

'War Over Iraq War' Hangs On Two State of Union Speeches

by Mark Burdman

The crucial dates, Jan. 27-28, arrive with two diametrically opposed mobilizations escalating over war with Iraq. The horror of what such a war would mean has unleashed tremendous opposition around the world, far broader and more determined than at the time of the September 2002 UN session. That this has spread among the American people, was seen in the 600,000 who came out to protest the war on Jan. 18, in Washington and San Francisco, and by poll indications. The burgeoning U.S. opposition was made possible when Lyndon LaRouche and his Presidential campaign "jammed up" the Iraq invasion expected in October-November 2002, through a mobilization including distribution of 10 million leaflets and pamphlets exposing the war faction's motives.

On the other side, and driven by their fear that global resistance could soon render a war impossible, the "chicken-hawk" architects of the war, in Washington and London, have massively stepped up their deployment of troops and military-logistical equipment to the areas contiguous to Iraq. The war rhetoric from the Bush Administration in Washington and the Blair regime in London, reached fever pitch in the week leading up to Bush's State of the Union speech on Jan. 28.

In this dramatic conjuncture, LaRouche's Jan. 28 "State of the Union" international webcast took on a crucial strategic importance internationally. LaRouche; his wife Helga Zepp-LaRouche, chairman of the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo) party in Germany; and his friend Jacques Cheminade, president of the French Solidarity and Progress party, have been holding public and private meetings for months in France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, and in the Persian Gulf, telling Europeans and Arabs not to cave in to "war is inevitable" fatalism, but to intensify the pressure on the American Presidency to block it. They have been backed up by six months of mass organizing by their parties and LaRouche's

campaign. That intervention, and the dangerous combination of this strategic conjuncture with a worsening economic collapse, have combined to shift the political climate in Europe to a tough anti-Iraq war resistance, approaching a showdown with the "chicken-hawks."

Danger of Provocation Is Great

Beyond the public opposition thrown up around France and Germany, *EIR* discussions during the week of Jan. 20 determined that there is very intensive private discussion, among policymakers in various capitals—Paris, Berlin, Moscow, and London—about what further, extraordinary actions might go beyond the diplomatic initiatives at the United Nations Security Council. Such deliberations are driven not only by the rapid American-British military forces escalation, but by the danger that a "Gulf of Tonkin"-type provocation will be launched in or around Iraq, to sweep away the anti-war mood and the UN Security Council with it. The UN weapons inspectors themselves, under gigantic pressure from Washington and London to validate the September 2002 "secret dossiers" of London and Washington on weapons of mass destruction, might be induced to do something unduly provocative. Intelligence sources have warned that Iraqi "sleepers" may stage an incident.

Also hazardous is the behavior of the Ariel Sharon regime in Israel, which has come under unprecedented attack for the Likud party's connections to international organized crime interests. Sharon's position, both in Israel and internationally, is shaky even if he wins the Jan. 28 elections; he very much wants a war to provide the cover for his decades-long intent to expel the Palestinians *en masse* from the Palestinian territories.

In the days leading up to Jan. 27, the date when chief of



An estimated half-million Americans protested plans for an Iraq war on Jan. 18 in Washington; since the mobilization by Larouche's campaign held up the war in the Fall, Americans' tolerance for the war-hawks has fallen dramatically.

UN inspectors Hans Blix must present his interim report to the Security Council, there have been unprecedented diplomatic moves. Most dramatic, have been the conjoined efforts of France and Germany to prevent the war, in the context of the Jan. 22-23 festivities for the historic 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, and a series of detailed German diplomatic proposals to avoid war (see article following).

Germany became a member of the Security Council in January, while France is a permanent member, with veto power. With German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder standing at his side Jan. 22, French President Jacques Chirac proclaimed that "Germany and France have the same judgment on the Iraq crisis," as the two both felt that "war would be the worst option. . . . Any decision for the Security Council belongs to it alone. . . . For us, war is always evidence of failure." Earlier in the day, representatives of the two nations blocked a NATO decision on whether to prepare supporting measures for a possible Iraq war, during a debate at the Alliance's headquarters in Brussels.

EIR's sources stress that the French government's opposition to the war has become stronger than anyone anticipated. It is driven, in large part, by the extreme opposition of the French population; recent polls have shown that *three-quarters* of Frenchmen asked are steadfastly opposed to military action against Iraq.

A senior Russian strategist told *EIR* Jan. 20: "I think we will see some good news, on the Iraq front, after Jan. 28. My firm understanding, is that the UN Security Council will *not* approve an Iraq war after Jan. 28. By their rhetoric and approach, the Americans have gotten themselves into an idiotic self-trap. And the fact is, the situation in Britain is very shaky

for the Americans. My understanding is, that if there is a Security Council resolution openly authorizing war, the Russians will veto. The Chinese will veto. And probably, the French will also veto." This observer noted reports he had received from Washington that LaRouche's mobilization to "jam up" the war was bearing fruit among American institutions.

'Whole Energy Policy in Jeopardy'

In a Jan. 21 discussion, a Paris-based strategist who has worked closely with the Inter-Action Council of former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, made the essential point: "All well-minded people now have one task respecting Iraq, which is to help this Administration in Washington back-pedal from a war that they have been promoting constantly for several months. This is not a time for name-calling and recriminations, but a time for intensive efforts, to help construct a way out." This individual argues that Washington will be unleashing unanticipated disasters if it pushes ahead with war. "What is not being taken into account, by these great war planners, is that an Iraq war will create an explosive and devastating crisis in *Turkey*, a country which has no real instability, at this point. The internal dynamics in Turkey will create a very serious problem. What this will mean, paradoxically, is that *if* the Americans succeed in procuring Iraqi oil, it will be undermining the entire oil-pipeline structure, through Turkey, of oil that is to come from the former Soviet Union, and through the southern Caucasus. So, on the balance of accounts, there will be a loss of oil flow. The whole energy policy of Europe and the United States itself will be put into jeopardy. My hope is that [Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs



French President Chirac and German Chancellor Schröder on Jan. 23, at the 40th anniversary of their alliance after World War II; they marked the important milestone by a joint determination to stop and American-British war on Iraq.

of Staff] Gen. Richard Myers, who has been in Turkey, will tell the White House about this disturbing reality. This would be all the more useful, as the opposition in the Pentagon, to this war, is very strong. Of course, Myers might not tell this reality . . . but I am sure he has been warned, what will happen in Turkey if this war breaks out.”

Bush Administration leading lights have reacted with anger to the anti-war moves of continental Europe. On Jan. 21 and 22, President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell both criticized the Franco-German position. But most direct was Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who proclaimed on Jan. 22, “Germany has been a problem, and France has been a problem. But you look at vast numbers of other countries in Europe. They’re not with France and Germany on this, they’re with the United States.” He derided France and Germany, Europe’s two largest and most important nations, as “the old Europe.”

The Administration’s problem, however, is closer to home. Aside from the large anti-war protests of Jan. 18, and the continuation of this protest mood during the Martin Luther King holiday commemorations on Jan. 20, the newest opinion poll shows 70% of the American population insistent that the inspectors may be given more time. To make its case, the Administration began to deploy key officials publicly in the days leading up to the State of the Union. First, was Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, who blurted to a United States Institute of Peace gathering Jan. 22, that there was no need for finding a “smoking gun” in Iraq, since “there is nothing but smoke”—i.e., there are weapons of mass destruction all over Iraq. Rumsfeld had implied the same on Jan. 18.

Words are being matched with deeds on the ground. The vast array of matériel, and over 150,000 troops already de-

ployed to the Gulf show a shift in strategy, away from the chicken-hawks’ “cakewalk” approach of the Fall—that an Iraq war could easily be fought and won by air power and special forces—toward a more traditional “D-Day” strategy of massive force. The personnel buildup really began with authorizations signed by Rumsfeld on Dec. 24, after which 125,000 more troops were sent to the region; during the week of Jan. 20, some 37,000 more deployed. This was accompanied, from the British side, by the deployment announced by Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon on Jan. 20. One-fourth of the British armed forces, 26,000 troops, were being sent to the region, for a “highly visible” role in the war. It was also announced that British Prime Minister Tony Blair would travel to the United States on Jan. 31 for war deliberations with the American President.

Intense Propaganda, ‘Like Suez in 1956’

Blair has become publicly furious, during the second half of January, about the necessity of “confronting Saddam,” and now insists that Saddam’s alleged links to terrorist networks pose the most immediate threat to Great Britain. On Jan. 21, he told a Parliament group, that a Saddam-backed terrorist attack on Britain was “inevitable.” Wild hyperbole from the Prime Minister has been accompanied by endless media reports of imminent biological or chemical warfare attacks on the U.K., and high-profile arrests of alleged terror planners.

Under the headline, “Scare Tactics Over Iraq,” Mike Berry, head of the University of Glasgow Media Group, charged in the London *Guardian* on Jan. 22 that “we are currently in the midst of the largest propaganda campaign waged by the British government since the attack on Suez, in 1956. . . . The Blair government has tried the Iraq weapons dossier—rubbished by defense analysts; and the Iraq human rights dossier—condemned as cynical and opportunistic by Amnesty International. Now it appears to have embarked upon a massive propaganda effort, to link Iraq to terrorism, and has started fabricating stories about imminent terrorist threats to Britain. These have been done by having the security services leak unattributable stories to various media organs.”

Berry enumerated the recent barrage of stories, as well as the “high-profile arrests.” In the latter case, the suspects are usually released without charges being brought, “but by then, the operations have already served their purpose, in helping to generate a climate of pervasive fear across the country. The purpose of this, is to scare the population into believing that an attack on Iraq will somehow improve their security, by removing a potential terrorist sponsor.”

Both Blair’s British faction and the Washington chicken-hawks are showing a desperation driven by running out of time, and by the rising demand of American and European populations that their leaders focus on the economic crisis, not war. Economist and candidate LaRouche’s Jan. 28 web-cast will have given the U.S. Presidency the guidance in how to do that, if it would survive this crisis.