

United States must declare the intention to withdraw and to bring the UN in, not as a fig-leaf, but as a legitimate body for the task. Kofi Annan has emphasized that this requires security guarantees. Such security can, ultimately, be provided only by a re-established Iraqi military. As the leading expert on Iraq in Germany, Aziz Alkazaz of the Deutsches-Orient-Institut, told *EIR*, only the Iraqis can restore law and order. The security situation must be given over to the Iraqis, not to those currently being groomed, but to “clean elements in the Army, who are recognized by the population as Iraqi patriots, who have not sold out, and are not criminals. They could establish security and stop the crime and anarchy.”

This requires facing the painful reality, that disbanding the Iraqi military was a terrible mistake, made by occupation administrator Paul Bremer. On Feb. 18, USMC Gen. Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made clear that the decision to disband had not been made by the competent military officials. “I do not know the discussions that took place in theater on when or how to disband the Iraqi military,” Pace stated to the New York Council on Foreign Relations. “I did not give Paul Bremer advice.” Moreover, “That issue was not specifically addressed by the Joint Chiefs, brought to the Joint Chiefs,” he said. “We were not asked for a recommendation or for advice.”

Now that mistake must be rectified, if it can, in time. Restoring security through a sovereign Iraqi military force, is the first precondition for holding elections. In the view of Alkazaz, the security situation must thus become visibly better, as the result of the intervention of a national, patriotic Army figure, who establishes order—but does not move against different groups. There are many such well-known Iraqi military figures. The UN cannot provide this security, and if the Americans try to establish order, the conflict situation remains.

Through the establishment of order, people must be able to see a new horizon. They have to be able to perceive that the occupation will end. An agreement has to be made for an orderly U.S.-U.K. military withdrawal—not overnight, but real.

As specified in LaRouche’s proposal, the UN must oversee the electoral process leading to a constituent assembly, which would draft a constitution. The Iraqi constitution of 1958 should serve as the historical precedent and starting point. Elections could then be organized. Former Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, who is still being unlawfully imprisoned, should be released from custody, and allowed to serve in this process.

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## Will Schröder Resign As German Chancellor?

by Rainer Apel

The surprise resignation on Feb. 6, of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder as national chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has been read—in Germany as well as abroad—as the first step towards his withdrawal from the chancellorship in the near future. The resignation announcement came after the publication of disastrous popularity ratings for Schröder (14%), and his government and SPD party (24%). The SPD is expected to lose votes heavily in all 14 elections—on the state and municipal level, as well as the European Parliament—that will be held in Germany this year. The first election takes place in the city-state of Hamburg on Feb. 29, and the month of March is expected to tell more about Schröder’s further plans.

On March 21, the SPD will officially replace Schröder with the designated new party chairman, Franz Müntefering. On March 25 Schröder will deliver a “State of Germany” address in Federal parliament. It cannot be ruled out that he will use that occasion for a vote of confidence. With his thin majority in the parliament of only 4 seats over the opposition, Schröder might lose that vote, because his Agenda 2010 budget-cutting policy is meeting very strong opposition inside his own SPD and the labor unions. If five SPD members of the Bundestag vote against or abstain, Schröder’s thin majority is gone. There are 2 Bundestag members of the post-communist PDS, who, because their party opposes the Agenda 2010 from a leftwing-populist side, will also not vote for Schröder.

Neither Schröder’s withdrawal as SPD party chairman, nor a lost vote-of-confidence, would be to the instant benefit of opposition leader, neo-con party chairwoman of the Christian Democrats Angela Merkel. Merkel’s proclaimed desire for a “regime change in Berlin now” stays 6 seats short of a majority in the national parliament, and because of her neo-con positions, she is not likely to pull SPD members over to her side. She cannot openly challenge the incumbent Chancellor in a no-confidence vote that she would not win. There are also enough serious policy differences between Merkel’s own CDU party and the allied CSU, the autonomous minor Christian Democratic party of Bavarian State Governor Edmund Stoiber, to undermine Merkel’s own ambitions. Stoiber himself responded to the Schröder announcement on Feb. 6 with the warning that the Christian Democrats