

## U.S. attack on Iraq plays right into British hands

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

It has become a truth universally acknowledged, since that outrage known as Margaret Bush and George Bush's Desert Storm, 1991, that any U.S. President in search of political support, need only push the appropriate button and launch bombs against Iraq. That nation's President, Saddam Hussein, has been so demonized by six years of psychological warfare in the world's press, that questioning the wisdom of bombing his country is almost tantamount to doubting the divinity of Christ. As the briefer of the U.S. State Department had to admit, in questioning Sept. 5 by journalists who challenged the legitimacy of the U.S. air strikes against Iraq, "you can't compare Saddam to any of his neighbors." The man has proven himself, Glyn Davies continued, to be "unreliable" over years. He has gassed his own people, committed other crimes against humanity. Ergo, he is a legitimate target—whenever and wherever we choose to say so, was the implicit message.

Thus, when President Clinton announced that he was going to launch air raids against Iraq, raids which were carried out on Sept. 3, he was observing what has become a revered tradition in Washington. The Republican opposition had been stoking the coals, ever since Aug. 31, when Iraqi government troops entered the northern Iraq city of Irbil, to support one Kurdish party, under Masoud Barzani, against a rival faction, under Jalal Talabani. Bob Dole, Newt Gingrich, and other paragons of strategic thinking, had launched a macho challenge to Clinton, that he show himself to be a man, and beat back the wicked Saddam. As soon as news of the air-borne assault was out, Dole predictably supported the President's move, declaring that under such circumstances, one thought not as a partisan politician, but as an American. Gingrich said that he hoped it would be the beginning of a serious move

against Saddam Hussein. The American population, in its infinite wisdom, expressed its wholehearted support for the military action against Iraq, according to opinion polls.

But beneath the Hollywood facade of American electoral politics, a far more dramatic sequence of events was unfolding in the real world. Contrary to the illusions that Clinton may have nurtured, that such an aggressive military move might solve all his domestic problems, bring stability to the region, and gain him the support of the "international community," the political effect of his decision, worldwide, was to prove to be an unmitigated disaster. Clinton had in one fell swoop, alienated the entire Arab and Islamic world, irritated his most vital allies internationally, and set into motion in the region, military, political, and economic processes leading toward general destabilization and war.

Lyndon LaRouche explained Clinton's behavior in the following terms: "President Clinton was obviously incompetently briefed, and things he should have known were obviously *not* told to him, that he should have been told. . . . The President is wrapped up a bit too much with the election campaign, in the wrong way. He still has not completely come out from under the habits which seemed to be ingrained while Dick Morris was really 'handling' him, in a sense. So he's coming out of the ether, but he hasn't come out yet and this thing [the Iraqi troop movements in Irbil] hit, and he responded as a candidate, fearing what the press and the Republicans and others will say tomorrow morning, not what history was going to say down the road, or what he was going to say himself, in a couple or weeks, a couple of months more down the road. It's a big mistake."

LaRouche pointed to a British hand in the operation. It was the British who egged Clinton on to initiate military ac-

tion, and it was the British who prevailed on Germany to go along with it. Most obviously, it was British Defense Minister Michael Portillo and Prime Minister John Major, who declared their unconditional support for the U.S. air raids. Indeed, it was Portillo, who first announced that the no-fly zone in southern Iraq should be extended, from the 32nd to the 33rd parallel. Only after Portillo's announcement, did the U.S. administration say it would enlarge the no-fly zone.

Even the *modus operandi* of the military deployment demonstrates that the entire operation had been worked out with London, almost to the exclusion of any other allies. As reported widely in the press, the U.S. planes which were deployed to launch the cruise missiles, came from faraway Guam, and flew only over water, so as to avoid any political friction with countries over whose airspace they might travel. Logistical support for the flights, including refuelling, was provided by the loyal British allies. The United States had evidently been told to avoid asking partners in the region, like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or Jordan, for logistical backup. The British must have known very well that any such approach would have ignited political fireworks. Thus, the operation was done, so to speak, under the cover of darkness.

Saudi Arabia was not asked for logistical support, though American military forces there would have been the obvious choice. Turkey, whose Incirlik base is regularly used for Operation Comfort missions into the UN-protected zone in northern Iraq, was not informed. Jordan, with which the United States had run extensive air maneuvers over southern Iraqi air space in the spring, may have been informed, but was not consulted. In sum, the entire operation was carried out by the British and the Americans, in utter disregard of the views of those regional partners which had proven so crucial to Desert Storm—Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The British knew that none of these would agree to having any deployments against Iraq originate from their soil, for fear of domestic reactions.

### **Widespread opposition**

Once the air strikes had started, and the erstwhile allies of the war against Iraq had been informed of what was happening in their back yard, all hell broke loose. The list of nations which supported the U.S. was pitifully short: Great Britain, its minion Canada, Japan, Germany, Israel, and that London-based piggy bank known as Kuwait. The much-touted 30-nation "coalition" which had lent credibility to the massacre of Iraq in 1991 was nowhere to be seen.

On the contrary, the entire Arab world rose up in revolt against the United States, and with it, the Islamic nations. In Egypt, traditionally the cornerstone of U.S. presence in the region, demonstrators took to the streets, burning the American flag. The government newspaper *Al Ahram* editorialized that the U.S. had adopted the "behavior of the cowboy and the quarrelsome bully." The paper said, "Iraq has not broken any international law, it hasn't invaded any country, as it did

with Kuwait. It was practicing its legitimate sovereignty over its territory. Americans are obsessed with violence, with Superman and Rambo." In Pakistan, demonstrators hurled rocks at the U.S. consulate in Lahore, prompting authorities to tighten security around diplomatic missions. In Bangladesh, demonstrators burned Clinton in effigy. In Jordan, a country which has become the public relations officer for Washington's Mideast policy, all 80 members of parliament issued a statement, in which they "deeply reject the American aggression on brotherly Iraq and breaching its sovereignty and unity of its people and territories."

### **Russia, China alienated**

Clinton also alienated several leading members of the UN Security Council. If Britain stood out for its gushing praise of Clinton, the two nations whose good relations with Washington are of crucial strategic import, Russia and China, were less enthusiastic. The Russians, according to statements issued by Yeltsin's spokesman, Dmitri Ryurikov, had been kept in the dark. "To talk about coordination is simply not serious," he is quoted as saying. "The Russian leadership was not informed."

National Security head Gen. Aleksandr Lebed was less polite. "There is one big strong master in the world," he was quoted by Itar-Tass as saying, "who spits on everybody. That master is behaving like a bull in a china shop. This is the essence of true democracy: Carry out air raids and then gather the journalists to applaud."

As for China, the reactions were no more diplomatic. Xinhua news agency issued a commentary attributing the action to "Clinton's need to strengthen his image and influence as a world political leader at home so as to win the upcoming presidential elections in November." Government spokesmen were quoted saying they viewed the attacks against Iraq as dangerous.

Both Russia and China were reacting to the fact that the United States had utterly ignored even those UN procedures and forums which it had always held up to be sovereign. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, before meeting German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, expressed his concern that such unilateral action could to catastrophic consequences" and "anarchy" in international relations. Russia made known, through its deputy foreign minister, that it would not vote for a resolution, prepared by Great Britain, condemning Iraq for its actions in Irbil, and thus justifying the air strikes.

The other crucial partner that was scorched by the air strikes, is Turkey, a NATO member, former ally in the anti-Iraq coalition, and launching pad for Operation Comfort missions into northern Iraq. Washington reportedly did not consult Turkey's new prime minister, Ecmettin Erbakan. "Turkey was informed, but not necessarily consulted," a Western diplomat said. The arrogance of power typical of British diplomacy, ignored Ankara.

Tansu Ciller, Turkey's foreign minister, reshuffled the cards by announcing that Turkey intended to establish a "se-

curity cordon" or "buffer zone" inside northern Iraq, where the anti-Turkish Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) has bases. On Sept. 5, actions followed, when Turkish troops massed along the border to Iraq, and F-16s took off, for flights over Iraq. Ankara was planning a surprise attack against PKK positions. According to a press report on Sept. 5, Turkey "said its fighter jets Thursday attacked Kurdish rebels in another area [of Iraq] farther north." The Turkish government had reportedly informed Washington of its intentions, but there had been no official response.

As of Sept. 5, therefore, anything was possible: Turkey could bomb PKK positions inside Iraq. It could send in ground troops. When queried about the implications of this eventuality, the State Department Glyn Davies, waxed ineloquent. In response to *EIR*'s question, whether the U.S. action were not an expression of a new doctrine of limited sovereignty, since the U.S. had militarily attacked a nation which had moved its own troops in its own territory, he tried to extricate himself, by saying that Saddam Hussein had violated UN resolutions. Pressed as to whether the sovereign nation of Iraq did or did not have the right to move in its own territory, against forces being manipulated against it, from outside, the briefer answered, that he "did not want to get into theoretical questions." Reminded by another journalist of the recent Iranian interventions into Iraqi territory, which proved this was not a theoretical, but a practical question, Davies had no other recourse than to take refuge in the universally accepted notion that Saddam is the problem.

### The broader game

The situation, as it shaped up on Sept. 6, presented several foreign policy paradoxes, to say the least. Turkish troops and aircraft were mobilized to move into northern Iraq, to "protect" Turkish citizens from the PKK. If the U.S. action against Iraq had been prompted by concern that Saddam Hussein were violating the human rights of Kurds inside Iraq, who must be "protected," what, then, should be the response of the United States to military action against Kurds there by NATO member Turkey? Is the U.S. to sanction it for its actions?

This is only one of the many wild cards in the situation. Saudi Arabia is another. The Saudi royal family was apparently also not fully informed of U.S. military plans. Washington did not ask Saudi Arabia for rights to use its territory for launching the attacks, presumably due to awareness of the opposition this would provoke inside the country. Yet, now the U.S. strikes have taken place, further fuelling anti-American sentiment. At the same time—and it is no coincidence—the British government is allowing an international conference of terrorists to take place in London, including leading members of the Saudi opposition (see article, p. 38). Among the luminaries expected to appear at the gala conference Sept. 8, is Osama Bin Laden, renegade son of one of the wealthiest Saudi families, who, after having made his fame and fortune

in the Afghanistan theater, has continued to fund and direct "Islamist" terrorist operations. Bin Laden authored an article in the London-based Arabic daily *Al Arab*, on Sept. 3, in which he called on the Saudi opposition groups to organize irregular warfare against American installations. He went so far as to propose that a faction within the royal family be brought in as an ally, in the effort to expel the United States from the country, through terrorism.

The coincidence of the international terrorist conference in London, for which Bin Laden's call is a manifesto, and the dramatic events in the Gulf, should cause sensitive noses to sniff.

What, after all, do British geopolitical interests dictate at the current conjuncture? It is not the Gulf region per se, but the broader geopolitical setting which defines London's target. As *EIR* has documented, the historical nightmare of British geopolitics has been, that the nations of Europe and Asia would reach agreement on economic cooperation, leading to the development of the Eurasian continent. This would relegate the island empire to a position of relative insignificance. Thus, London has historically sabotaged any and all such attempts by continental forces.

Now, the government of China has made implementation of Eurasian infrastructure projects, the continental land-bridge, its priority. China thus is to be destabilized. To the extent that the Turkish government of Erbakan and the current Iranian government have become key factors in this project, in the Gulf region which represents the bridge from Asia into Europe, they, too, have placed themselves on the enemy list of London.

The Eurasian land-bridge strategic perspective requires agreement among the United States, Russia, and China, as a combination uniquely capable of defeating British geopolitical designs politically. Now, Clinton's military madness against Iraq has proven to be the perfect tool to sabotage U.S.-Russian-Chinese relations—as the British know only too well.

What precise scenario is being pursued by Britain is unclear, but there exists the very real possibility that the entire region will go up in flames. The Saudi opposition, fuelled by Bin Laden's calls, could destabilize the kingdom. The long-time U.S. ally could shift its allegiances to London, or France, which has been given the role by Britain in this crisis, of the "friend of the Arabs." Jordan could blow up as well, if the internal opposition takes to the streets. And Iraq itself could explode. The U.S.-British decision to extend the southern no-fly zone to the 33rd parallel just south of Baghdad, could mean that British blueprints for a strike against Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, are operational. Or, that the historic British project to establish a "Kurdistan" carved out of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, is being dusted off.

This dimension of the matter, surely, is not something that Mr. Clinton was briefed on, before making his ill-fated decisions.