

## Bush's genocide will hand Mideast to Moscow

by Joseph Brewda

The refusal of George Bush on Feb. 19 to even consider a Soviet proposal for settling the U.S.-Iraq war, has implications for U.S. interests far beyond the Middle East. Bush has now exposed the fact that his so-called "new world order" is nothing but a plan to destroy Iraq, or any Third World country opposed to U.S. imperial dictates. His earlier rejection of a Feb. 15 offer by Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, had the same effect.

This arrogant refusal to accept a peaceful solution will make it more likely that the so-called "coalition" will split apart over the coming period, with defections from among not only the Arab states, but even from among European states.

Moscow, on the other hand, will be able to successfully depict itself as the only superpower a Third World nation can hope to deal with.

The Iraqi proposal to withdraw from Kuwait [see p. 30] was promptly rejected by Bush on Feb. 15 as a "hoax," on the grounds that Iraq refused to withdraw "unconditionally" from Kuwait. Speaking to a meeting of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science that day, Bush said that "not only was the Iraq statement full of unacceptable old conditions," but, he complained, it included "new conditions." He concluded, "Let me state once again: They must withdraw without condition. There must be full implementation of all the Security Council resolutions. And there must be no linkage to other problems in the area."

### The meaning of 'unconditional withdrawal'

Later that day, a Pentagon spokesman stated that "unconditional withdrawal" meant that Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait must lay down their arms, abandon their tanks, and walk back to Iraq—all without even a preexisting formal cease-fire or any

guarantee that these disarmed soldiers would not be slaughtered, or their disarmed nation invaded.

As if this were not provocative enough, Bush, in a purposely demeaning tone typical of his handling of the war, added a new condition in his remarks that day. The "Iraqi people," Bush demanded, must "take matters into their own hands, to force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside."

Responding to these statements, the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, Abdul Amir al-Anbari, said that what had been raised by Iraq in its statement were not "conditions" but "issues to be discussed," while the Iraqi Ambassador to France, Abdul Razaq al-Hashimi, asserted that "Iraq has every right to ensure its security, to ensure its life and to ensure its future through reasonable, civilized negotiations and dialogue in order to reach a solution."

Unlike the United States, such diverse states as Iran, Morocco, the Vatican, and initially even Kuwaiti spokesmen, supported the new Iraqi initiative. Iran described the communiqué as a "positive step," while a Vatican spokesman said that "Certainly, this new act should, I underline *should*, open the door to a solution of this crisis, a reasonable solution worthy of human values."

Reactions throughout the entire Arab and Muslim world, and through the entire former colonial world generally, were strongly supportive.

### Moscow sets the trap

Sensing a chance to displace the U.S. from the Mideast, Moscow began making a turn in its public posture toward the conflict on Feb. 15. In an article in *Izvestia*, the official paper of the Soviet government, commentator Stanislav Kondrashev denounced the Soviet government for being "on the side of murderers" by collaborating with the U.S. policy toward

Iraq. Kondrashov stated that "Desert Storm is now desert slaughter," and the real aim of the U.S. is to "smash" Iraq "into pieces."

Moscow could have blocked the planned U.S. war against Iraq at any point over the last six months, through a variety of diplomatic measures, such as using its veto at the U.N. Security Council. But the Soviet leadership was not adverse to watching as the U.S. bogged down its army in a Vietnam-style quagmire of its own making. Yet, at the same time, having one-half of the U.S. military so close to its southern borders has alarmed Soviet leaders, who see this as threatening their national interests—a point repeatedly stressed by the Soviet military which is increasingly dominating policy in Moscow.

Having decided upon a "Third World turn," Moscow surprised Washington by suddenly inviting Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Moscow for talks following the Feb. 15 offer. In a desperate effort to block the talks, U.S. Army spokesmen in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia threatened that the safety of Tariq Aziz's plane could not be guaranteed, forcing Aziz to travel by land to Iran, and then fly to Moscow on Aeroflot for the Feb. 18 meeting.

The three-and-a-half hours of talks between Aziz and Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Sa'adoun Hammadi with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov, Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, and Soviet Mideast envoy Yevgeny Primakov were termed "very constructive" by the Soviet government upon their conclusion. Soviet spokesmen revealed that Gorbachov had presented a "specific plan for action . . . to solve the Gulf crisis by political means and to avoid further bloodshed."

Before the Soviet proposal was released on Feb. 22 to the public, Gorbachov's spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko indicated that the key points included: immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait; guarantees that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government, as well as the Iraqi nation, would survive the war; assurances that no reparations would be demanded of Iraq; and, unstated, but understood, agreement that the related issues of the Middle East, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, will be addressed eventually.

The foreign ministers of Germany and Iran, and the prime minister of Italy, immediately commented favorably on the Soviet plan, as did leaders of several other states. But not George Bush.

Speaking at a photo session on Feb. 19, Bush stated that the Soviet proposal "falls well short of what would be required. . . . As far as I am concerned, there are no negotiations. The goal has been set out. There will be no concessions." Meanwhile, U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney stated that a "cease-fire, a pause of some kind, would in fact be very dangerous from the standpoint of U.S. and allied forces."

Similarly, British Prime Minister John Major told reporters in London one day earlier that "In our view, the proposals do not meet the full requirements of the U.N. Security Council

resolutions." Major also told the Parliament that "Nothing has happened which would incline us toward a cease-fire or a pause in the conflict. If Saddam Hussein wants to avoid a land battle, he knows what he has to do. He has to withdraw unconditionally and immediately from Kuwait and implement the U.N. Security Council resolutions in full."

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas dismissed the Gorbachov initiative as "a little late and therefore insufficient."

### **Moscow will pick up the pieces**

This summary rejection of the peace plan by France, Britain, and the U.S., only serves to expose the three states as imperialistic. This self-exposure is of immense usefulness to Moscow.

"The slaughter must be stopped," Soviet Mideast expert Yevgeny Primakov stated on Soviet television on Feb. 19, shortly after Bush's remarks. "I am not saying that the war was justified before, but its continuation cannot now be justified from any point of view. A people is perishing.

"Some believe," he added, that "it is necessary to break the backbone, not only of the regime but also of Iraq, its military and economic potential. But if the destruction of a people solves such problems, I don't want to have anything to do with it." In previous months, Primakov had correctly identified then-British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as advocating such a policy.

Primakov had been in Baghdad just a few days earlier making the arrangements for the Aziz trip to Moscow. What is particularly important about Primakov's unusually harsh remarks, is his close association with the military "hardliners."

Similarly, Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh had harsh words against Bush. When asked about Bush's statement that day, the minister said the proposal was hardly for Bush to accept or reject. "That plan was addressed to the Iraqi leadership, so he rejected the plan which did not belong to him," he snapped.

Then, Soviet Marshal Viktor Kulikov, the former commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact, denounced the U.S.-led military forces for carrying out a "massacre" and "blood-bath" in the Gulf, in comments to the journal *Rabochaya Tribuna*. The United States, he charged, was committed to a "new order based on the ideas of the old system." Kulikov is one of the key figures in the group increasingly dominating Soviet foreign policy.

Kulikov added that "the war should not have started in the first place," and that "peaceful methods" should have been used to resolve the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. Instead, what has been used is "the language of gunboats and death-dealing B-52 bombers . . . something we have been familiar with for a long time. It has nothing in common with the 'new thinking' which the Americans applauded warmly but did little in a concrete way to support."

Any Third World leader, anti-communist or not, will be hard-pressed not to agree.