

Clinton prioritizes Russia, China ties in second term

by William Jones

Temporary medical problems aside, Clinton is faced with some of the most profound foreign policy challenges of any postwar American leader, as the world financial and monetary system careens toward a certain break point, that will require the U.S. President to assemble a combination of world leaders behind a new Bretton Woods monetary system. In particular, Clinton must be able to secure the backing of China and Russia for such a new secure arrangement, or else his enemies in London will drive the world, irreversibly towards a new dark age.

Thus, beyond the surface issues addressed in the President's meeting with his Russian counterpart, and by Vice President Al Gore, during his more recent visit to Beijing, lie the deeper questions of political cooperation to confront this looming world monetary and financial *punctum saliens*.

The Clinton-Yeltsin summit

With regard to the primary issue, the expansion of NATO—a military alliance which, in fact, is not much use to United States, so long as America's number-one enemy, Great Britain, also remains a member of it—the two sides agreed to disagree. The United States and the NATO countries are committed to bringing in new members from among the eastern European nations at the upcoming NATO summit in July. The Russians are opposed to the expansion of NATO, fearing, despite assurances to the contrary, that it is aimed at them.

Clinton administration officials have characterized the summit as a great success, with National Security Adviser Sandy Berger calling it “a turning point.” The reason for the optimism was not so much any particular agreements that were signed. The important issue, according to administration officials, was that Russia had agreed to be involved in building the structures of the new Europe. “The direction Russia takes will be very important,” said one official. “It is of fundamental importance that they will work with the Alliance as a whole.”

Working with the alliance involves signing a Russia-NATO pact which will outline the areas and mode of cooperation. “The Russians are no longer saying “no” to everything,” the official added. This was regarded as of particular importance, since the United States had to now deal with the tougher Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, rather than with the malleable Andrei Kozyrev.

The Russians have shown unusual flexibility toward U.S. demands for changes in experimentation and deployment of tactical missile defense systems, while the U.S. allowed more time for Russia to meet the requirements of START II, now being held up in the Russian Parliament, and committed to moving quickly to START III which would further reduce the nuclear arsenals. NATO has also made a formal decision not to station nuclear weapons in the new member states, and has announced its intention to place strict limits on its conventional forces and limits on the forces deployed eastern Europe. These concessions helped to keep the Russia-NATO dialogue alive, but it remains to be seen whether they will serve to allay Russian suspicions regarding NATO expansion.

More than any agreements that were signed at the summit, it is the relationship which President Clinton has established with the Russian President which will prove to be the lasting value of the summit. That relationship was firmly established at the 1995 summit in Hyde Park, New York, at the home of Franklin Roosevelt—quite direct and strong symbolism of the good relationship that FDR had established with the Russians. The FDR symbolism was more implicit than explicit in Helsinki, with the President telling the Guardian's Martin Walker in an interview shortly before the summit, that he had been reading the speech FDR was to have made the day after he died, as preparation for the Helsinki summit.

Responding to a question from *EIR* on March 1 regarding the Clinton comments to Walker, White House Press Spokes-

man Mike McCurry said, "That question of how Russia defines its greatness as we think of the 21st century is a key issue that defines the global agenda as we look ahead to the 21st century and think about what role the United States will play." "How we intersect and interrelate to a Russia that really needs to cope with the question of its future, especially with respect to Europe, is one of the defining, central foreign policy challenges we face for the next four years and beyond, as you've heard the President and others here say. And that, yes, the President is mindful of the fact that those questions take on historic significance equal to and important as the confrontation that defined the climate at the conclusion of World War II and that established thus the architecture of the Cold War era."

Charting a course in troubled waters

Developing a foreign policy strategy during the second Clinton administration may prove much tougher than during the first. The Republican Right, although somewhat chastened by its setbacks in 1996, is still intent on playing "down-and-dirty" with the administration, continuing its perennial scandal-mongering, and combining it, particularly in the so-called "Chinagate," aimed at halting any "engagement" with China.

Attempting to create an "aura of corruption" around the administration may prove to be a dangerous tactic, however. Republican "cowboy" Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.), one of the prime protagonists of "Chinagate," is learning, much to his chagrin, that shouting "corruption" all the time may lead to people focussing a little closer on "he who cast the first stone." Burton is now the subject of a grand jury investigation looking closer at his shady deals with Pakistan.

If the relationship with Russia had been of primary concern during the first Clinton administration, the China relationship may well prove to require more focus during Clinton II. In a major policy speech given at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on March 27, National Security Council adviser Samuel Berger gave an indication of President Clinton's thinking on the foreign policy priorities during his second administration. In his remarks, Berger met some of the Republican objections to the Clinton policy of "constructive engagement" with China. "Our strategy of engagement with China is not a reward for good behavior," Berger said. "It is a vehicle for expanding areas where we can cooperate to advance our shared strategic interests, such as on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or stability on the Korean Peninsula, and where we can deal directly with our fundamental differences such as human rights, market access and some of China's weapons sales."

Berger continued: "There is no guarantee that engagement will succeed in pulling China in the direction of the international community, away from a more nationalistic, self-absorbed course. But seeking to isolate China or to isolate us from China," Berger warned, "almost certainly will push China in the wrong direction and undercut the stability that America, China, and the entire Asia-Pacific region need for

Clinton plays Hamlet

Virtually every government on this planet, including that of the U.S.A., is currently vacillating in a manner reminiscent of the Act III soliloquy of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The world is threatened with not merely an onrushing financial collapse, but a plunge into a probably protracted new, global "dark age." The cause of this collapse is, primarily, the cultural and economic policy-changes adopted over the recent thirty years. Civilization might soon be destroyed, unless they abandon present policies and institutions, for appropriate new ones. Yet, governments, like so many Hamlets, would rather cling to failed policies with which they have become familiar, than find solutions in successful, pre-1966 policies, which the presently ruling generation has never known during its adult life-time.

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., March 29, 1997

the future to be secure and prosperous."

In talking about the "opening markets strategy" that the administration has also adopted as its own, Berger paid the usual homage to the British "free market" dogma—but with some circumspection. "The President is determined to pursue this course, navigating the false choice between protectionism and unbridled free trade," Berger said. "Protectionism simply is not an option in today's global economic arena. If we walk away, the process of integration won't stop; it will simply continue without us. Others in Europe and Asia and elsewhere will benefit." "But while protectionism is not an option, neither is ungoverned free trade," Berger continued. "Competition causes dislocation, especially among those without adequate training and skills to compete in the global economy. We cannot walk away from them."

Only in passing did Berger touch upon an issue that could prove to become the number one foreign policy consideration of Clinton II: the forebodings of a major collapse in the international financial markets. The collapse which has been predicted by American economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche is now becoming a matter of public discussion in various capitals of the world. Neither the President nor his advisers are inclined to touch upon it directly, but it is undoubtedly the subject of heated discussions in the quiet councils of government. "But we must also understand that these powerful forces toward integration are not without down sides or dangers," Berger said. "As borders become as easy to breach as lines in the sand, nations become more vulnerable to transnational tidal waves. Witness the peso crisis, which threatened not only Mexico's economy, but jobs in America, and stability in developing countries around the world."