

## War-Torn Southwest Asia Needs Kerry-LaRouche

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

As Lyndon LaRouche has warned, if George W. Bush and Dick Cheney were to be re-elected on Nov. 2, that would mean more wars, beginning with a strike against Iran. This perception is now shared through Southwest Asia. In Egypt, for example, literally all press, whether government, opposition, liberal, conservative, Islamist, or whatever, have depicted a possible re-election as a nightmare. The scenario presented in Egypt, as summarized to *EIR* by a leading Egyptian intellectual, is that Iran would be attacked, by the United States or by Israel on orders from Washington; Iran would respond by sending forces into Iraq as well as launching missiles at Israel. Bush would see re-election as a message from God, telling him to continue his mission; Sharon would expel Yasser Arafat from his headquarters in Ramallah, and would invade Syria.

No one is more aware of the danger than the Iranian government and people. One wonders why, then, Hassan Rowhani, the head of the Iranian Security Council, should have endorsed Bush's candidacy recently. Some may see it as a Machiavellian ploy. But, in fact, according to *EIR*'s sources, all political factions in Iran, which regularly differ on most issues, are in agreement on this: Bush means war against the nation.

### Charges Against Iran Abound

Having experienced the war against Iraq, which was launched on the basis of lies about weapons of mass destruction and al-Qaeda links, Iranians are not surprised about the propaganda that Tehran is seeking nuclear weapons. Nor do they treat lightly the fact that the State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, gave credence to accusations made by Iraqi interim intelligence chief Mohammed al-Shawahni, that Iran had links to the infamous Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, touted to be the leading al-Qaeda operative in Iraq, responsi-

ble for attacks against U.S. forces. The Iraqi intelligence chief had told Agence France Presse in early October that he believed Iran, through its embassy in Baghdad, was masterminding an assassination campaign that has seen nearly 20 of his agents killed since the middle of last month. He said raids on Iranian "safehouses" in Baghdad had uncovered documents linking Iran to plots to kill members of Iraqi intelligence services, using as its tool the Badr Brigade—the militia of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).

SCIRI denied the allegations and charged that the "new" Iraqi intelligence service is packed with veterans of Saddam Hussein's military, who are now seeking revenge against former Shi'ite resistance groups based in Iran in the 1980s. Shahwani claimed that, since mid-September, 18 Iraqi intelligence agents had been killed in Iraq, 10 of them by the Badr Brigades, fulfilling orders from Iran; the rest were killed by Zarqawi. Shahwani said he suspected Tehran was funding Zarqawi; however, he seemed to lack any conclusive proof.

A *Newsweek* story cited sources close to Jordanian intelligence, who said that Zarqawi had travelled from Iraq to Iran several times since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and had established contact with some Iranian officials. Jordan has just brought formal charges against Zarqawi and 12 others, for having planned a huge attack in Jordan with chemical weapons.

The State Department did not comment directly, but spokesman Boucher had the following to say: "All I would be able to say is that we have generally been very concerned about some of the reports of Iranian activity in Iraq. . . . We have frequently discussed these in public, as well as made clear, I think, to others what our concerns were, so that the Iranians would know exactly what our concerns were about possible support for different groups inside Iraq. . . . The Iraqi

interim government has also been quite vocal both directly with the Iranians and in their statements with others about the concerns about Iran so it remains an issue, a very serious concern. And were it to be found that Iran was providing particular support for this terrorist group, obviously that would be a very, very serious matter," he said, referring to the Tawhid wal Jihad, which the United States had formally designated a "foreign terrorist organization" days earlier.

Iranian Minister of Intelligence Younesi immediately rejected the charges, as patently absurd: It is well known that Iran and al-Qaeda have been ideological and military adversaries for years. Not only have the al-Qaeda/Taliban forces in Afghanistan systematically targeted Shi'ite Iranians in that country, but the terrorist attacks against Iraqi Shi'ites in Kerbala months ago were also attributed to the al-Qaeda/Zarqawi networks.

The only significance of the new charges of a Zarqawi-Iranian connection, lies in the fact that—like the false claim of a Saddam Hussein/Osama Bin Laden link—it provides the basis for a mad dog Bush regime to justify military aggression. One should not lose sight of the fact that the entire military operation being conducted against Fallujah in Iraq, is being carried out under the banner of the fight against Zarqawi, who is supposedly in hiding there.

## War Scenarios

Were the United States (and/or Israel) to attack Iran, it would not follow the *modus operandi* of the Iraq War, with ground troops invading under cover of massive aerial bombardments. Instead, as several regional experts have told *EIR*, it would be an attack from a distance, aimed primarily at installations related to Iran's nuclear program—and regime change.

Contrary to fantasies that may be entertaining the disturbed mind of President Bush, Iran is not Iraq. Iran is militarily and demographically strong, as reflected in the Egyptian press accounts. Although no military match for the United States in a direct confrontation, it does have capabilities, including long-range missiles (Shahab-3), to respond in an asymmetric manner, by hitting targets inside Israel, and/or mobilizing forces inside Iraq, as well as other nations in the region.

Regional experts recall the precedent of the Iran-Iraq War, in which the Islamic Republic of Iran, although militarily weaker, deployed mass forces against its adversary. Such masses could be deployed now, these experts believe, not only from Iran, but from Islamic nations worldwide, acting in solidarity with Iran, which enjoys a standing in the Islamic world that Iraq did not have prior to the war.

Another fantasy cherished in certain quarters in Washington, is that an attack on Iran would be greeted by cheering crowds in Tehran. Iranian sources report that, at the time of the U.S. war against Afghanistan, two years ago, there were, indeed, some political and popular layers in Iran who applauded the action (given that the Taliban regime had been a

military adversary), and some had hoped that the United States would pick Iran next. Those who promoted such a scenario, did so in hopes that the conservative clergy would be overthrown in a regime change. Today, those same people think differently, because of what they have seen of the devastating consequences of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. They have seen that the war was conducted, not for its stated aims, but to wreak wanton destruction, eliminate the nation-state, and loot the raw materials resources. Iran sees itself as one of the few states in the region that does not have an American military presence on its territory, and the only major oil producer free of U.S. influence.

Thus, today, those same layers who toyed with regime change in Iran, are rallying to the defense of the government against any such proposition. An additional key factor in popular support for the Iranian government, is the conviction shared by all political factions: that Iran has a right to its nuclear program—a target of the U.S. administration and of Israel.

## War Avoidance Plans

What will happen in the fight over Iran's nuclear program will depend on who is elected on Nov. 2 in the United States. Thus far, the European Union has maintained its position, that Iran has a right to nuclear energy technology, but should give up all aspects of its enrichment program. In Vienna on Oct. 21, the EU reportedly offered Iran delivery of a light-water research reactor, and access to nuclear fuel, on condition that Iran renounce its uranium enrichment activity. Iran reportedly made a counter-proposal, to renounce any weapons or military application, and to invite Western countries to participate in its energy project.

The support from Russia, Iran's main partner in the nuclear program, has strengthened Tehran's hand. Talks are continuing in Vienna. State Department spokesman Boucher reportedly declared that the Bush Administration did *not* support the EU approach to a diplomatic solution.

The proposal issued by John Kerry, through his running-mate John Edwards, to guarantee Iran fuel supplies for the peaceful use of nuclear technology, was received with interest by elements of the Iranian government.

According to this author's sources, the main concern of the Iranian leadership, shared by all the actors in Southwest Asia—aside from preventing a new war—is to stabilize the region, which means finding a solution to the catastrophe known as Iraq. One important opportunity could be offered on Nov. 25 (the same time that the International Atomic Energy Agency is to issue its report on Iran's nuclear program), when an international conference on Iraq will be convened in Egypt. If Kerry is the President-elect, the mood among the regional players, as well as representatives of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Russians, and the Europeans, will be more optimistic. Particularly, if it is perceived that a President-elect Kerry were open to the policy input of Lyndon LaRouche regarding Southwest Asia, then support for a new

American policy course would be forthcoming. If desired, at such a venue, contact between the United States and Iran could be initiated.

If, however, the U.S. lame duck administration goes into that meeting with the intention of drafting Arab and Islamic troops for Iraq (as has been leaked), it will fail. The only possible way out is a radical change in U.S. policy, a change which a Kerry Administration could initiate. Kerry has gone on record, not only denouncing the war and the post-war fiasco, but pledging to start withdrawing troops in his first year in office. He has also endorsed the idea of a conference of Iraq's neighbors. Both moves are contained in the LaRouche Doctrine, issued by the former Democratic candidate in April.

Nothing short of a plan to end the occupation of Iraq will succeed. The elections slated for January 2005 may never take place, given the fact that the United Nations cannot currently deploy more than 35 people in Iraq, in the absence of adequate security. More were available for the elections in tiny East Timor! Even Bush-ally Australia has declined to provide troops to protect UN personnel, who are tasked with preparing elections.

Current U.S. moves to eliminate the resistance in Sunni cities such as Ramadi, Fallujah, and Samarra, allegedly in order to make elections possible, will fail. The "success story" of Samarra was not that at all, according to informed sources on the ground. After U.S. forces reneged on negotiated agreements and stormed that city, they found nobody at home. The resistance units had redeployed out of the city. Iraqi resistance negotiators in Fallujah drew the appropriate lesson, and broke off talks as soon as interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi unilaterally announced that the city would be stormed, unless al-Zarqawi and his group were surrendered to the authorities.

As of Oct. 21, leading Sunni organizations, like the Association of Muslim Scholars, who represent 3,000 mosques, have threatened to boycott the January elections, which will render the polls more meaningless than those recently orchestrated in Afghanistan.

The issue is not elections per se, but ending the occupation. It is significant that Ayatollah Aliu Husseini al-Sistani, the supreme religious authority of the Shi'ites, has reportedly encouraged the formation of a committee, which should vet candidates for a single slate in the elections. The criteria cited by a spokesman are straightforward: "We will support all those who seek a way out of the crisis, who want to *end the occupation*, and who are committed to implementing free elections."

Radical change in U.S. policy is the *sine qua non* for a successful resolution. This is why the perspective of a Kerry Administration, shaped by LaRouche, especially in foreign policy, is generating hope throughout Southwest Asia. LaRouche is the only leading American political figure trusted in the Arab and Islamic world. That trust is the most valuable asset that a Kerry Administration could deploy in finally cleaning up the mess in Iraq.