shot in the hand while standing in front of his home. He was taken to Rafidia hospital, treated, and later arrested by the Israeli Army. She said she personally knew of four other young people who have been arrested.

The NGO committee reported in its Jerusalem press conference that Palestinians outside their homes face severe penalties. "On Jan. 22, the maximum fine for breaking curfew was raised to 30,000 Israeli shekels (\$15,000) and the maximum prison sentence to five years," read a press release.

Abdullah, a resident of the Gaza Strip, told *Al-Fajr* that when soliders lifted the curfew for two hours, only women were permitted to go into the streets. The stores, most of which are operated by men, were therefore not opened and women were unable to buy anything. He reported no meat or vegetables in the market.

The ad hoc committee told the press that "the majority of the Palestinian population has limited access to first aid and health care facilities" as a result of the curfew. This has placed many in life-threatening situations, they maintain.

Dr. Mustapha Barghouthi of the Palestine Union of Medical Relief Committees said that this is particularly serious for residents who have chronic heart disease and need daily attention and medication, and for women giving birth.

Najat told *Al-Fajr* that women are delivering their babies at home and there are reports of labor being prolonged to 36 hours in some cases as a result.

Crisis in medical care

Dr. Barghouthi told the journalists that the most serious issues in medical care, from the NGO's perspective, was the Israeli Army's failure to distribute adequate gas masks to the population of the Occupied Territories.

Abdullah reported from Gaza that only residents with telephones in their homes were able to phone for UNRWA ambulances. He said the soldiers have been announcing that anyone caught leaving their home would be "shot down." Pharmacies lack medicines, he said.

In terms of human rights violations under curfew, the NGOs said that they have been alerted to the following: "opening fire without warning, widespread beatings, frequent tear-gassings including the shooting of tear gas cannisters into homes under curfew, arbitrary arrests, and exorbitant fines."

A press release read: "Our information suggests that there has been an alarming rise in the degree and number of human rights violations during the curfew." The ad hoc committee reports that all of their sources say the Israeli Army has told the population that anyone leaving his home "does so at his own risk."

The press release adds, in conclusion, "It is unreasonable to argue any longer, as the Israeli authorities do, that public order must be maintained in the Occupied Territories by prolonging the curfew. This curfew has been imposed on a defenseless civilian population who are not at war and who are not provided with any means of protection against war."

What others see from Moscow's military

On Jan. 9, a European expert on Soviet military affairs observed to *EIR*, "The Soviet military is pulling the rug out from everybody in the Gulf." The strenuous Soviet protests about the interception of Soviet ships in the Red Sea were "some sort of extraordinary signal" of Soviet intentions to slow down the U.S. confrontation with Iraq. But while Bush is fixated on the Gulf crisis to the exclusion of any other issue, most particularly the dramatic crisis erupting within the Soviet Empire itself, the Russian military would be making it clear that it does not intend to give up its historical influence with the Arabs.

Jan. 15. Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis, as reported on Polish radio by Lithuania's Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas, pleaded with the West not to start a war in the Gulf, since the war would be used by the Soviet Union as a cover for the Soviet military to come down on Lithuania.

He said that Landsbergis believed "the Russians want the Americans to go to war in the Gulf now. It's a trap. Gorbachov is not in control. He's a puppet of the Russian generals."

Jan. 26. General Lacaze, former head of the French Army, told *Le Figaro* that the Soviet military "sees in this war an interesting laboratory to test the comportment of Soviet military material," especially as 90% of the Iraqi military arsenal is of Soviet origin. There are still Soviet military advisers in Iraq, he added, and "One may also ask if the U.S.S.R. has really respected the embargo on the sending of spare parts." Lacaze concluded, "The generals of the Red Army, supported by conservative circles, have besides made no secret of their pro-Iraq proclivities and of their distances vis-à-vis the United States. Clearly, the Red Army, for which Iraq has always been a traditional ally, is politically reluctant in the face of the official Soviet policy of benevolent neutrality toward the United States."