A Decision To Stop War From Which LaRouche Did Not Shrink

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The recent behavior of President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney—specifically, the formulations presented by the two, in draft resolutions before the U.S. Congress and the United Nations Security Council, on the pending pre-emptive war on Iraq—manifest clinical insanity. This judgment was stated urgently on Oct. 3 by Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, who challenged any other explanation for what the President and the Vice President are doing. Bush and Cheney are launching a war of aggression, in violation of the U.S. Constitution, and in violation of post-World War II codes of international law, including the Nuremberg precedents, the London Charter of 1945, and the United Nations Charter.

The type of pre-emptive invasion of Iraq being advocated by Bush and Cheney is precisely the kind of war crime, for which 12 defendants were convicted at the Nuremberg Trials of 1945. The principles of law, recognized in the judgments of that first Nuremberg Tribunal, were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950. This is the cornerstone of the post-World War II order, centered around relations among sovereign nation-states.

Could a President of the United States, LaRouche asked, who was not insane, proceed with such reckless abandon, to violate these principles of law which have been the foundation of the postwar international order? Never! He concluded that the United Nations Security Council must recognize this reality. It should suspend the current debate over the insane formulations included in the Anglo-American draft resolution—which carries the implied threat to assassinate Saddam Hussein, and any number of Iraqi scientists and engineers, in a sick replay of the Jacobin Terror in 1790s France. The Security Council should instead declare that the President and Vice President of the United States, by virtue of their actions before the U.S. Congress and the United Nations, have demonstrated that they are mad, and proceed from that standpoint, hoping that the insanity is temporary, and that such bold actions by the Security Council might serve as a shock of reality, bringing the President and Vice President back to their senses.

The Courage of a Wartime Decision-Maker

This harsh but honest assessment coming from Lyndon LaRouche, is of special significance. Unless leading policy-makers in the United States and around the world are willing to face up to the reality, that the President and Vice President of the United States, by their actions, are judged insane, no adequate mobilization to avoid impending war can be accomplished. There are few statesmen alive today who demonstrate the courage of a wartime decision-maker: To state the truth, because nothing short of the truth can secure victory—in this case, a war-avoidance victory over the Bush and Cheney insanity, and the neo-conservative and Christian Zionist looney-bin dominating U.S. foreign policy and national security deliberations.

This was a decision from which Lyndon LaRouche did not shrink.

Many leading policy-makers in Washington and around the world will agree that LaRouche's assessment is both fair and urgent. Some have already weighed in. The fact that most among them lack the personal courage to state this reality—which, admittedly is not a good career move—is of secondary importance. In every crisis of war and peace, it only requires a small handful of individuals with unique leadership qualities, to step forward and inspire others to act above their own self-estimates. All great military leaders, in time of war, brought forth those qualities of courage and creativity-under-fire in the men and women under their command. LaRouche

has taken the bold step, making it possible for others to act. This may be the last best hope to avoid a needless and devastating U.S. attack on Iraq, triggering a perpetual war and the likely early onset of a global New Dark Age.

Byrd Says 'Blind and Improvident'

Some of those same wartime leadership qualities were, happily, on display on the floor of the United States Senate on Oct. 3, where Robert Byrd, the 84-year old West Virginia Democratic Senator and Constitutional scholar, delivered his own courageous and compassionate attack against the Bush Administration's doctrine of pre-emptive war. Byrd did not go so far; yet, he presented the evidence, supporting LaRouche's diagnosis. LaRouche in turn commended Senator Byrd for his actions, urging that the Bush Administration show the intelligence to listen to the senior Senator's cogent arguments.

Senator Byrd delivered a statement entitled "Rush to War Ignores U.S. Constitution," as debate opened on Senate Joint Resolution 46—introduced into the Senate by Joseph Lieberman (D-Ct.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.)—authorizing the President to use whatever force he deem necessary in Iraq or elsewhere. Byrd began: "The great Roman historian, Titus Livius, said, 'All things will be clear and distinct to the man who does not hurry; haste is blind and improvident.' 'Blind and improvident,' Mr. President. . . . Congress would be wise to heed those words today, for as sure as the sun rises in the East, we are embarking on a course of action with regard to Iraq that, in its haste, is both blind and improvident. We are rushing into war without fully discussing why, without thoroughly considering the consequences, or without making any attempt to explore what steps we might take to avert conflict."

The heart of the issue, seized on by Byrd, is that the resolution violates the Constitution and international law. "The resolution before us today is not only a product of haste; it is also a product of Presidential hubris. This resolution is breathtaking in its scope. It redefines the nature of defense, and reinterprets the Constitution to suit the will of the Executive Branch. It would give the President blanket authority to launch a unilateral pre-emptive attack on a sovereign nation that is perceived to be a threat to the United States. This is an unprecedented and unfounded interpretation of the President's authority under the Constitution, not to mention the fact that it stands the Charter of the United Nations on its head."

Byrd quoted from a letter of then-Congressman Abraham Lincoln, who warned: "Allow the President to invade a neighboring nation whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion. . . and you allow him to make war at pleasure. The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress was dictated, as I understand it, by the following reasons. Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This, our Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all Kingly oppressions; and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us. But your view destroys the whole matter, and places our President where kings have always stood."

Byrd challenged his fellow Members of Congress: "If he could speak to us today, what would Lincoln say of the Bush doctrine concerning preemptive strikes?"

War Without End in Sight

"Think for a moment," Byrd asked the Senate, "of the precedent that this resolution will set, not just for this President but for future Presidents. From this day forward, American Presidents will be able to invoke Senate Joint Resolution 46 as justification for launching pre-emptive military strikes against any sovereign nations that they perceive to be a threat. Other nations will be able to hold up the United States as the model to justify their military adventures. Do you not think that India and Pakistan, China and Taiwan, Russia and Georgia are closely watching the outcome of this debate? Do you not think that future adversaries will look to this moment to rationalize the use of military force to achieve who knows what ends?. . . To be sure, weapons of mass destruction are a 20th-Century horror that the Framers of the Constitution had no way of foreseeing. But they did foresee the frailty of human nature and the inherent danger of concentrating too much power in one individual. That is why the Framers bestowed on Congress, not the President, the power to declare war."

Byrd warned that the United States, under the Bush doctrine, would become a rogue state: "The principle of one government deciding to eliminate another government, using force to do so, and taking that action in spite of world disapproval, is a very disquieting thing. I am concerned that it has the effect of destabilizing the world community of nations. I am concerned that it fosters a climate of suspicion and mistrust in U.S. relations with other nations. The United States is not a rogue nation, given to unilateral action in the face of worldwide opprobrium."

Unless, the President has gone mad.

Regional Press Show Distrust of War Madness

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) revealed in an ABC-TV interview in late September that, of 10,200 letters she had received about the prospect of an Iraq war, only a couple of hundred supported war. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) described the same phenomenon, at town hall meetings all over her district, when she spoke in Washington on Sept. 4. In her politically