

## Editorial

# *Stop the New Thirty Years' War*

The spectacular broad-daylight assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in Beirut on Feb. 14, has accelerated an ongoing "Thirty Years' War" dynamic in Southwest Asia, which threatens to spread around the globe. As a result of the car-bomb killing of the Saudi-linked billionaire, the Bush-Cheney Administration's targetting of Syria for "regime change" has been put on the front burner.

One Washington politico said he is convinced that, regardless of who was behind the Hariri murder, Cheney and the Administration neo-cons will exploit the situation, to advance their longstanding agenda of destroying Syria's Ba'athist regime. The leading advocate—back to his co-authorship of the mid-1990s "Clean Break" blueprint for crushing the Mideast peace process—is David Wurmser, a senior Mideast policy aide to Cheney.

The dynamic in the region, one source elaborated, has been transformed by the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. An alliance between secular Arab nationalists and all stripes of Islamists, once thought an impossibility, has now coalesced—in opposition to the perceived U.S. imperial oil grab in the Persian Gulf. Those feelings have been fuelled by the recent statements by Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice, assailing Iran and Syria. Numerous intelligence sources have confirmed that, with U.S. support, Israeli commandos are operating in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. They are working with Kurdish Peshmerga militias, and with terrorists from the Mujahideen el-Khalq, an Iranian exile group on the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist groups, planning cross-border sabotage incursions into Iran. The *Washington Post* revealed that the U.S. has been flying unmanned aerial vehicles over Iranian territory, mapping anti-aircraft radar positions, and probing for bombing targets.

Even the recent Iraqi elections, first hailed as a "victory for democracy" and for the legitimacy of the American occupation, have turned against Washington. The coalition of Shi'ite parties endorsed by Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani, won 48% of the vote; secular Shi'ite acting Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's party got only 18%. Many experts believe that, unless the United States announces

a set timetable for withdrawal of all foreign occupation forces from Iraq, the Shi'ites will join the insurgency, with backing from Tehran.

The threats to bomb Iran, supply motive for the Iranian hardliners to unleash Shi'ite uprisings throughout the Persian Gulf. Reports are that Kuwait is a powder-keg set to explode, and Bahrain is vulnerable to Shi'ite insurgencies, as is the oil-dense Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

Add to the Thirty Years' War dynamic the fact that the Israeli settlers, at the instigation of Cabinet Minister Natan Sharansky and various religious fanatics from the camp that organized the killing of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, are going berserk, staging anti-government demonstrations, and threatening to assassinate Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon—for decades hailed as the champion of the very settlers who are now threatening to kill him, if he proceeds with his planned withdrawal from Gaza later this year.

As at the time of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), violence is fuelled by religious fundamentalist extremism and conflicting territorial claims.

Lyndon LaRouche, commenting on the Hariri assassination, warned that Southwest Asia is already gripped by religious and sectarian conflicts now being fuelled, in particular, by the Cheney faction inside the U.S. government. In his keynote remarks at a Jan. 12-13 *EIR* seminar in Berlin, LaRouche had called for a "New Treaty of Westphalia," to deal with the grave threats to the political and economic stability of Eurasia. The original Treaty of Westphalia (1648) ended 30 years of religious and sectarian warfare that had wiped out a third of the population of Central Europe. France's Cardinal Mazarin organized the Treaty, on the basis of the principle of "the advantage of the other." Today, that principle must be implemented quite concretely, not as a configuration of political sentiments, but through the creation of long-term agreements under a new system of fixed currency exchange rates, which will produce long-term international credit for investments in basic physical economic infrastructure.

We shall have more to say about implementing such a system in the weeks ahead.