

Editorial

The threat of nuclear war

Anyone who believes that the U.S. and British bombing attacks against Iraq last month had little strategic repercussion, had better wake up. As the result of President Clinton allowing himself to be bamboozled, by Vice President Al Gore and Prime Minister Tony Blair, into that disastrous and senseless action, the planet is suddenly faced, once again, with a growing danger of nuclear confrontation.

The immediate trigger for such a horrific event is the still unsettled situation in the Middle East, but the added strategic dimension, fostered by the bombing of Iraq, is the danger that Russia, still one of the world's largest nuclear weapons arsenals, could move into a confrontational mode with the West.

Reports from visitors to Moscow, and from *EIR*'s own correspondents in various parts of Russia, indicate that the anti-American and anti-Western resentment is bubbling out of control. It is no secret that many in Russia hold the United States directly accountable for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies that have driven the Russian economy into the ground over the past eight years, since the fall of the Soviet Union. Regardless of whether this view is fully justified or not, it is becoming an increasingly important "fact on the ground."

During the week of Dec. 21, the Russian Defense Ministry made a great public fanfare out of its deployment of a new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles, replacing part of their aging arsenal. The aggressive tone of Russia's display of its nuclear prowess would not have occurred prior to the Iraq fiasco. Given the collapse of the Russian economy, which has decimated the Russian Army, Moscow increasingly will see its strategic nuclear arsenal as its defense-of-last-resort — unless there is a radical change in the global political landscape.

The growing perception in Moscow, in Beijing, and in most capitals of the Arab world, is that the Thatcher-Bush era push for a world government centered in the United Nations Security Council's permanent five members, has been superseded by a new, aggressive Anglo-American unilateralism, unleashed in Operation

Desert Fox. President Clinton must take dramatic steps to *undo* the massive damage already done.

In the Middle East, the cockpit for any nuclear confrontation, the British and their Likud Party assets in Israel are running amok. Note that it was Benjamin Netanyahu who endorsed the fall of his own government and the calling of new elections. Those elections are now set for May 17 — two weeks *after* the deadline for completing the Oslo final status negotiations, and after the date that Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat had set for declaring an independent Palestinian state, should the negotiations fail. The ingredients are present for a new outbreak of violent confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis in the beginning of May. Both Netanyahu and his chief thug, Ariel Sharon, are more than capable of provoking such bloodshed, and exploit it for their electoral advantage.

Under any circumstances, it is likely that the first round of Israeli elections will not be decisive, and a runoff will occur on June 1. This means a six-month period, from now to the beginning of June, in which there are no checks on the Netanyahu-Sharon berserkers. They have already stated that Israel will use nuclear weapons against Iraq, should there be any hint of Iraqi biological or chemical weapons attacks against Israel. Britain, too, announced that it was prepared to use nuclear weapons against Iraq, in the event of an attack on Israel.

This group of British-Israelite fanatics has got to be caged. Lyndon LaRouche has called upon President Clinton to announce that all aid to Israel be cut off, until Netanyahu complies fully with the Wye Plantation Accords, which he personally signed just a few months ago. This kind of no-holds-barred action would not only go a long way toward curbing the British and Israeli crazies; it would also signal Moscow, Beijing, and other world capitals that President Clinton — not Al Gore — is back in the driver's seat in Washington, and the policy direction best expressed in the past 14 months' efforts at forging a U.S.-Chinese strategic partnership for the 21st century have not been squandered.