

Editorial

A strategic red alert

As we head into April, any sane person can see that the level of strategic crisis has reached “red alert” status. The standoff in Kosova, where both sides are digging in their heels, is the most dangerous at the moment, but it is followed by a number of other crisis spots, from the ongoing war against Iraq, to the Israel-Syria tensions, to Chechnya, to Colombia, and many other smaller hotspots around the globe.

Most dangerous is the fact that the new Cold Warriors in Washington, centered in the Congress and on Vice President Al Gore’s Principals Committee, are committed to pushing confrontations with China and Russia on virtually every front. And so far, President Clinton, beleaguered as he has been by the impeachment assault, has appeared unable to retake the initiative, in order to reestablish the partnerships for peace and cooperation which he has sought.

What is driving these local conflagrations toward a larger strategic crisis is precisely the fact that Washington has joined the British Commonwealth crowd in acting against, and despite, the objections of Russia and China, as well as other nations. It is also clear that the weakness of conventional forces in all theaters tends to exacerbate the danger that a flight-forward will occur, including the possible use of nuclear weapons. This joint dynamic is clearest in the Middle East, where both China and Russia—which are nuclear powers and on the United Nations Security Council—have continually objected to the British-American bombing campaign, only to be ignored.

It now appears that the British-Principals Committee crowd is also determined to act against the will of the regional Middle East powers, which, like Egypt, are coming out more and more forcefully against the unilateral military action.

U.S. collaboration with the Russians would also be the key to defusing the Kosova confrontation, which is being fed by outrageous provocations by Milosevic. But the United States and NATO have not been able to collaborate with the Russians to control Milosevic, in large part because the Russians are responding to U.S.-Western support for the International Monetary Fund’s arrogant moves against them, as well as the unilateralism in the Gulf. An insistence on military action is likely to

light a match in Europe that will start an uncontrollable fire.

While personal collaboration between President Clinton and Russia’s leadership is critical for resolving the crises in the Middle East and Europe, the hotspots in Asia require closer coordination between Clinton and the Chinese. On the most dangerous hotspot there, North Korea, there seems to have been sufficient flexibility on the U.S. side to come to a deal which the Chinese and South Koreans approve of. But one cannot overlook the fact that Defense Secretary William Cohen himself, as well as the Republican Congressional yahoos, have been in the forefront of stoking the fires in that region—and the deal could fall apart.

And the global issues of the new NATO doctrine, which moots intervention anywhere against “weapons of mass destruction,” and the provocative U.S. stance on ballistic missile defense have created considerable new tensions between the United States, and Russia and China, which could easily disrupt other agreements.

The key to shifting out of the danger zone lies with President Clinton reasserting his power over foreign policy, and consigning the Gore-Principals Committee provocateurs to their lairs once again. Fortunately, we are in a situation where the opportunities for this happening are great. The Prime Ministers of both Russia and China are making visits to the United States over the next two to three weeks, and it is precisely the understandings that can be reached between President Clinton and these two leaders on the strategic front, which can reverse the momentum toward a strategic disaster.

How do we make this possible? It is up to every thinking citizen in every country to mobilize to the fullest on the strategic issue, with the demand that the Gore-Principals Committee warmongering be stopped, and President Clinton ally with Russia and China around the program for global reconstruction which is the only basis for lasting world peace.

These war crises, which are fed by the financial oligarchy’s attempt to *prevent* cooperation around a new monetary system, can only be solved by exposing their insanity, and moving forward to build that monetary system. There can be no holding back. Once the confrontation escalates, it may be unable to be stopped.