

issue. Peace requires the voluntary, active cooperation among the nations of the region of Southwest Asia bounded, most immediately, by the Caucasus, Turkey, Iran, and Egypt.

The consequences of the stupid and outrageous folly of some U.S. representatives' thuggish attempts to stifle the voice of the Zayed Centre, must be assessed against that background.

The Arab world within that region of Southwest Asia is a group of relatively small states, many thinly populated, with much of their area presently desert. These states, many of which are fiercely jealous of their independence, do have profound common interests; but they require a forum through which definition of those common interests may be deliber-

ated; that, with little obligation but that of free choice to accept the influence of moral and intellectual persuasion.

If we are to build durable peace to replace the presently ominous situation in Southwest Asia and adjoining places, we must engage the consent of the people, the nations, which inhabit that region. We need means to step outside the formalities of formal diplomacy, to create the environment which is fertile for successful diplomacy. U.S. pressures to shut down the Zayed Centre are disgusting to anyone who prizes democratic freedoms of peoples. Such disgusting measures, as presently set against the background of Proconsul Bremer's role in supervising the carpetbagging role of Cheney's Halliburton, are not the road to successful diplomacy; under the

## Why Centre Was Shut Down

The Zayed Centre for Coordination and Follow-Up (ZCCF), sponsored by the government of Abu Dhabi and functioning under the umbrella of Cairo-based Arab League Organization, was officially ordered to be shut down in Aug. 27, 2003 upon orders from the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan. The office of Sheikh Zayed issued a statement in his name. The reason given, was that the ZCCF had engaged "in a discourse that starkly contradicted the principles of interfaith tolerance."

The real reason for the closure was massive pressure exercised for a period of months by elements in the U.S. Administration, combined with threats from Britain and Australia, the two countries that joined the Cheney neo-conservative fascists to launch the war against Iraq. The ZCCF has functioned since its founding in 1999 upon a request of Sheikh Zayed and approval of the Arab League's Foreign Ministers, as a unique forum for free discussions among Arab thinkers, economists, scientists, and cultural personalities on the one hand; and between these Arabs and their western counterparts; on issues related to the dialogue of civilizations, economic cooperation, and the pursuit of peaceful solution to international conflicts, especially in the Middle East. The Centre invited hundreds of government officials, former heads of state, economists and politicians. It held conferences and seminars on a wide range of political, economic and scientific issues.

The campaign against the ZCCF began in earnest following Lyndon LaRouche's historic visit there on June 2-3, 2002, during which he addressed a group of UAE ministers, Arab diplomats, professionals, intellectuals, economists, and press on "The Middle East as a Strategic

Crossroad." The speech was the keynote to a conference on "Oil and Gas in World Politics." The speech by LaRouche was subsequently published as a book by the ZCCF. The book also included a lecture on the subject of "Dialogue of Civilizations" which was contributed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute and the wife of Lyndon LaRouche.

Sources in the ZCCF told *EIR* that as soon as LaRouche's participation in the conference was announced, threats were made by U.S., British, Australian, and Canadian officials in a concerted effort to disinvite the American Presidential candidate. Both the Zayed Centre and the Foreign Ministry of the UAE were threatened through informal and formal messages. It reached the level of informing UAE officials that such a matter "would harm economic and political relations" with these countries.

## Arab Critics of War Silenced

More pressure was applied in the period of preparation of the invasion of Iraq. From September to February, the ZCCF invited speakers from Europe, Britain, and the United States who were opposed to the war plans against Iraq, and who refuted the claims of the Bush Administration and the Blair government, of Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction.

The pressure was part of a larger intimidation of the Arab regimes to submit to the "will of power" of the U.S. Straussian neo-cons, marching to the Middle East to "change all the regimes" and "redraw the map" of the region. When it became obvious that these chicken-hawks were getting themselves into a "Vietnam in the desert," and could not fulfill their scheme for the region, they resorted to dirty tricks to shut down sources of criticism of these policies. That included the ZCCF and all the prominent Arab newspapers and media outlets. Journalists in the Gulf told *EIR* that any criticism of the U.S. policy in the Middle East "is currently regarded as blasphemy." Strict orders

circumstances, such behavior by certain U.S. officials is less than human.

The Zayed Centre's role as a place for such a forum among the member states of the Arab League, has been proven most appropriate, and valuable on this account. Here, the world has had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Arab world most immediately, and, implicitly, with a larger part of the world of Islamic cultures. Until now, the Zayed Centre's role in fostering of emergent consensus among Arab states, on numerous matters, has become a critical element in defining constructive goals among nations of the region. We need that channel more than ever in its past existence, at this time. By "we," I mean also the United States.

were given to journalists that any such criticism would be censured.

Immediately after the Iraq invasion, the ZCCF came under a heavy smear campaign by the Israeli intelligence/neo-con "think-tank" Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)—based in Washington and Berlin—and the ADL. The charge this time was, that the ZCCF was spreading "anti-Semitic" and "anti-American" propaganda.

The UAE government's response to the campaigns against the ZCCF, in shutting the Centre, does not reflect a belief in these charges of anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism. It was, rather, a response to threatening manipulation by elements in the U.S. Administration, pulling of family and factional strings in the UAE, especially at a point when that country is faced with a succession issue, as Sheikh Zayed is entering old age and suffering chronic sickness. Certain elements within the U.S. State department have been suggesting that there is a dispute among the sons of Sheikh Zayed: Sultan, who was the Chairman and sponsor of the ZCCF; and his older brother Khalifa. According to these State Department elements, they were in a dispute over the role and practices of the ZCCF.

The intimidation by the U.S. "war party" of the Arab governments and political elite is threatening to destabilize the whole region. The population in these countries are seeing their governments succumbing to the demands of what they currently regard as an "enemy."

The Zayed Centre was a unique forum for free exchange of ideas. Its loss would be a loss for the whole region and the world in general. Its continued closure would just deepen the belief in the region that the United States is a tyrannical power, which wants neither free speech nor democracy there. The fact that the ZCCF was threatened for inviting LaRouche, the American statesman respected and esteemed by people in the Arab world as "America's voice of reason," adds to Arabs' frustration.—*EIR Staff*

## Late-Summer Nightmares Shattering Blair Regime

by Mark Burdman

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has taken such a political battering, during the usually quiescent British Summer, that serious observers are asking who and what can replace him? Blair has suffered a number of severe shocks. On Aug. 29, Alastair Campbell, his Downing Street "spin doctor" and main psycho-political crutch, resigned. In the first week of September, Lord Hutton's inquiry into the July 17 death of British WMD expert Dr. David Kelly heard testimony that sent the Blair regime reeling.

Kelly's widow Janice and daughter Rachel testified on Sept 1. Speaking via video-conference, Janice Kelly proclaimed that "in his final days, my husband felt belittled, betrayed and let down by his superiors." Such words most directly undermined Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon, in whose Ministry of Defense (MOD) Kelly worked; Hoon is likely the next government member to leave office. But beyond that, her account, in the words of one leading British commentator, "thoroughly trounced" Blair and Downing Street.

Then, on Sept. 3, the entire basis of Blair's justification for going to war against Iraq was blown apart by two senior intelligence officials. The first was Dr. Brian Jones, originally an MOD scientist in 1973, just retired as a branch head of the Defense Intelligence Analysis Staff. Jones's department was dedicated to investigating Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). He showed that the content of Downing Street's controversial September 2002 dossier on Iraqi WMD was dictated by political expediency, and exaggerated, in substance. Next, Jones's testimony was buttressed by a very senior MOD witness, only identified as "Mr. A," and who testified via video with his voice muffled. He was described as Britain's foremost authority on chemical warfare, working in the MOD's Counter-Proliferation Arms Control Department. Mr. A charged that "spin merchants," rather than intelligence experts, determined how the subject of Iraqi WMD was conveyed to the public, and that intelligence claims cited in that dossier, were fundamentally mistaken.

Effectively, the two men confirmed that Downing Street had "sexed up" the September 2002 dossier—the accusation at the center of the last months' storms. Blair, in his own testimony before the Hutton inquiry, on Aug. 28, had attempted to counter that, had the dossier been "sexed up" by his office, it "would have merited my resignation."