

*This issue of the South Bulletin is dedicated to the people in Iraq, dead and wounded and the millions more suffering terror and collateral affects of hi-tech warfare waged on their country.*

## WAR, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

The war on Iraq has shattered an already fragile world order, marked by embedded injustices. The self-appointed guardians of our world deemed it necessary to resort to force, using state of the art military technology and bankrolled by hundreds of billions of dollars, a sum which dwarfs anything even dreamed of for global “wars” on poverty and disease. A cradle of ancient civilisation – Baghdad – is being terrorised day and night with the thunder and lightening of deadly bombs and missiles...all in the name of ‘freedom’ for the Iraqi people themselves. These are the very same people who have been subjected to 12 years of devastating economic sanctions. What the near 33 million people of Iraq first need is freedom from the scarcity of the basics of life such as food and medicines. That is only possible through development built on peace.

Indeed, what billions of people in the developing world need, to begin with, is freedom from economic deprivation and poverty. Yet, a lot of homilies are paid in the name of the poor. There is no frontal attack on poverty – we only have Declarations and targets and then, more of the same. The hoped for “development peace dividend” has not materialized after two decades, and the world has been subjected to another major war of destruction in a display of brute force.

Even the promise of a ‘Development’ Agenda in the World Trade Organisation – as flagged off in Doha, Qatar (which by some supreme irony now houses the Command and Control Centre of the forces invading Iraq) appears to be fizzling. Developing countries are at pains to discover any tangible ‘developmental’ progress. In fact, if the rich industrialised nations have their way again, as they did

in all previous Rounds of the so-called multilateral trade negotiations, the majority of WTO’s member governments from developing nations will experience, under the assault of massive Northern negotiating “firepower”, further limits on their domestic policy space. That ‘freedom’ is the basis for their national sovereignty and dignity, and needed to promote growth, employment and prosperity of their peoples.

It is unfortunate indeed that the “greatness” of a nation today seems to be based on its material wealth and military power. Such assumptions can only give rise to disaster as is unfolding in Iraq. The hope for the international community is in a tide of spontaneous protests, in their majority by the young, which can be seen around the globe. Those people crying out against injustice outnumber the few but powerful who pursue and stand to benefit from wars and conflicts.

It should be no surprise that despite its internal differences, the Arab League has characterised the war in Iraq as an ‘aggression’ against Iraq. Together with the Non-Aligned Movement, it has called for an emergency meeting of the Security Council to stop the carnage in Iraq. This is a matter of utmost concern to all developing countries, who, as weaker members of the international community have been traditionally subject to interference in their domestic affairs by the dominant powers from the North. A replay of the earlier colonial aspirations by essentially the same powers but in a new garb appears to be unfolding. But even the mobilised youth of today can see through that.

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## 'OUTLAW WAR' - MAHATHIR

*"Unfortunately thousands of years after the stone age we still measure the greatness of a nation by the capacity to slaughter the greatest number of people." This harsh truth was driven home by the Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in his inaugural address at the 13th Summit Meeting of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kuala Lumpur on 24 February, 2003. The threat of a looming war on Iraq had become a focal concern of the Summit. But that address of Dr. Mahathir, reproduced below, is also interesting for the lessons of history that he draws as a guide for possible future course of collective action by the world's leadership*

"On behalf of the Government and People of Malaysia, may I extend a very warm welcome to all of you to Kuala Lumpur to this XIII Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is indeed a great honour for Malaysia to host this Summit Meeting and to assume the chairmanship of the Movement.

As the host, Malaysia is gratified at the high level of participation in spite of the uncertainties of the international situation today. This clearly demonstrates our continued and abiding faith in, and commitment to our Movement and our collective wish and determination to strengthen our unity and cohesion.

I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the Republic of South Africa, in particular His Excellency President Thabo M'beki, for his and his country's outstanding stewardship of our Movement for the past four years a little longer than they had bargained for when they assumed the Chairmanship at our Summit Meeting in Durban. We congratulate them for the admirable way the Republic of South Africa has held high the banner of NAM despite cynicism about its relevance.

We are also gratified that under South Africa's leadership our Movement has intensified the serious and critical examination of our organisation and has initiated some important steps towards its revitalisation a process which Malaysia will pursue with the help and cooperation of the members of NAM.

This Summit Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, the first to be held in the new century, indeed the new millennium, is taking place at a most crucial time. The world now lives in fear. We are afraid of everything. We are afraid of flying, afraid of certain countries; afraid of bearded Asian men, afraid of the shoes airline passengers wear; of letters and parcels, of white powder. The countries allegedly harbouring terrorists, their people, innocent or otherwise are afraid too. They are afraid of war, of being killed and maimed by bombs being dropped on them, by missiles fired from hundreds of miles away by unseen forces. They are afraid because they would become the collaterals to be killed because they get in the way of the destruction of their countries.

The preparations and the measures taken to ensure security go on frantically. Trillions of dollars are spent by the world for new weapons, new technology, new strategy; the deployment of forces and inspectors worldwide. Those who cannot afford these security measures must simply await their fate and trust in God. Yet despite all these, terrorist attacks have taken place where they are least expected, killing the collaterals again. There is still no guarantee that the well dressed, clean shaven family man next door might not become another hijacker, crashing his aircraft into buildings and killing collaterals.

In the meantime the economy of the world has slowed down and in some instances has been reversed, with huge deficits burdening countries. Jobs are lost and poverty

is increasing even in the rich countries. No new investments in foreign countries or at home. With the threat of war oil prices have shot up, increasing further the economic and social burdens of the poor countries.

Aid for the poor has practically stopped and loans are not available as the poor countries defaulted and defaulted again.

Truly the world is in a terrible mess, a state that is worse than during the East West confrontation, the Cold War. All the great hopes following the end of the Cold War have vanished. And with the terrorists and the anti terrorists fumbling blindly in their fight against each other, normalcy will not return for quite a long while.

Surely at some stage we must ask ourselves why this is happening to the world. Why is there terrorism? Is it true that the Muslims are born terrorists because of the teachings of a prophet who was a terrorist? How do we explain the pogroms, the inquisitions and the holocaust which characterised Christian Europe for almost 2000 years? Why did the Jews choose to seek haven in Muslim countries whenever Christian Europeans persecute them? Do people seek safety in the land of terrorists? Does not sound very likely.

The Christians too were terrorised, not by Muslims but by fellow Christians who condemned them as heretics. They were persecuted, tortured, burnt at the stakes for their beliefs and forced to

migrate. Seems that, the Muslims did not have a monopoly of terrorism, certainly not on the scale of the holocaust, the pogroms and the inquisition.

So it cannot be that Muslims are the sole cause of all these problems. If they are not then is it a clash of civilisation, a clash of the Muslim civilisation against the Judea Christian civilisation, that is responsible?

Frankly I do not think so. Frankly I think it is because of a revival of the old European trait of wanting to dominate the world. And the expression of this trait invariably involves injustice and oppression of people of other ethnic origins and colours.

If we care to think back, there was no systematic campaign of terror outside Europe until the Europeans and the Jews created a Jewish state out of Palestinian land. Incidentally terrorism was first used by the Haganah and the Irgun Zvai Leumi to persuade the British to set up Israel. The Palestinians were actually ejected from their homes and their country and forced to live in miserable refugee camps for more than 50 years now.

It is the struggle of the Palestinians to regain their land that has precipitated, first conventional wars, then civil protest and eventually violent demonstrations. The Israelis demanded European support to atone for European crimes against them in the past. In desperation the Palestinians finally resorted to what is described as acts of terror. Rightly, this is condemned by the world. But the world does not condemn as acts of terror the more terrifying acts of the Israelis; the massacres in Sabra and Shatila, the shooting and killing of children, the use of depleted uranium coated bullets, the bulldozing of Palestinian homes

while the occupants are still in them, the helicopter gunships etc. And Israel is now threatening to use nuclear weapons.

This blatant double standards is what infuriates Muslims, infuriates them to the extent of launching their own terror attacks. If Iraq is linked to the Al Qaeda, is it not more logical to link the expropriation of Palestinian land and the persecution and oppression of the Palestinians with September 11? It is not religious differences which angered the attackers of the World Trade Centre. It is simply sympathy and anger over the expropriation of Palestinian land, over the injustice and the oppression of the Palestinians, and Muslims everywhere. If the innocent people who died in the attack on Afghanistan, and those who have been dying from lack of food and medical care in Iraq, are considered collaterals, are not the 3,000 who died in New York and the 200 in Bali also just collaterals whose deaths are necessary for the operations to succeed?

Actually the life of any human being is sacred, no matter if the person is a friend or an enemy. That is why war is not a solution. A contest based on who can kill more people in order to establish who is the Victor and who the loser, worst still in order to determine who is right and who is wrong is primitive and does not speak well of the so called high level of civilisation we have achieved. The greatness of a nation should be based on a culture that values high moral qualities, aesthetics, learning and advancements in the sciences. Unfortunately thousands of years after the stone age we still measure the greatness of a nation by the capacity to slaughter the greatest number of people.

But the oppression and injustice is not confined to waging war and

killing people; there is oppression in ideological propagation. We are now allowed only a democratic system of Government. We admit it is by far the best system of Governments. But applying sanctions, starving people, denying access to medicine in order to force the acceptance of democracy hardly seem to be democratic. Actually millions have died because they have not converted to this new religion. And millions more are suffering because they are unable to make democracy work, because of the resulting anarchy.

Relieved of the need to compete with the Communists, the capitalist free traders have ceased to show a friendly face. Their greed knows no bounds. They want countries which had fought hard to gain independence, to give up that independence, to do away with their borders, to allow the capitalists free access to do what they like to the economies of these countries. They call this free competition. As they merge and acquire each other, they become monstrous giants against whom the small businesses in the developing countries will not be able to compete. What is the meaning of competition if you cannot win at all. In the end a few of these monsters will control the economy of the whole world.

The sad thing is that they are not above cheating and corruption. And we know they can fail. We have seen how spectacularly they fail losing 100 billion dollars in one year. And that is only one corporation.

Then there are the rogue currency traders who destroyed the economies of half the world, threw tens of millions out of work, bankrupted banks and thousands of businesses, cause the collapse of Governments and precipitated anarchy; all so that half a dozen individuals can make billions for themselves.

Now the rich give no more aid. They do not lend either. And all the time the international agencies they control try to strangle the debt laden poor countries which had been attacked by their greedy market manipulators.

The disparities between rich and poor widen daily. The rich have per capita incomes of more than 30,000 US Dollars, the poor only 300 US Dollars. Still the rich want to squeeze out literally the last drop of blood from the poor.

It is this which plagues the world today, this oppression of the poor by the rich; this injustice, this inequality. To nib salt into the wound the poor are always being told that they lack transparency and good governance, they don't respect human rights, they don't uphold freedom of speech, freedom of the press and so on and so forth, when in fact it is the rich who lack transparency, who do not respect human rights, who curb our rights to speak the truth about what they are doing, who use their media to hide their misdeeds and spread lies. How else can we interpret the operations of the hedge funds and the currency traders, sanctions and the systematic bombings of certain countries, the impoverishment of the already poor, and the censorship of news as well as distorted and fabricated reports about the south.

The fact is that the poor countries have been and are being oppressed and terrorised by the rich countries. Naturally the poor are bitter and angry and have lost faith in justice and honour. And the last straw which caused them to resort to futile and destructive terror attacks is the blatant support for state terrorism as practised by Israel and others. If Israeli terrorism is a response to Palestinian terrorism, then Palestinian terrorism, and terror acts

by their sympathisers must be due to the expulsion of Palestinians from their land, the further occupation of Palestinian territory and the open support for Israeli intransigence and terrorism by the Europeans. But the developing countries must admit that we are also responsible for the mess the world is in today. We have not used our independence and freedom to develop our countries for the good of our people. Instead we have been busy overthrowing our Governments, setting up new Governments which in turn would be overthrown. We have even killed our own people by the millions. And frequently, frustrated with anarchic democracy we resort to autocratic Governments, exposing ourselves to much vilification.

The result of this confrontation between the haves and the have-nots, the developed and the developing is a world that is practically ungovernable. Despite all the advances in science and technology, the world is in a terrible state. With more than enough food to feed the six billion people of the world, fully one in six is actually underfed, starving, with hundreds dying daily.

Since Sept 11, the rich and the powerful have become enraged with the poor half of the world. And their extreme measures to ensure security for themselves have only amplified the anger of the oppressed poor. Both sides are now in a state of blind anger and are bent on killing each other, on war.

War solves nothing. War is primitive. Today's war is more primitive than stone age wars. The targets are not the fighters, the combatants. The target is the ordinary civilians, the women, children and old people. Whether it is terror attacks or military action, these are the victims.

In primitive wars the carnage is witnessed by the warriors. While the suicidal terrorists die with each attack, the great warriors who press the buttons see nothing of the mangled bodies, the heads and limbs which are torn from disembowelled bodies, the blood and the gore of the innocent people who an instant before were living people like them. And because they don't see, the button pressing warriors and the people who commanded them go back to enjoy a hearty meal, watch TV shows or moral boosting troop entertainers and then retire to their cosy beds for a good sleep. Tomorrow they would make more sorties, to carpet bomb more children, women and old people or they would press more buttons to send missiles to tear off more heads and limbs.

War is about slaughtering people. Newer and more brutal weapons are being invented to kill more people more efficiently. And now there is talk that the use of nuclear weapons is justified. Is it because the people to be slaughtered are chromatically different? Is it because they cannot hit back?

Our meeting here today is a meeting of Heads of States and Heads of Governments. We must admit that our organisation has not been as effective as it should be. We may want to remain uninvolved and to avoid incurring the displeasure of the powerful countries. But our people are getting restless. They want us to do something. If we don't then they will, and they will go against us. They will take things into their own hands. Unable to mount a conventional war they will resort to guerrilla war, to terrorism, against us and against those they consider to be their oppressors.

They cannot be ignored any longer. We cannot incarcerate them

all for we do not always know who they are or where they are.

Sept 11, has demonstrated to the world that acts of terror even by a dozen people can destabilise the whole world completely, put fear into the hearts of everyone, make them afraid of their own shadows.

But their acts have also removed all the restraint in the countries of the north. They now no longer respect borders, international laws or even simple moral values. And they are now talking of wars, of the use of military conquests in order to change Governments. They are even talking of using nuclear weapons.

It is no longer just a war against terrorism. It is in fact a war to dominate the world i.e. the chromatically different world. We are now being accused of harbouring terrorists, of being Axis of Evil, etc. NAM has a lot of problems and issues which it must tackle. But at the moment the most important threat that we face is the tendency of the powerful to wage war when faced with opposition to the spread of their dominance. We cannot fight a war with them.

Fortunately many of their people are also sick of war. They have come out in their millions to protest the warlike policies of their leaders. We must join them. We must join their struggle with all the moral force that we can command.

War must be outlawed. That will have to be our struggle for now. We must struggle for justice and freedom from oppression, from economic hegemony. But we must remove the threat of war first. With this Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads we can never succeed in advancing the interests of our countries.

War must therefore be made illegal. The enforcement of this must be by multilateral forces under the

control of the United Nations. No single nation should be allowed to police the world, least of all to decide what action to take, when.

Globalisation must not be confined to the exploitation of the wealth of the earth only. Globalisation must include the multilateral protection of countries threatened by war or hegemony.

There must be a new world order in which power is shared equitably by all. The United Nations must be reformed. It must no longer be bound by the results of a world war fought more than half a century ago. Everyone must disarm. Weapons of mass destruction must be disallowed for all. And there should be no more research into making conventional weapons more lethal.

If it is right for an international agency in a globalised world to oversee human rights, business practices and the kind of democracy practised by countries, then a truly International Agency beholden only to the United Nations General Assembly should oversee the military budget of all countries, big and small. Trading in arms must come under United Nations supervision. Brutal ethnic cleansing must be stopped by a multinational standing army.

When Japan was defeated, it was allowed to spend only one percent of its GDP on its armed forces. If such a condition can be imposed on Japan, why cannot it be imposed on all countries?

In the struggle to outlaw war and control arms, nuclear as well as conventional, NAM will find growing support from among many people in the North. It is a daunting task nevertheless. But unless we take the moral high ground now, we will wait in vain for the powerful North to voluntarily give up slaughtering

people in the name of national interest.

Again I would like to say that NAM must struggle to outlaw war. NAM must struggle to outlaw nuclear weapons. NAM must struggle to stop the research and development of more and more lethal so called conventional weapons. NAM must struggle to control the arms trade.

We must work for a new world order, where democracy is not confined to the internal governance of states only but to the governance of the world. We must work for the revival of the United Nations and multilateralism. We must work to do away or modify the powers of the victors of a war fought half a century ago.

We know we are weak. But we also know we have allies in the North. They too want the abolition of wars, the slaughter of people for whatever reason. They may not agree with us in everything. But in the opposition to war very many will be with us. They are ready to oppose their warlike leaders. We must work with them.

This then is our struggle. We are not irrelevant. We are not anachronistic. We have a vision, the vision to build a new world order, a world order that is more equitable, more just; a world order which is above all free from the age old belief that killing people is right, that it can solve the problems of relations between nations.

For all these we must revitalise the Non Aligned Movement. And that vitality can only come from our closing ranks and acting together.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before this august assembly. Malaysia pledges to work vigorously to oppose war including the war against Iraq and to ensure the success of this our Movement."

## 'PEACE LOVERS OF THE WORLD UNITE' - KHATAMI

*"The 'phenomenon of globalization', has posed serious threat to the most fundamental aspects of the existence of our societies, such as cultural identity and civilizational differences among peoples and nations. It is not just cultural identity - a sociological phenomenon - rather, the most fundamental and cherished accomplishments of history are endangered, even humankind itself is being torn to pieces by this gigantic machine. What this machine is capable of producing is a leviathan, that has no memory, does not understand poetry, fails to recognize colour, space and harmony in painting, architecture and music, is deprived of experiencing the "sacred realm", and does not feel the bitterness of tears or the sweetness of smiles." These profound sentiments were expressed by the **President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami** at the 13th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur on 24 February, 2003. In his address to the Summit, reproduced below, President Khatami laid out his 'collective political wisdom' for the NAM. The continuing mass demonstrations around the world as a sequel to the military strike on Iraq seem to be bearing out the above exhortation he made for the peace lovers of the world to unite.*

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

At the very outset, I would like to seize the opportunity to sincerely congratulate His Excellency Dr. Mahathir Mohammad for his election as the Chairman of the XIII Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. I should as well express appreciation to His Excellency President Mbeki, the outgoing Chairman, for his valuable services to the Movement. May God the Almighty bestow success and prosperity on the esteemed Government and the honourable people of Malaysia.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has undergone great transformations ever since the first Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. An objective, profound analysis of the causes and reasons for these changes and arrival at a common understanding based on 'collective political wisdom' will ensure the survival and dynamism of the Movement.

The founders of the Movement, cognizant of the nature of the world political situation at the time, opened a new path that 'brought in its wake important political and social consequences. Similarly, it is imperative for us today,

notwithstanding our inevitable differences to search for common ground in our analysis and assessment of the past and present of the Movement. What I have in mind is not a mere re-iteration of the principles laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru, or the Bandung Principles as reflected in the various documents of the Movement, rather, it is an invitation to search for the more profound layers of political decisions of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The fundamental question now is: what are the new characteristics of our world today, as compared with the world Political situation in, 1961, and hence. What political and social decisions and policies are needed? The new characteristics of the world political situation should be defined in terms of major transformations in structure and underlying foundations of our time. Change in the structure is best reflected in the collapse of one of the two super-powers and the emergence of an illusion of a unipolar world. The world faced many serious threats during the Cold War era. Yet, both sides tended to avoid a total war. And, needless to say, the Non-Aligned Movement benefited immensely from a state of 'mutual deterrence'. It is unfortunate that in the wake of the Soviet collapse, the other super-power - convinced that the rival's demise a vindication of the superiority of its own claims -

allows itself, self-righteously, to hector others from a position of the 'big brother', worse still, as the self-appointed 'master of the world'. The problem, however, is not just a matter of satisfying an instinct for a sense of superiority, rather, as is currently the case, the very security of many countries in the world is seriously threatened.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

The transformations during the past two decades in the field of communications technology, not just "progress" in its conventional sense in this domain, represent a far-reaching revolution destined to profoundly influence different spheres of our lives. The world of future, not future centuries, but just 20 or 30 years from now, will profoundly affect all the existing social institutions, the economic relationships, and even human sensibilities and relations. The mass media has shrunk the world. Satellites do not recognize or abide by boundaries. What is now known, in current parlance or sociological literature, as the "phenomenon of globalization", has posed serious threat to the most fundamental aspects of the existence of our societies, such as cultural identity and civilizational differences among peoples and nations. It is not just cultural identity - a sociological phenomenon - rather, the most fundamental and cherished

accomplishments of history are endangered, even humankind itself is being torn to pieces by this gigantic machine. What this machine is capable of producing is a leviathan, that has no memory, does not understand poetry, fails to recognize colour, space and harmony in painting, architecture and music, is deprived of experiencing the "sacred realm", and does not feel the bitterness of tears or the sweetness of smiles.

The situation could well be looked at from a different angle. One could also talk about the positive and useful impact of this process, in which case we should re-define the concept of identity and rise above from its particularistic and egoistic aspects. What today's thinkers refer to as cultural pluralism, cultural dialogue and multi-layered consciousness do in fact reflect these positive aspects. The point I am trying to make here is merely to highlight a very critical aspect of the current global political and cultural situation; transformation in the structure and underlying foundations, once combined with a self-righteous totalitarian interpretation of morality and culture, is bound to create a very dangerous political and human situation.

Excellencies,

As we witness today, the existing super-power projects its own moral and cultural values as eternal and ever-lasting truths, and has arrogated to itself the right to remove, through resort to force and violence, what it considers as standing on its way. This is the product of a form of fanatic fundamentalism which sadly enough, happens to command the greatest might in man's history. The real danger today is much greater than the warmongering decisions, or the greed for the economic resources and wealth of others, or even what is termed as 'change in the political geography.' Rather, the danger is

that a super-power - possessing various types of weapons of mass destruction and also enjoying the immense possibilities of advanced technology, particularly communications technology - considers itself as the sole global power and is bent on deciding for the whole world. The fact that such a determination is rooted in pervasive illusion makes it all the worse for the material and moral well-being of humankind.

The question before us is: what future policies and measures should the Non-Aligned Movement adopt? In my view, the Non-Aligned Movement, representing almost two-thirds of the whole international community, has to take a courageous and moral stand. We have to say it loud and clear that "cultural identity" is a positive and creative source. We have to take a stand in favour of dialogue of civilizations and cultures and for the mutually beneficial exchange of scientific and artistic experiences, also inclusive of the positive and constructive aspects of the on-going globalization process. We should, nevertheless, remain vigilant to the negative impact of this process as well as to the dangers emanating from the rise of the new form of totalitarianism. Yes, over and above the rather routine course of the Movement's activities, it is incumbent upon us, as a matter of priority and urgency, to undertake to collectively explore how to counter these dangers and threats. The current frightening world atmosphere makes it imperative for the Movement to opt for a more affirmative approach towards achieving a peaceful world - a far cry from the struggle for independence in the bygone era of the Cold War.

What is needed, first and

foremost, is to set aside the logic rooted in fear and fright. What is obvious, beyond any shadow of doubt, is that the win of the peoples of the world has no place in the minds and words of the warmongers. The voice of violence and war, whether coming from the hide-outs of terrorists or from the palaces of politics, or even from those preaching from the position of world supremacy, is neither acceptable nor sustainable. The now coalescing voice of the world public opinion across the globe in Asia, Europe, Africa Oceania and the Americas - against war-mongering and violence will definitely help the Non-Aligned Movement in its drive and strive. We should not fall in the trap the war-seekers have devised to turn the whole world into a security zone to the detriment of peace and freedom. The Non-Aligned Movement as an independent, potent force in the world today, must - and can - undertake to devise decisions and policies to prevent and avert the catastrophes looming ahead of us all.

Speaking here in the name of the great, freedom-loving people of Iran, I would like to seize the occasion to ask the Non-Aligned Movement to and mobilize all its potentials - varied and great as they are - to safeguard peace based on justice, security based on sovereign equality of nations and states, and independence based on progress. Safeguarding peace and security does undoubtedly require strength, which is contingent, first and foremost, upon the establishment of democracy and respect for the rights of the citizenry in our respective societies. Democracy is the only way to strengthen the bonds between the rulers and the ruled, which, regrettable as it is, has been rendered fragile and vulnerable in many countries. Equally important, and simultaneously, we should utilize the existing possibilities in

this highly interdependent world and build up our scientific, technical and technologic and economic capabilities and capacities towards achieving long-term sustainable, human development. We, in this Movement should, with due regard for the irreplaceable principle of justice in the political, economic as well as cultural arena, present an independent, peace-seeking force in the world today. Well-organized utilization of the potentials and capabilities of 116 members of the Movement in various international forums and organizations is indeed a great and unique asset for us all.

Given the current world situation and the constructive role the Non-Aligned Movement is capable of playing in this regard, taking bigger and more substantial steps for revitalization is imperative. It is now high time that the Movement adopt a new approach and policy to strive against the rising trend towards unilateralism and emergence of a uni-polar world. The Movement can, and should, rely on the ever-increasing consciousness among the nations of the world in its endeavours. People of all walks of life everywhere in the world., particularly the good-intentioned thinkers and intellectuals, even in the United States say "no" to war-mongering and policies bent on violence and vengeance.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the tenets of Islam as a religion of humanity, rationality, justice and peace, and also from the vantage point of international and regional considerations, is opposed to war-mongering policies. I stand here to state, in all frankness, that the Islamic Republic of Iran opposes use of force to change any regime in any country. This position of principle should not be understood as a support for any particular polity; rather, it is a policy against a dangerous trend and precedent

towards consolidating the ascending unilateralism as well as the foundations of a new fundamentalism and the emerging totalitarianism. The new trend is bound to endanger international security and undermine the very rationale for international institutions and organizations in charge of maintaining peace and security; i.e., most notably the United Nations. The future of Iraq, as anywhere else in the world, should be determined by the people concerned, and not through foreign intervention.

A military attack against Iraq will subject the suffering people of Iraq to immeasurable further suffering; will endanger the stability and security of our sensitive area; will create economic instability in this strategic region; will certainly bring in its wake a host of destructive environmental consequences; and last but not least, it will create a humanitarian catastrophe for the neighbouring countries. It will also strengthen extremism and help retard the measured movement that has started and is taking root in the region towards the establishment of democracy compatible with religion, morality and culture. Needless to reiterate, the Iraqi Government must also comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions in an unambiguous and transparent manner.

Excellencies,

The Non-Aligned Movement has been seized from the very beginning with the question of Palestine. It is a matter of great regret that the Israeli regime; misusing the political atmosphere following the tragic events of September 11, has intensified its repressive policies against the oppressed Palestinian people. This much intensified repressive attitude and policy of the Zionist regime has made it more crystal clear than ever before that

Israel is not committed to the pursuit of an honourable peace. It is also a fact known to all that violation of international undertakings and commitments is perpetrated more by Israel than anywhere else. The Non-Aligned Movement carries a very heavy responsibility towards what is happening to the oppressed people of Palestine - a living, ongoing case of crime against humanity.

Dear Friends,

Today, we are all in the same boat. Any efforts towards saving oneself individually, could prove fatal and futile. If there is going to be a survival, it will have to include 'us', and them'. Let us place the Non-Aligned Movement shoulder to shoulder with others. Let us rise to the challenge of upholding the principles of freedom, peace, justice and morality, in our own societies, among ourselves, and, of course, in our individual and collective relations with the rest of the world.

Our true friends and all those supporting these ideas and ideals are not to be found only in Asia, Africa and the Latin America. In Europe and the United States as well, most intellectuals and scholars and the majority of the general public also aspire for moderation, wisdom, peace, justice and security.

Just a few years back, I spoke of the 'Dialogue among Civilizations' and cultures, which was welcomed by the international community and in particular, intellectuals and scholars. And more recently, in the midst of all the hue and cry of war and violence, I presented the idea of "Coalition for Peace with Justice."

And now, with the world facing horrendous threats and dangers, may I call from this rostrum of the Non-Aligned Movement: "Peace Lovers of the World Unite."

## ROBIN COOK: RESIGNATION STATEMENT

*With the war ultimatum given by President Bush to Iraq ticking, the resignation of the leader of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom Parliament, Robin Cook was a sensational development in the polity of the 'coalition' forces. As one who has long been at the helm of UK foreign affairs, every word that he used in his resignation statement carries a lot of weight, and particularly a ring of truth – even though mainstream western media may not have splashed them in bold. Following is the statement of Robin Cook to the UK House of Commons on Monday, March 17, 09:24 PM.*

“Mr Speaker, this is the first time for 20 years I’ve addressed the House from the backbenches.

I must confess I had forgotten how much better the view is from up here.

None of those 20 years were more enjoyable or more rewarding than the past two in which I’ve had the immense privilege of serving this House as the leader of the House, made all the more enjoyable, Mr Speaker, by the opportunity of working closely with yourself.

It was frequently the necessity for me as leader of the House to talk my way out of accusations that a statement had been preceded by a press interview.

On this occasion, I can say with complete confidence that no press interview has been given before this statement.

I have chosen to address the House first, on why I cannot support a war without international agreement or domestic support.

The present prime minister is the most successful leader of the Labour Party in my lifetime. I hope he will continue to be the leader of our party and I hope he will continue to be successful.

I have no sympathy with, and I will give no comfort to those who want to use this crisis to displace him. I applaud the heroic efforts the prime minister has made in trying to secure a second resolution.

I do not think anyone could have done better than the foreign secre-

tary in working to get support for a second resolution within the Security Council.

But the very intensity of those attempts underlines how important it was to succeed. Now that those attempts have failed, we cannot now pretend that getting a second resolution was of no importance.

France has been at the receiving end of bucket-loads of commentary in recent days. It is not France alone that wants more time for inspections. Germany wants more time for inspections, Russia wants more time for inspections.

Indeed, at no time have we signed up even the minimum necessary to carry a second resolution. We delude ourselves if we think that the degree of international hostility is all the result of President Chirac.

The reality is that Britain is being asked to embark on a war without agreement in any of the international bodies of which we are a leading partner. Not NATO, not the European Union, and now not the Security Council. To end in such diplomatic weakness is a serious reverse.

Only a year ago, we and the United States were part of a coalition against terrorism which was wider and more diverse than I would ever have imagined would be possible. History will be astonished at the diplomatic miscalculations that led so quickly to the disintegration of that powerful coalition.

The US can afford to go to war. But Britain is not a superpower. Our interests are best protected not by

unilateral action but by multilateral agreement and a world order governed by rules.

Yet tonight, the international partnerships most important to us are weakened. The European Union is divided, the Security Council is in stalemate. Those are heavy casualties of a war in which a shot has yet to be fired.

“I’ve heard some parallels between military action in these circumstances and the military action that we took in Kosovo.

There was no doubt about the multilateral support we had for the action we took in Kosovo.

It was supported by NATO, it was supported by the European Union, it was supported by every single one of the seven neighbours in the region. France and Germany were our active allies.

It is precisely because we have none of that support in this case that it was all the more important to get agreement in the Security Council as the last hope of demonstrating international agreement.

And the legal basis for action in Kosovo was the need to respond to an urgent and compelling humanitarian crisis. Our difficulty in getting support this time is that neither the international community, nor the British public, is persuaded that there is an urgent and compelling reason for this military action in Iraq.

“The threshold for war should always be high. None of us can predict the death toll of civilians from the forthcoming bombardment of

Iraq. But the US warning of a bombing campaign that will shock and awe makes it likely that casualties will be numbered at least in the thousands.

"I am confident that British servicemen and British servicewomen will equip themselves with professionalism and with courage. I hope that they all come back. I hope that Saddam even now will quit Baghdad and avert war.

But you know it is false to argue that only those who support war support our troops. It is entirely legitimate to support our troops while seeking an alternative to the conflict that will put those troops in.

Nor is it fair to accuse those of us who want longer inspections for not having an alternative strategy. For four years as foreign secretary, I was partly responsible for the Western strategy of containment.

Over the past decade, that strategy destroyed more weapons than in the Gulf war, dismantled Iraq's nuclear weapons programme, halted Saddam's medium and long range missiles programmes.

Iraq's military strength is now less than half its size at the time of the last Gulf war. Ironically, it is only because Iraq's military forces are so weak that we can even contemplate its invasion.

Some advocates claim his forces are now so weak, so demoralised, so badly equipped that the war will be over in a few days. Mr. Speaker, we cannot base our military strategy on the assumption that Saddam is weak and at the same time justify pre-emptive action on the claim that he is a threat.

Iraq probably has no weapons of mass destruction in the commonly-understood sense of the term, namely a credible device capable of being delivered against a strategic city target. It probably still has bio-

logical toxins and battlefield chemical ammunitions. But it's had them since the 1980s, when US companies sold Saddam anthrax agents, and the then-British government approved chemical ammunitions factories.

Why is it now so urgent that we should take military action to disarm a military capacity that has been there for 20 years and which we helped to create? Why is it necessary to resort to war this week while Saddam's ambition to complete his weapons programme is blocked by the presence of UN inspectors?

Only a couple of weeks ago, Hans Blix told the security council that the key remaining disarmament tasks could be completed within months.

I've heard it said that Iraq has not had months but 12 years in which to complete disarmament and our patience is exhausted.

Yet it is over 30 years since resolution 242 called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. We don't express the same impatience with the persistent refusal of Israel to comply.

I welcome the strong, personal commitment the prime minister has given to Middle East peace but Britain's positive role in the Middle East does not redress the strong sense of injustice throughout the Muslim world at what they see as one rule for allies of the US and another rule for the rest.

Nor is our credibility helped by the appearance that our partners in Washington are less interested in disarmament that they are in regime change in Iraq.

And that explains why any evidence that inspections may be showing progress is greeted in Washington not with satisfaction

but with consternation because it reduces the case for war.

What has come to trouble me most over past weeks is a suspicion that if the hanging chads in Florida had gone the other way, and Al Gore had been elected, we would not now be about to commit British troops.

Mr. Speaker, the longer I have served in this place, the greater the respect I have for the good sense and the collective wisdom of the British people.

On Iraq, I believe the prevailing mood of the British people is sound. They do not doubt that Saddam is a brutal dictator. But they are not persuaded he is a clear and present danger to Britain.

They want inspections to be given a chance. And they suspect that they are being pushed too quickly into conflict by a US administration with an agenda of its own.

Above all, they are uneasy at Britain going out on limb in a military adventure without a broader international coalition and against the hostility of many of our traditional allies.

From the start of the present crisis, as leader of this House, I've insisted on the right of this place to vote on whether Britain should go to war.

It has been a favourite theme of commentators that this House no longer occupies the central role in British politics.

Nothing could better demonstrate that they are wrong than for this House to stop the commitment of troops in a war that has neither international agreement nor domestic support.

I intend to join those tomorrow night who'll vote against military action now.

It is for that reason, and that reason alone, and with a heavy heart, that I resign from the government."

## 'LAW, FORCE AND JUSTICE' - VILLEPIN

**Dominique de Villepin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France** *spelt out his vision of a new world order in an address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London on 27 March 2003. His views, as reproduced below, based on the information provided by the French government.*

"It is an honour for me to be here today to deliver the annual lecture given in memory of Alastair Buchan, the founder of your institute.

In these moments of crisis, a place of intellect and reflection such as yours shows its real importance. It is a forum for exchange and debate vital to thought, an essential laboratory for action.

I am speaking to you at a decisive moment in our history. At a serious moment, when the United Kingdom is engaged in the military operations in Iraq. I naturally wish that this conflict finds a swift conclusion with the minimum possible number of casualties.

And in this time of trial, I come to you in a spirit of respect, friendship and dialogue. With the clear awareness that your country is at war and your soldiers at risk, I come here to look to the future, beyond the current differences between our two countries. I believe that we will only overcome the current obstacles if we take a clear and frank measure of our divisions. I am certain that, in the troubled world in which we live, we need unity more than ever before. And I hope to show you a French vision that aims to build and re-establish dialogue.

France and the United Kingdom have particular responsibilities as permanent members of the UN Security Council. They should exercise these responsibilities in pursuit of the same goal: international stability, security and peace. This implies working together to define the balance required for any international action: law, force and justice.

Where were we ten years ago?

The end of the Cold War changed our world. Law was placed at the centre of international concerns. Its relationship with force was profoundly changed.

For nearly fifty years, nuclear deterrence had guaranteed order. Both the West and the Communist world knew that the use of force would result in untold devastation on both sides. War would have meant the failure of deterrence and the unthinkable apocalypse.

Yet, with the end of the Cold War, force came back as a policy option. It could be envisaged again, because its cost was no longer disproportionate.

Yet it was rarely used. Because the assertion of Western values met with little opposition. Because the United States was moderate in its use of force. Indeed, it has always been true that only moderation makes power acceptable. As Thucydides remarked in ancient times: We should be praised for being more just than our available power would normally imply.

However, no international order can be based solely on what the powers-that-be want it to be based. Collective norms were hence defined to contain the use of force within the bounds of collective responsibility.

This new order met with considerable success.

It curbed territorial aggression. In 1991, respect for the rule of law and the use of force drove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. Any similar invasion would surely be met today with an immediate and forceful

reaction from the international community.

This order also brought assistance to the populations who fell victim to civil war, authoritarian regimes and natural disasters. Following the Gulf War, operation Provide Comfort stopped the flow of Kurdish refugees into Turkey and helped them to return to Northern Iraq. It paved the way for the right of humanitarian intervention and major UN operations: in Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, East Timor and Sierra Leone.

And not least, the new order helped define a set of standards that made force available to a law based on humanist values. Respect for the individual, the defence of freedoms, and the fight against poverty and epidemics were all given the force of law.

Yet this balance between law and force did not solve all security problems. Firstly, it did not solve the question of Iraq's disarmament, other than with a policy of sanctions that hit primarily the Iraqi people. Secondly, it did not open up prospects for solving the regional crises threatening the world's stability: first and foremost the Middle East, which remains a prisoner of a spiral of violence and retaliation; but also the disputes in Cyprus and Western Sahara, and the crisis in Kashmir. In these regions, the promises of the new world order ran up against the complexity of religious and ethnic relations, the weight of history and geographic constraints.

Moreover, the international community's support for this order gradually waned. The results obtained demanded considerable

UN resources: in Sierra Leone, a country with 4 million inhabitants covering 71,000 square kilometres, 16,000 UN troops are needed to maintain what remains a fragile order.

The limits of the humanitarian intervention concept have gradually started to show. It makes it possible to take action against a government's will when an imminent humanitarian catastrophe demands it. But it has also prompted concern among the emerging powers and could be criticized for being partial. Why take action here rather than elsewhere? Who makes the decision to intervene, and based on what legitimate authority?

The case of Kosovo reflects the complexity of these issues. We were faced with some disturbing realities in this crisis. The concept of humanitarian intervention was questioned for the first time. Some powers in the South feared it would allow the Western democracies to unduly encroach on their sovereignty. And Kosovo prompted contradictory criticisms from these same democracies: some objected to a premature use of force, or the interference of political leaders in the conduct of military operations.

At the end of the day, the operation in Kosovo was a legitimate enterprise and a political success. But it was also a source of divisions. Some saw it as the first instance of a customary right to intervene on humanitarian grounds without a UN mandate. We, however, saw it as an exception, justified by wide support and the threat of an imminent humanitarian disaster.

11 September put an end to the emergence of a new world order.

Firstly, the world entered the age of mass terrorism. We now know that the terrorist organizations will stop at nothing to spread their message of hate.

Secondly, it changed the meaning of power: in a world where the weak can destabilize the strong, where ideologies flout the most fundamental rights, the use of force is not a sufficient answer. When the blade unites with new technologies, it side-steps the classic rules of power.

Thirdly, it revealed the vulnerability of the United States, triggered a feeling of anger and injustice and led this country to change its view of the world. Attacked in the heart, America refocused its priorities on its own security, its own soil and its own population.

These times of great changes call for a renewed close and trusting relationship with the United States. France is ready. We understand the immense trauma that this country has suffered. We showed unwavering solidarity with the Americans after 11 September and we share their utmost determination to tirelessly fight terrorism worldwide. Our military commitment in Afghanistan and especially our intelligence input illustrate this. Lastly, we will continue to work together on the major proliferation challenges facing us, especially in North Korea.

Because they share common values, the United States and France will re-establish close cooperation in complete solidarity. We owe it to the friendship between our peoples, for the international order that we wish to build together.

Over the last few months, some have wondered about France's reasons for its ways of going about settling the Iraq crisis. I would like to say loud and clear that our choices were not made against one country or another, but in the name of a certain idea of collective responsibility and of a world vision.

We shouldn't underestimate the stakes here. We need to know by which rules we would like to live

together: only consensus and respect for law can give force the legitimacy it needs. If we overstep this mark, could the use of force become a destabilizing element?

We also need to know how to manage the many crises throughout the world. Iraq is not an isolated case. North Korea and other countries are raising new threats of proliferation. We must therefore give ourselves the means to deal with them. We had started defining a disarmament method together and this method was giving results.

Lastly, we have a fundamental concern: how could we neglect the risk of increased misunderstanding between peoples? A misunderstanding that could lead to a clash of cultures. Isn't that the major challenge of the day? Is it unavoidable? We must find the right answers and fuel the spirit of dialogue and respect amongst peoples.

In this respect we noted two elements that lie at the heart of UNSCR 1441: the international community is most effective only when it is united; the international community is truly legitimate only when it shoulders all its responsibilities.

Responsibility meant that the Council had to strive relentlessly to improve inspections in order to make the most of UNSCR 1441. We proposed reinforcing the inspectors' resources, adopting a stringent timetable for inspections, a speedy and focused work programme, and a short deadline for the interim report to be presented.

Responsibility also meant that Security Council members should decide together what must be done. And that they should keep control of the process at every stage. That is why the Council could not endorse an ultimatum including an automatic

use of force. Indeed it would have been outside the framework unanimously agreed on in UNSCR 1441. And it would not have been in keeping with the spirit of our work. Those are the simple reasons for the impasse in the Security Council during the last round of negotiations. In this context, France was continuously searching for a compromise. Throughout this process, France kept its options open, including the use of force, should inspections fail.

The situation in the Council did not change even by one vote because most members felt the peaceful option had not been pursued to the full. Because the military timetable seemed to overtake the diplomatic agenda from January onwards. Because the very principle of inspections soon seemed to be called into question. Because the sense of a gradual shift in objectives from the disarmament of Iraq to regime change, or even the reshaping of the Middle East, no doubt increased the misunderstandings.

Through the Iraq crisis, two different understandings of the world are coming head to head. They reflect different relationships between law and force, between international legitimacy and the defence of national security interests.

According to one such understanding, democracy can be imposed from the outside. Having faith in the power of the law is therefore something of a delusion. International legal tools become constraints more than safeguards of international security. Some even say that the US would assume its responsibilities alone and thereby show its strength while Europe's position reflects its weakness. It also means that some governments might decide of their own accord to

strike first given the scope of the threats. Self-defence then knows no bounds or constraints.

But the limits of the use of force in Iraq and unclear political prospects for the country fuel many questions on the relevance of such an analysis.

We live in a complex world. It can no longer be explained by series of alliances, as was the case in the nineteenth century or the Cold War. Today's world is about new threats – terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; about extremely volatile regional crises; about extremist and fundamentalist ideologies active across the world; about organized crime becoming a new means of financing and implementing these threats. Using force in this context will not solve the real issues. It may reveal new fault lines.

We believe in democracy, just as the British and the Americans do. With the Magna Carta, the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the US Constitution, our countries headed the democratic revolution. We are convinced that democracy needs resolve, conviction and a long learning period.

We do not oppose the use of force. We are only warning against the risks of pre-emptive strikes as a doctrine. What example are we setting for other countries? How legitimate would we feel such an action to be? What are our limits to the use of such might? In endorsing this doctrine, we would risk introducing the principle of constant instability and uncertainty. We risk not controlling situations and rushing headlong into action. Let us not open a Pandora's box.

How, then, can we act? Our own view is underpinned by a number of requirements.

**Unity:** it is necessary given the complexity of our world. We can only uproot terrorism if we increase our police, judicial and intelligence cooperation. We can only respond to proliferation if we develop together an effective method. We must build on what we started doing in Iraq. We can only resolve regional crises if we start a constructive dialogue with all parties involved.

**Responsibility:** all the countries are collectively responsible for increasing the security and stability of our world. Force is not a privilege some enjoy and law the alibi of others. We are all bound by the law.

**Legitimacy:** it is the key to the effectiveness of international action. If we want to develop the right answers to the challenges of the modern world and to take appropriate measures – including the use of force – we must do so with the authority of collective decisions.

We must now find once again the path to European unity and reassert transatlantic solidarity on the basis of those requirements. We must rebuild the world order shattered by the Iraq crisis.

This is a goal for all Europeans – the fifteen current members of the EU and the soon-to-be members. However, it is a particular challenge for France and the United Kingdom, which have developed over time a different relationship with the US. Yet we are both concerned about the quality and strength of the transatlantic relationship, which we acknowledge as a stabilizing force in our world.

The alternative is not between force and law. Force must serve the law. Force must be contained by the law to reverse Pascal's words: unable to make what is just strong, we have made what is strong just. Asserting the primacy of the law is not an admission of weakness. It is a moral and political obligation, the

prerequisite not only for justice but also for effectiveness. Indeed, only justice can guarantee lasting security.

Conversely, if the international system is still seen as unjust, if force always seems to prevail over the law, if the opinions of the peoples are disregarded, then destabilizing factors will grow stronger, proliferation programmes will develop, power play will go on needlessly, and hostility towards Western democracies will be increasingly manipulated.

We must now define our common goals.

Firstly, we must fully disarm Iraq. A unanimous international community rallied around this goal. It must now be carried through by the inspectors. The UN must steer the process. More importantly, the UN must be at the heart of the reconstruction and administration of Iraq. The legitimacy of our action depends on it. We must come together to build peace together in a region rife with a sense of insecurity and deep fault lines.

The fight against terrorism must remain our priority. We must pursue our cooperation, strengthen our exchange of intelligence and develop new tools to fight against the financing of terrorist networks.

We continue to have a rich and ongoing partnership with the US and the United Kingdom on proliferation. This partnership must go hand in hand with the work we will

conduct in the UN at the summit [of heads of State and Government] proposed by France. We also suggest that European countries consult closely and develop a common analysis of proliferation risks so as to assess together the means to respond. We have started developing disarmament tools. They are based on a balance between force and law. Establishing a standing group of UN inspectors would give flesh to our hopes.

All these challenges demand that we work together more than ever before to find a political settlement to the Middle East crisis. Because it is a fundamental crisis, because it is fuelled by a deep sense of injustice, we can only have lasting peace if it is justice-based. Such justice must meet the expectations of the Palestinian people and guarantee the security of Israel. Only justice can strengthen peace and law.

All these goals can only be met if the UN gives the impetus. But they can be implemented within major regional poles.

To be truly stable, this new world must be based on a number of regional poles, structured to face current threats. These poles should not compete against one another, but complement each other. They are the cornerstones of an international community built on solidarity and unity in the face of new challenges.

The determination of European countries to develop a common

foreign and security policy must reflect that. This determination shows our will to bring about a true European identity. An identity that all the peoples of our continent are yearning for. We wish to go resolutely down this path with the support and involvement of the United Kingdom. We have already covered much ground together in the field of defence. After the decision in Macedonia, we must pursue our projects: taking over from NATO in Bosnia and establishing a European armaments agency. A strong Europe will be in everyone's interest. It will strengthen the security of our world.

France and the United Kingdom must overcome the current difficulties and remain united.

I am convinced that what brings us together goes to the heart of the identity of our peoples. We have the same sense of independence. We have the same sense of our countries' global role. I cannot forget that, at the bleakest time in our history, the United Kingdom welcomed the man who personified the honour and spirit of resistance of our country. At the same time, Winston Churchill and the British people embodied the hopes of the free peoples.

Strengthened by our mutual respect and friendship, France and the United Kingdom want to be present and active when Europe comes together, to contribute to a world that fulfils our shared yearning for peace and justice."

### **'SHOCK AND AWE' TACTICS WAR CRIMES UNDER GENEVA CONVENTIONS**

*Greenpeace-Switzerland had the following to say on the 'shock and awe' tactics openly employed by the striking outside forces in Iraq:*

"The use of 'shock and awe' tactics is illegal under international law and will inevitably result in mas-

sive civilian casualties, damage to civilian infrastructure and an environmental disaster which will leave a deadly legacy for many generations to come."

"This is a war crime under the terms of both the Geneva Conven-

tion and International Criminal Court statutes. It is up to everyone - governments, the United Nations and people around the world - to call the war criminals to account."

"Words are not enough. The international community and the UN  
*continued on page 28*

## CONFRONTING THE EMPIRE

*Making sense in chaotic times is always difficult. Especially when events around us, unfolding as they are, with alarming implications. Shorn of all the hype about 'liberating' some 34 million Iraqi people who have been strangled with economic sanctions for the last 11 years, the U.S. decision to use force against Iraq may well be part of a bigger design of 'imperial' ambition. A glimpse into that picture is provided in the following article by **Noam Chomsky**. Based in the United States, Chomsky is a professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a political activist. The article is based on the address he delivered at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on 1 February, 2003.*

We are meeting at a moment of world history that is in many ways unique—a moment that is ominous, but also full of hope.

The most powerful state in history has proclaimed, loud and clear, that it intends to rule the world by force, the dimension in which it reigns supreme. Apart from the conventional bow to noble intentions that is the standard (hence meaningless) accompaniment of coercion, its leaders are committed to pursuit of their “imperial ambition,” as it is frankly described in the leading journal of the foreign policy establishment—critically, an important matter. They have also declared that they will tolerate no competitors, now or in the future. They evidently believe that the means of violence in their hands are so extraordinary that they can dismiss with contempt anyone who stands in their way. There is good reason to believe that the war with Iraq is intended, in part, to teach the world some lessons about what lies ahead when the empire decides to strike a blow - though “war” is hardly the proper term, given the array of forces.

The doctrine is not entirely new, nor unique to the US, but it has never before been proclaimed with such brazen arrogance – at least not by anyone we would care to remember.

I am not going to try to answer the question posed for this meeting: How to confront the empire. The reason is that most of you know the

answers as well or better than I do, through your own lives and work. The way to “confront the empire” is to create a different world, one that is not based on violence and subjugation, hate and fear. That is why we are here, and the WSF offers hope that these are not idle dreams.

Yesterday I had the rare privilege of seeing some very inspiring work to achieve these goals, at the international gathering of the Via Campesina at a community of the MST, which I think is the most important and exciting popular movement in the world. With constructive local actions such as those of the MST, and international organization of the kind illustrated by the Via Campesina and the WSF, with sympathy and solidarity and mutual aid, there is real hope for a decent future.

I have also had some other recent experiences that give a vivid picture of what the world may be like if imperial violence is not limited and dismantled. Last month I was in southeastern Turkey, the scene of some of the worst atrocities of the grisly 1990s, still continuing: just a few hours ago we were informed of renewed atrocities by the army near Diyarbakir, the unofficial capital of the Kurdish regions. Through the 1990s, millions of people were driven out of the devastated countryside, with tens of thousands killed and every imaginable form of barbaric torture. They try to survive in caves outside the walls of Diyarbakir, in condemned buildings in miserable

slums in Istanbul, or wherever they can find refuge, barred from returning to their villages despite new legislation that theoretically permits return. 80 per cent of the weapons came from the US. In the year 1997 alone, Clinton sent more arms to Turkey than in the entire Cold War period combined up to the onset of the state terror campaign – called “counterterror” by the perpetrators and their supporters, another convention. Turkey became the leading recipient of US arms as atrocities peaked (apart from Israel-Egypt, a separate category).

In 1999, Turkey relinquished this position to Colombia. The reason is that in Turkey, US-backed state terror had largely succeeded, while in Colombia it had not. Colombia had the worst human rights record in the Western hemisphere in the 1990s and was by far the leading recipient of US arms and military training, and now leads the world. It also leads the world by other measures, for example, murder of labor activists: more than half of those killed worldwide in the last decade were in Colombia. Close to ½ million people were driven from their land last year, a new record. The displaced population is now estimated at 2.7 million. Political killings have risen to 20 a day; 5 years ago it was half that.

I visited Cauca in southern Colombia, which had the worst human rights record in the country in 2001, quite an achievement. There I listened to hours of testimony by peas-

ants who were driven from their lands by chemical warfare – called “fumigation” under the pretext of a US-run “drug war” that few take seriously and that would be obscene if that were the intent. Their lives and lands are destroyed, children are dying, they suffer from sickness and wounds. Peasant agriculture is based on a rich tradition of knowledge and experience gained over many centuries, in much of the world passed on from mother to daughter. Though a remarkable human achievement, it is very fragile, and can be destroyed forever in a single generation. Also being destroyed is some of the richest biodiversity in the world, similar to neighboring regions of Brazil. Campesinos, indigenous people, Afro-Colombians can join the millions in rotting slums and camps. With the people gone, multinationals can come in to strip the mountains for coal and to extract oil and other resources, and to convert what is left of the land to monocrop agroexport using laboratory-produced seeds in an environment shorn of its treasures and variety.

The scenes in Cauca and South-eastern Turkey are very different from the celebrations of the Via Campesina gathering at the MST community. But Turkey and Colombia are inspiring and hopeful in different ways, because of the courage and dedication of people struggling for justice and freedom, confronting the empire where it is killing and destroying.

These are some of the signs of the future if “imperial ambition” proceeds on its normal course, now to be accelerated by the grand strategy of global rule by force. None of this is inevitable, and among the good models for ending these crimes are the ones I mentioned: the MST, the Via Campesina, and the WSF.

At the WSF, the range of issues and problems under intense discussion is very broad, remarkably so, but I think we can identify two main themes. One is global justice and Life after Capitalism – or to put it more simply, life, because it is not so clear that the human species can survive very long under existing state capitalist institutions. The second theme is related: war and peace, and more specifically, the war in Iraq that Washington and London are desperately seeking to carry out, virtually alone.

Let’s start with some good news about these basic themes. As you know, there is also a conference of the World Economic Forum going on right now, in Davos. Here in Porto Alegre, the mood is hopeful, vigorous, exciting. In Davos, the New York Times tells us, “the mood has darkened.” For the “movers and shakers,” it is not “global party time” any more. In fact, the founder of the Forum has conceded defeat: “The power of corporations has completely disappeared,” he said. So we have won. There is nothing left for us to do but pick up the pieces – not only to talk about a vision of the future that is just and humane, but to move on to create it.

Of course, we should not let the praise go to our heads. There are still a few difficulties ahead.

The main theme of the WEF is “Building Trust.” There is a reason for that. The “masters of the universe,” as they liked to call themselves in more exuberant days, know that they are in serious trouble. They recently released a poll showing that trust in leaders has severely declined. Only the leaders of NGOs had the trust of a clear majority, followed by UN and spiritual/religious leaders, then leaders of Western Europe and economic managers, below them corporate execu-

tives, and well below them, at the bottom, leaders of the US, with about 25 per cent trust. That may well mean virtually no trust: when people are asked whether they trust leaders with power, they usually say “Yes,” out of habit.

It gets worse. A few days ago a poll in Canada found that over 1/3 of the population regard the US as the greatest threat to world peace. The US ranks more than twice as high as Iraq or North Korea, and far higher than al-Qaeda as well. A poll without careful controls, by Time magazine, found that over 80 per cent of respondents in Europe regarded the US as the greatest threat to world peace, compared with less than 10 per cent for Iraq or North Korea. Even if these numbers are wrong by some substantial factor, they are dramatic.

Without going on, the corporate leaders who paid \$30,000 to attend the somber meetings in Davos have good reasons to take as their theme: “Building Trust.”

The coming war with Iraq is undoubtedly contributing to these interesting and important developments. Opposition to the war is completely without historical precedent. In Europe it is so high that Secretary of “Defense” Donald Rumsfeld dismissed Germany and France as just the “old Europe,” plainly of no concern because of their disobedience. The “vast numbers of other countries in Europe [are] with the United States,” he assured foreign journalists. These vast numbers are the “new Europe,” symbolized by Italy’s Berlusconi, soon to visit the White House, praying that he will be invited to be the third of the “three B’s”: Bush-Blair-Berlusconi – assuming that he can stay out of jail. Italy is on board, the White House tells us. It is apparently not a problem that over 80 per

cent of the public is opposed to the war, according to recent polls. That just shows that the people of Italy also belong to the "old Europe," and can be sent to the ashcan of history along with France and Germany, and others who do not know their place.

Spain is hailed as another prominent member of the new Europe - with 75% totally opposed to the war, according to an international Gallup poll. According to the leading foreign policy analyst of Newsweek, pretty much the same is true of the most hopeful part of the new Europe, the former Communist countries that are counted on (quite openly) to serve US interests and undermine Europe's despised social market and welfare states. He reports that in Czechoslovakia, 2/3 of the population oppose participation in a war, while in Poland only 1/4 would support a war even if the UN inspectors "prove that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction." The Polish press reports 37% approval in this case, still extremely low, at the heart of the "new Europe."

New Europe soon identified itself in an open letter in the Wall Street Journal: along with Italy, Spain, Poland and Czechoslovakia - the leaders, that is, not the people - it includes Denmark (with popular opinion on the war about the same as Germany, therefore "old Europe"), Portugal (53 per cent opposed to war under any circumstances, 96 per cent opposed to war by the US and its allies unilaterally), Britain (40 per cent opposed to war under any circumstances, 90 per cent opposed to war by the US and its allies unilaterally), and Hungary (no figures available).

In brief, the exciting "new Europe" consists of some leaders who are willing to defy their populations.

Old Europe reacted with some annoyance to Rumsfeld's declaration that they are "problem" countries, not modern states. Their reaction was explained by thoughtful US commentators. Keeping just to the national press, we learn that "world-weary European allies" do not appreciate the "moral rectitude" of the President. The evidence for his "moral rectitude" is that "his advisors say the evangelical zeal" comes directly from the simple man who is dedicated to driving evil from the world. Since that is surely the most reliable and objective evidence that can be imagined, it would be improper to express slight skepticism, let alone to react as we would to similar performances by others. The cynical Europeans, we are told, misinterpret Bush's purity of soul as "moral naiveté" - without a thought that the administration's PR specialists might have a hand in creating imagery that will sell. We are informed further that there is a great divide between world-weary Europe and the "idealistic New World bent on ending inhumanity." That this is the driving purpose of the idealistic New World we also know for certain, because so our leaders proclaim. What more in the way of proof could one seek?

The rare mention of public opinion in the new Europe treats it as a problem of marketing; the product being sold is necessarily right and honorable, given its source. The willingness of the leaders of the new Europe to prefer Washington to their own populations "threatens to isolate the Germans and French," who are exhibiting retrograde democratic tendencies, and shows that Germany and France cannot "say that they are speaking for Europe." They are merely speaking for the people of old and new Europe, who - the same commentators acknowledge - express "strong opposition" to the policies of the new Europe.

The official pronouncements and the reaction to them are illuminating. They demonstrate with some clarity the contempt for democracy that is rather typical, historically, among those who feel that they rule the world by right.

There are many other illustrations. When German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder dared to take the position of the overwhelming majority of voters in the last election, that was described as a shocking failure of leadership, a serious problem that Germany must overcome if it wants to be accepted in the civilized world. The problem lies with Germany, not elites of the Anglo-American democracies. Germany's problem is that "the government lives in fear of the voters, and that is causing it to make mistake after mistake" - the spokesperson for the right-wing Christian Social Union party, who understands the real nature of democracy.

The case of Turkey is even more revealing. As throughout the region, Turks are very strongly opposed to the war - about 90 per cent according to the most recent polls. And so far the government has irresponsibly paid some attention to the people who elected it. It has not bowed completely to the intense pressure and threats that Washington is exerting to compel it to heed the master's voice. This reluctance of the elected government to follow orders from on high proves that its leaders are not true democrats. For those who may be too dull to comprehend these subtleties, they are explained by former Ambassador to Turkey Morton Abramowitz, now a distinguished senior statesman and commentator. Ten years ago, he explained, Turkey was governed by a real democrat, Turgut Ozal, who "overrode his countrymen's pronounced preference to stay out of the Gulf war." But democracy has

declined in Turkey. The current leadership “is following the people,” revealing its lack of “democratic credentials.” “Regrettably,” he says, “for the US there is no Ozal around.” So it will be necessary to bring authentic democracy to Turkey by economic strangulation and other coercive means – regrettably, but that is demanded by what the elite press calls our “yearning for democracy.”

Brazil is witnessing another exercise of the real attitudes towards democracy among the masters of the universe. In the most free election in the hemisphere, a large majority voted for policies that are strongly opposed by international finance and investors, by the IMF and the US Treasury Department. In earlier years, that would have been the signal for a military coup installing a murderous National Security State, as in Brazil 40 years ago. Now that will not work; the populations of South and North have changed, and will not easily tolerate it. Furthermore, there are now simpler ways to undermine the will of the people, thanks to the neoliberal instruments that have been put in place: economic controls, capital flight, attacks on currency, privatization, and other devices that are well-designed to reduce the arena of popular choice. These, it is hoped, may compel the government to follow the dictates of what international economists call the “virtual parliament” of investors and lenders, who make the real decisions, coercing the population, an irrelevant nuisance according to the reigning principles of democracy.

When I was just about to leave for the airport I received another of the many inquiries from the press about why there is so little anti-war protest in the US. The impressions are instructive. In fact, protest in the US, as elsewhere, is also at levels

that have no historical precedent. Not just demonstrations, teach-ins, and other public events. To take an example of a different kind, last week the Chicago City Council passed an anti-war resolution, 46-1, joining 50 other cities and towns. The same is true in other sectors, including those that are the most highly trusted, as the WEF learned to its dismay: NGOs and religious organizations and figures, with few exceptions. Several months ago the biggest university in the country passed a strong antiwar resolution – the University of Texas, right next door to George W’s ranch. And it’s easy to continue.

So why the widespread judgment among elites that the tradition of dissent and protest has died? Invariably, comparisons are drawn to Vietnam, a very revealing fact. We have just passed the 40th anniversary of the public announcement that the Kennedy administration was sending the US Air Force to bomb South Vietnam, also initiating plans to drive millions of people into concentration camps and chemical warfare programs to destroy food crops. There was no pretext of defense, except in the sense of official rhetoric: defense against the “internal aggression” of South Vietnamese in South Vietnam and their “assault from the inside” (President Kennedy and his UN Ambassador, Adlai Stevenson). Protest was non-existent. It did not reach any meaningful level for several years. By that time hundreds of thousands of US troops had joined the occupying army, densely-populated areas were being demolished by saturation bombing, and the aggression had spread to the rest of Indochina. Protest among elite intellectuals kept primarily to “pragmatic grounds”: the war was a “mistake” that was becoming too costly to the US. In sharp contrast, by the late 1960s the great majority of the public had come to oppose the war as “funda-

mentally wrong and immoral,” not “a mistake,” figures that hold steady until the present.

Today, in dramatic contrast to the 1960s, there is large-scale, committed, and principled popular protest all over the US before the war has been officially launched. That reflects a steady increase over these years in unwillingness to tolerate aggression and atrocities, one of many such changes, worldwide in fact. That’s part of the background for what is taking place in Porto Alegre, and part of the reason for the gloom in Davos.

The political leadership is well aware of these developments. When a new administration comes into office, it receives a review of the world situation compiled by the intelligence agencies. It is secret; we learn about these things many years later. But when Bush #1 came into office in 1989, a small part of the review was leaked, a passage concerned with “cases where the U.S. confronts much weaker enemies” – the only kind one would think of fighting. Intelligence analysts advised that in conflicts with “much weaker enemies” the US must win “decisively and rapidly,” or popular support will collapse. It’s not like the 1960s, when the population would tolerate a murderous and destructive war for years without visible protest. That’s no longer true. The activist movements of the past 40 years have had a significant civilizing effect. By now, the only way to attack a much weaker enemy is to construct a huge propaganda offensive depicting it as about to commit genocide, maybe even a threat to our very survival, then to celebrate a miraculous victory over the awesome foe, while chanting praises to the courageous leaders who came to the rescue just in time.

That is the current scenario in Iraq.

Polls reveal more support for the planned war in the US than elsewhere, but the numbers are misleading. It is important to bear in mind that the US is the only country outside Iraq where Saddam Hussein is not only reviled but also feared. There is a flood of lurid propaganda warning that if we do not stop him today he will destroy us tomorrow. The next evidence of his weapons of mass destruction may be a "mushroom cloud," so National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice announced in September – presumably over New York. No one in Iraq's neighborhood seems overly concerned, much as they may hate the murderous tyrant. Perhaps that is because they know that as a result of the sanctions "the vast majority of the country's population has been on a semi-starvation diet for years," as the World Health Organization reported, and that Iraq is one of the weakest states in the region: its economy and military expenditures are a fraction of Kuwait's, which has 10% of Iraq's population, and much farther below others nearby.

But the US is different. When Congress granted the President authority to go to war last October, it was "to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq." We must tremble in fear before this awesome threat, while countries nearby seek to reintegrate Iraq into the region, including those who were attacked by Saddam when he was a friend and ally of those who now run the show in Washington - and who were happily providing him with aid including the means to develop WMD, at a time when he was far more dangerous than today and had already committed by far his worst crimes.

A serious measure of support for war in the US would have to extricate this "fear factor," which is genu-

ine, and unique to the US. The residue would give a more realistic measure of support for the resort to violence, and would show, I think, that it is about the same as elsewhere.

It is also rather striking that strong opposition to the coming war extends right through the establishment. The current issues of the two major foreign policy journals feature articles opposing the war by leading figures of foreign policy elites. The very respectable American Academy of Arts and Sciences released a long monograph on the war, trying to give the most sympathetic possible account of the Bush administration position, then dismantling it point by point. One respected analyst they quote is a Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who warns that the US is becoming "a menace to itself and to mankind" under its current leadership. There are no precedents for anything like this.

We should recognize that these criticisms tend to be narrow. They are concerned with threats to the US and its allies. They do not take into account the likely effects on Iraqis: the warnings of the UN and aid agencies that millions may be at very serious risk in a country that is at the edge of survival after a terrible war that targeted its basic infrastructure – which amounts to biological warfare - and a decade of devastating sanctions that have killed hundreds of thousands of people and blocked any reconstruction, while strengthening the brutal tyrant who rules Iraq. It is also interesting that the criticisms do not even take the trouble to mention the lofty rhetoric about democratization and liberation. Presumably, the critics take for granted that the rhetoric is intended for intellectuals and editorial writers – who are not supposed to notice that the drive to war is accompanied by a dramatic dem-

onstration of hatred of democracy, just as they are supposed to forget the record of those who are leading the campaign. That is also why none of this is ever brought up at the UN.

Nevertheless, the threats that do concern establishment critics are very real. They were surely not surprised when the CIA informed Congress last October that they know of no link between Iraq and al Qaeda-style terrorism, but that an attack on Iraq would probably increase the terrorist threat to the West, in many ways. It is likely to inspire a new generation of terrorists bent on revenge, and it might induce Iraq to carry out terrorist actions that are already in place, a possibility taken very seriously by US analysts. A high-level task force of the Council on Foreign Relations just released a report warning of likely terrorist attacks that could be far worse than 9-11, including possible use of WMD right within the US, dangers that become "more urgent by the prospect of the US going to war with Iraq." They provide many illustrations, virtually a cookbook for terrorists. It is not the first; similar ones were published by prominent strategic analysts long before 9-11.

It is also understood that an attack on Iraq may lead not just to more terror, but also to proliferation of WMD, for a simple reason: potential targets of the US recognize that there is no other way to deter the most powerful state in history, which is pursuing "America's Imperial Ambition," posing serious dangers to the US and the world, the author warns in the main establishment journal, *Foreign Affairs*. Prominent hawks warn that a war in Iraq might lead to the "greatest proliferation disaster in history." They know that if Iraq has chemical and biological weapons, the dictatorship keeps them under tight control. They un-

derstand further that except as a last resort if attacked, Iraq is highly unlikely to use any WMD it has, thus inviting instant incineration. And it is also highly unlikely to leak them to the Osama bin Ladens of the world, which would be a terrible threat to Saddam Hussein himself, quite apart from the reaction if there is even a hint that this might take place. But under attack, the society would collapse, including the controls over WMD. These would be "privatized," terrorism experts point out, and offered to the huge "market for unconventional weapons, where they will have no trouble finding buyers." That really is a "nightmare scenario," just as the hawks warn.

Even before the Bush administration began beating the war drums about Iraq, there were plenty of warnings that its adventurism was going to lead to proliferation of WMD, as well as terror, simply as a deterrent. Right now, Washington is teaching the world a very ugly and dangerous lesson: if you want to defend yourself from us, you had better mimic North Korea and pose a credible military threat, including WMD. Otherwise we will demolish you in pursuit of the new "grand strategy" that has caused shudders not only among the usual victims, and in "old Europe," but right at the heart of the US foreign policy elite, who recognize that "commitment of the US to active military confrontation for decisive national advantage will leave the world more dangerous and the US less secure" – again, quoting respected figures in elite journals.

Evidently, the likely increase of terror and proliferation of WMD is of limited concern to planners in Washington, in the context of their real priorities. Without too much difficulty, one can think of reasons why this might be the case, not very attractive ones.

The nature of the threats was dramatically underscored last October, at the summit meeting in Havana on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis, attended by key participants from Russia, the US, and Cuba. Planners knew at the time that they had the fate of the world in their hands, but new information released at the Havana summit was truly startling. We learned that the world was saved from nuclear devastation by one Russian submarine captain, Vasily Arkhipov, who blocked an order to fire nuclear missiles when Russian submarines were attacked by US destroyers near Kennedy's "quarantine" line. Had Arkhipov agreed, the nuclear launch would have almost certainly set off an interchange that could have "destroyed the Northern hemisphere," as Eisenhower had warned.

The dreadful revelation is particularly timely because of the circumstances: the roots of the missile crisis lay in international terrorism aimed at "regime change," two concepts very much in the news today. US terrorist attacks against Cuba began shortly after Castro took power, and were sharply escalated by Kennedy, leading to a very plausible fear of invasion, as Robert McNamara has acknowledged. Kennedy resumed the terrorist war immediately after the crisis was over; terrorist actions against Cuba, based in the US, peaked in the late 1970s continued 20 years later. Putting aside any judgment about the behavior of the participants in the missile crisis, the new discoveries demonstrate with brilliant clarity the terrible and unanticipated risks of attacks on a "much weaker enemy" aimed at "regime change" – risks to survival, it is no exaggeration to say.

As for the fate of the people of Iraq, no one can predict with any

confidence: not the CIA, not Donald Rumsfeld, not those who claim to be experts on Iraq, no one. Possibilities range from the frightening prospects for which the aid agencies are preparing, to the delightful tales spun by administration PR specialists and their chorus. One never knows. These are among the many reasons why decent human beings do not contemplate the threat or use of violence, whether in personal life or international affairs, unless reasons have been offered that have overwhelming force. And surely nothing remotely like that has been offered in the present case, which is why opposition to the plans of Washington and London has reached such scale and intensity.

The timing of the Washington-London propaganda campaign was so transparent that it too has been a topic of discussion, and sometimes ridicule, right in the mainstream. The campaign began in September of last year. Before that, Saddam was a terrible guy, but not an imminent threat to the survival of the US. The "mushroom cloud" was announced in early September. Since then, fear that Saddam will attack the US has been running at about 60-70 per cent of the population. "The desperate urgency about moving rapidly against Iraq that Bush expressed in October was not evident from anything he said two months before," the chief political analyst of United Press International observed, drawing the obvious conclusion: September marked the opening of the political campaign for the mid-term congressional elections. The administration, he continued, was "campaigning to sustain and increase its power on a policy of international adventurism, new radical preemptive military strategies, and a hunger for a politically convenient and perfectly timed confrontation with Iraq." As long as domestic issues were in the fore-

front, Bush and his cohorts were losing ground – naturally enough, because they are conducting a serious assault against the general population. “But lo and behold! Though there have been no new terrorist attacks or credible indications of imminent threat, since the beginning of September, national security issues have been in the driver’s seat,” not just al Qaeda but an awesome and threatening military power, Iraq.

The same observations have been made by many others. That’s convenient for people like us: we can just quote the mainstream instead of giving controversial analyses. The Carnegie Endowment Senior Associate I quoted before writes that Bush and Co. are following “the classic modern strategy of an endangered right-wing oligarchy, which is to divert mass discontent into nationalism,” inspired by fear of enemies about to destroy us. That strategy is of critical importance if the “radical nationalists” setting policy in Washington hope to advance their announced plan for “unilateral world domination through absolute military superiority,” while conducting a major assault against the interests of the large majority of the domestic population.

For the elections, the strategy worked, barely. The Fall 2002 election was won by a small number of votes, but enough to hand Congress to the executive. Analyses of the election found that voters maintained their opposition to the administration on social and economic issues, but suppressed these issues in favor of security concerns, which typically lead to support for the figure in authority – the brave cowboy who must ride to our rescue, just in time.

As history shows, it is all too easy for unscrupulous leaders to terrify the public, with consequences

that have not been attractive. That is the natural method to divert attention from the fact that tax cuts for the rich and other devices are undermining prospects for a decent life for large majority of the population, and for future generations. When the presidential campaign begins, Republican strategists surely do not want people to be asking questions about their pensions, jobs, health care, and other such matters. Rather, they should be praising their heroic leader for rescuing them from imminent destruction by a foe of colossal power, and marching on to confront the next powerful force bent on our destruction. It could be Iran, or conflicts in the Andean countries: there are lots of good choices, as long as the targets are defenseless.

These ideas are second nature to the current political leaders, most of them recycled from the Reagan administration. They are replaying a familiar script: drive the country into deficit so as to be able to undermine social programs, declare a “war on terror” (as they did in 1981) and conjure up one devil after another to frighten the population into obedience. In the `80s it was Libyan hitmen prowling the streets of Washington to assassinate our leader, then the Nicaraguan army only two-days march from Texas, a threat to survival so severe that Reagan had to declare a national emergency. Or an airfield in Grenada that the Russians were going to use to bomb us (if they could find it on a map); Arab terrorists seeking to kill Americans everywhere while Qaddafi plans to “expel America from the world,” so Reagan wailed. Or Hispanic narcotraffickers seeking to destroy the youth; and on, and on.

Meanwhile the political leadership were able to carry out domestic policies that had generally poor economic outcomes but did create

wealth for narrow sectors while harming a considerable majority of the population – the script that is being followed once again. And since the public knows it, they have to resort to “the classic modern strategy of an endangered right wing oligarchy” if they hope to carry out the domestic and international programs to which they are committed, perhaps even to institutionalize them so they will be hard to dismantle when they lose control.

Of course, there is much more to it than domestic considerations – which are of no slight importance in themselves. The September 11 terrorist atrocities provided an opportunity and pretext to implement long-standing plans to take control of Iraq’s immense oil wealth, a central component of the Persian Gulf resources that the State Department, in 1945, described as “a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history.” US intelligence predicts that these will be of even greater significance in the years ahead. The issue has never been access. The same intelligence analyses anticipate that the US will rely on more secure supplies in the Western hemisphere and West Africa. The same was true after World War II. What matters is control over the “material prize,” which funnels enormous wealth to the US in many ways, Britain as well, and the “stupendous source of strategic power,” which translates into a lever of “unilateral world domination” - the goal that is now openly proclaimed, and is frightening much of the world, including “old Europe” and the conservative establishment in the US.

I think a realistic look at the world gives a mixed picture. There are many reasons to be encouraged, but there will be a long hard road ahead.

## WAR AND FREE TRADE

*"This is not a localized war. This is a truly global war, a war for the recolonization of the South," says Peter Rosset, co-director of Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy (<http://www.foodfirst.org>) in Oakland, CA, USA. The following article has been translated from the original in Spanish that appeared in Alai-Amlatina, a Latin American News Agency. The translation was done by Common Frontiers, a Canada-based multi-sectoral working group which confronts, and proposes an alternative to, the social, environmental and economic effects of economic integration in the Americas through the FTAA.*

For some years now the United States has been mired in a crisis with multiple dimensions, a crisis that is getting deeper and more complex all the time. First of all, over the past few decades American industry has been suffering from a drop in its competitiveness viz a viz Europe and Asia. A beginning with the end of the cold war, the traditional allies of the U.S. have been gradually distancing themselves from the former patron. The U.S. also has an internal crisis of legitimacy of the co-called neoliberal model, formerly called Reaganomics but now official doctrine of both parties, thanks to rising social polarization (unemployment, crime, corruption) and scandals like Enron, WorldCom, etc. Finally, there are President Bush's crisis of electoral legitimacy, and the current deep recession of the U.S. economy.

With so many problems, should we be surprised that the powers that be are launching a war? One of the oldest tactics of American presidents is to use war to stimulate the economy and distract people's attention from problems at home. But by looking a little deeper, we also find close links between the war and accompanying militarization, and the fanatical American push for so-called "free trade" policies at any cost.

In reality, the U.S. is seeking to recover its pre-eminent position in the world - pre-eminent economically, politically and militarily - by both military and commercial means. Thus we might ask: what are the aims behind the recent U.S. construction of military bases in Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia? And behind the war in Iraq? In the first place, and very evidently in the case

of oil, there is control over strategic resources. And of course there is the old need to "make the world safe for US corporations and investors", giving military protection to capital investments and the untrammelled accumulation of profits. The war against Iraq fulfills a double purpose. In addition to distracting the American electorate, the U.S. wants to control the petroleum resources of the Middle East while at the same time issuing a warning to other nations of the South, who once again are surrounded by American bases. "Behave yourselves, or you may be next!" is the message. This is not a localized war. This is a truly global war, a war for the recolonization of the South.

Now, if we analyze the goals of recent and pending free trade agreements (the WTO, FTAA, NAFTA and bilateral accords), we find a great similarity with the above mentioned purposes of the war and militarization. By means of these agreements, northern corporations are to be guaranteed access to Southern markets, eliminating all barriers to the repatriation of profits, and they would also gain control over key resources like oil, water, and germplasm by means of privatization. In other words, recolonization, pure and simple. Thus we might say that trade liberalization is really war by other means.

This leaves us with a question. If the WTO already exists, why does the US also need the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)? That's simple. If the current round of WTO agreements are signed at the next Ministerial meeting to be held in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003, it would essentially signify

the consolidation of all countries within one global economy. In this global economy, American industry would have to face up to its problems of competitiveness when faced with competitors from Europe, Japan and China. In this context, the U.S. wants to assure itself of an edge, in effect by having 'private reserves' where its corporations have greater access than others. These private reserves are the FTAA, NAFTA and the bilateral accords the U.S. wants to force on individual countries.

In these free trade areas, American corporations will have privileged access over their European and Asian counterparts.

With the war on Iraq, with new military bases spread far and wide, and with the FTAA, NAFTA and bilateral trade accords, the USA is seeking the advantage over its competitors in the new war for recolonization of the Third World. A war combining military might with free trade. A war which, in addition to the terrible toll taken on Southern populations, also has a devastating impact at home. As a result of "free" trade, the family farm is virtually a thing of the past in rural America, while unemployment and inner city desperation are on the rise. With the additional cutbacks of social programs that will inevitably result from the war on Iraq, these problems will intensify. Seen in this context, at this moment in history, it is essential that we link-up anti-war movements in the South and in the North both with each other, and also with the world-wide movement against neo-liberal globalization as represented by free trade agreements. "Free" trade is nothing less than war by other means, a war against all peoples, North and South.

## LEFT BEHIND TO STARVE

*As cash is poured into the war with Iraq and its aftermath, a humanitarian disaster is engulfing Africa. The following article by **George Monbiot** was posted on his website ([www.monbiot.com](http://www.monbiot.com)) on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2003. He is Honorary Professor at the Department of Politics in Keele and Visiting Professor at the Department of Environmental Science at the University of East London and formerly Visiting Fellow at Green College Oxford and Visiting Professor at the Department of Philosophy, Bristol. He's the author of **Captive State: The corporate takeover of Britain**, and the investigative travel books **Poisoned Arrows**, **Amazon Watershed** and **No Man's Land**.*

There is surely no more obvious symptom of the corruption of western politics than the disproportion between the money available for sustaining life and the money available for terminating it. We could, I think, expect that, if they were asked to vote on the matter, most of the citizens of the rich world would demand that their governments spend as much on humanitarian aid as they spend on developing new means of killing people. But the military-industrial complex is a beast which becomes both fiercer and greedier the more it is fed.

As the United States prepares to spend some \$12 billion a month on bombing the Iraqis, it has so far offered only \$65 million to provide them with food, water, sanitation, shelter and treatment for the injuries they are likely to receive<sup>1</sup>. A confidential UN contingency plan for Iraq, which was leaked in January, suggests that the war could expose around one million children to "risk of death from malnutrition." It warns that "the collapse of essential services in Iraq could lead to a humanitarian emergency of proportions well beyond the capacity of UN agencies and other aid organizations."<sup>2</sup> Around 60 per cent of the population is entirely dependent on the oil for food programme, administered by the Iraqi government. This scheme was suspended by the UN yesterday, leaving the Iraqis reliant on foreign aid. The money pledged so far is enough to sustain the Iraqis for less than a fortnight.<sup>3</sup>

It is hard to believe, however, that the US government will leave them to starve once it has captured

their country. For the weeks or months during which Iraq dominates the news, the US will be obliged to defend them from the most immediate impacts of the institutional collapse its war will cause. Afterwards, like the people of Afghanistan, the Iraqis will be first forgotten by the media and then deserted by those who promised to support them. But even before the first troops cross the border, the impending war has caused a global humanitarian crisis. As donor countries set aside their aid budgets to save both themselves and the United States from embarrassment under the camera lights in Baghdad, they have all but ceased to provide money to other nations. The world, as a result, could soon be confronted by a humanitarian funding crisis graver than any since the end of the Second World War.

Every year, in November, the UN agencies which deal with disasters launch what they call a "consolidated appeal" for each of the countries suffering a "complex emergency". They expect to receive the money they request by May of the following year. The payments and promises they have extracted so far chart the collapse of international concern for the people of almost every nation except Iraq.

In Eritrea, for example, the drought is so severe that the water table has fallen by ten metres. Most of the nation's crops have failed and grain prices have doubled. Seventy per cent of its 3.3 million people are now classified as vulnerable to famine.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations has asked the rich countries for \$163m to help

them. It has received \$4m, or 2.5 per cent of the money it requested.<sup>5</sup>

Burundi, where almost one sixth of the inhabitants have been forced out of their homes by conflict and natural disasters, and which is now officially listed as the third poorest nation on earth, has received 3% of its UN request. Liberia, where rebels have rendered much of the western part of the country uninhabitable, forcing some 500,000 people out of their homes, has been given 1.2%; Sierra Leone, where lassa fever is now rampaging through the refugee camps, has received 1%; and Guinea, which has recently taken 82,000 refugees from Cote d'Ivoire, 0.4 per cent. Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo have all received less than 6 per cent.

Much of the money for these invisible countries has come from donor nations with relatively small economies, such as Sweden, Norway, Canada and Ireland. "The state of Africa", Tony Blair told his party conference in October 2001, "is a scar on the conscience of the world, but if the world focused on it, we could heal it."<sup>6</sup> Well, let it now be a scar on the conscience of Tony Blair.

As a result of this unprecedented failure by the rich nations to cough up, the people of the forgotten countries will, very soon, begin to starve to death. The UN has warned that "a break in supplies" to Eritrea "is now inevitable."<sup>7</sup> The World Food Programme has started feeding fewer people there, but will run out of food within two months. In Burundi it

can, it says, continue feeding people "for another four weeks."<sup>8</sup> Beans will run out in Liberia this month; cereals in May.<sup>9</sup> One hundred thousand refugees in Guinea could find themselves without food by August.<sup>10</sup> Yet neither of the two governments which are about to launch a "humanitarian war" appear to be concerned by the impending humanitarian catastrophes in the world's poorest nations.

The aid crisis is now so serious that it is restricting disaster relief even in nations which are considered by the major powers to be geopolitically important. The UN agencies have so far received just 2.9 per cent of their request for Palestine, and 8.4 per cent of the money they need in Afghanistan.

The latter figure is, in light of the repeated promises made by the nations prosecuting the war there,

extraordinary. "To the Afghan people we make this commitment," Blair pledged during the same speech in October 2001. "The conflict will not be the end. We will not walk away, as the outside world has done so many times before."<sup>11</sup> Three months later, the UN estimated that Afghanistan would need at least \$10bn for reconstruction over the following five years. The US, which had just spent \$4.5bn on bombing the country, offered \$300m for the first year and refused to make any commitment for subsequent years. This year, George Bush "forgot" to produce an aid budget for Afghanistan, until he was forced to provide another \$300m by Congress.<sup>12</sup>

The government, which has an annual budget of just \$460 million - or around half of what the US still spends every month on chasing the

remnants of Al Qaeda through the mountains - is effectively bankrupt. At the beginning of this month the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, flew to Washington to beg George Bush for more money. He was given \$50m, \$35m of which the US insists is spent on the construction of a five-star hotel in Kabul.<sup>13</sup> Karzai, in other words, has discovered what the people of Iraq will soon find out: generosity dries up when you are yesterday's news.

If, somehow, you are still suffering from the delusion that this war is to be fought for the sake of the Iraqi people, I would invite you to consider the record of the prosecuting nations. We may believe that George Bush and Tony Blair have the interests of foreigners at heart only when they spend more on feeding them than they spend on killing them.

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OPIC pledges additional \$50 million for U.S. investment in Afghanistan

## INVITATION TO A LYNCHING

*The following article was written by John Maxwell, a respected Jamaican journalist. It appeared in the Jamaica Observer, in his 'Common Sense' Column on Sunday, March 16, 2003.*

START with the obvious.

War kills. Kills people. Men, women, pregnant women, babies, children, teenagers, athletes, musicians, old people, beautiful people, ugly people, black people, white people, any people. It kills animals: chickens, cows, camels, dogs and cats. War is no respecter of personality or brainpower. It kills teachers, nurses, doctors, journalists and lots of soldiers who are simply civilians dressed for the occasion. War doesn't usually kill politicians.

War degrades, makes people into beggars and whores, turns geniuses into babbling idiots. War brings hunger, and misery, and poverty and pain, lots of pain, broken bodies, deranged minds and the thirst for revenge.

War is the enemy of peace and of development, the enemy of logic and reason, the antithesis of life, liberty and happiness. War is rape, brutality, blackmail and indignity. It is terror and unreasoning fear. It is inhuman, inhumane and anti-human.

War stinks: of blood, of death, of rotting flesh and burning houses and shattered lives. It is the antithesis of hope.

War is obscene, shameful criminality dressed up in uniform, in ideology, in war games, staff orders, medals and brand new technology designed to destroy, to kill and brutalise.

War is against life. It is the antithesis of civilisation. War destroys the human environment: it negates civility, neighbourliness, friendship, courtesy, kindness, charity and beauty. War is merciless. It is murder. War is hell.

But you knew all that already. You've seen it on TV, in the movies,

the video games, read about it in books, in comics.

Even if you didn't know, you could probably figure out that it is because war is so evil and so destructive that the world has been trying for a long time to devise ways to avoid war, to maintain peace, to pursue human development, to scale the heights achievable by the indomitable human spirit.

It is to prevent war that men have signed treaties, established covenants, created the League of Nations and later the United Nations to ensure the peace, to try to define justice, to institutionalise mercy and compassion. We shall Overcome.

### The end of reason

War, is above all, lies. Satanic untruths designed to propel ordinary people into hysteria and fear, to move them to suspect, envy, hate and wish for vengeance against their own humanity.

In the last several months we have been warned that Saddam Hussein is a liar, a tyrant, a murderer, an assassin. He may very well be all of that but who provided him with the materials and technology for chemical, biological and conventional warfare? Who are his accomplices?

And, when we are told that Saddam is not serious about disarming, how are we to understand what is meant when those on our side produce, as evidence of his deviousness, forged documents, plagiarised theses and pictures of food distribution trucks which we are told are mobile labs for the production of weapons of mass destruction?

Who are we to believe when our side tells us that Saddam possesses

weapons of mass destruction, while the inspectors sent in by the UN have found no such evidence even when they searched the very areas, farms and houses which Mr Powell said were arms factories? The president of the US makes allegations about mobile labs which are flatly contradicted, within hours, by the weapons inspectors.

The prospect of war has already done serious damage to the so-called Atlantic Alliance, split the European Union, divided people from their governments. The Palestinian crisis, festering for 50 years, is, we are told, suddenly going to be solved now that the US and UK find it impossible to get approval for their war because most of us see a higher priority in Palestine than in Iraq?

In Iraq itself, where 10 million people will probably be starving within the next few weeks, and a million children may die because of the war, almost every household has a firearm. If the Iraqis are so oppressed by Saddam, if as Newsweek says he's "hated by his own subjects," why is Saddam giving guns to his people when they should be expected to turn the guns on him?

If this war will licence the Turks to invade the Kurdish area of Iraq, now under American protection, don't we realise that we are starting another war, because while the Kurds hate Saddam, they hate and fear the Turks even more?

### No mandate for war

Although a majority of Americans are in favour of war with Iraq, they want the UN to licence that war, perhaps conscious that they have not been told the whole truth. Nearly half of all Americans (42 per cent) believe that Saddam was personally responsible for 9/11. Maureen Dowd in the New York Times con-

demns her president as "exploitative" because he cited 9/11 "eight times in his news conference." ... given that the administration concedes there is no evidence tying Iraq to the 9/11 plot. By stressing that totem, Mr Bush tried to alchemise American anger at Al Qaeda into support for smashing Saddam." But not everyone is ignorant. The city councils of America's three largest metropolises have passed resolutions opposing the war: New York (pop 8m) Los Angeles (4m) and Chicago (3m) join Atlanta, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, Seattle, Milwaukee and others in opposition.

Mr Richard Gephardt, formerly leader of the Democrats in Congress, voted to give Mr Bush authority to defend the US, even if it meant war. Last week, however, Mr Gephardt said of Mr Bush: "The problem we've got is he is the president of the United States."

Mr Bush's own father, the former president, said a week ago that the case against Iraq was less clear than it was 12 years ago. And, he added, that he would have been able to achieve nothing if he had ignored the UN.

Even people like Thomas Friedman of the New York Times, who was quite ready for war not so long ago, now counsels caution: "Saddam Hussein has neither the intention nor the capability to threaten America and is easily deterrable if he did."

Last week, Friedman said, inter alia, that "some things are true even if George Bush believes them". He went on to criticise the president for hyping the threat, and combining that with neglecting important domestic concerns as well as the Arab-Israeli peace process. Friedman thinks Bush's bullying diplomacy will explode whatever is left of post 9/11 solidarity in a "divisive, unilateral war."

### George W Queeg

Another NYT columnist, Professor Paul Krugman, says it is clear that deposing Saddam has lost any rationale and is now simply an obsession. In support, Krugman calls up The Nelson Report, an influential foreign policy newsletter which says: "It would be difficult to exaggerate the growing mixture of anger, despair, disgust and fear actuating the foreign policy community in Washington as the attack on Iraq moves closer, and the North Korea crisis festers with no coherent US policy. ... Sober minds wrestle with how to break into the mind of George Bush."

The title of Krugman's column is "George W Queeg", a reference to the monomaniacal Captain Queeg in Herman Wouk's *Caine Mutiny*. Krugman is professor of economics at MIT and no bomb-thrower or flower power weirdo.

On September 15, last year, in my column, I described President Bush's rhetorical carpet bombing of the General Assembly, and made a statement which even my fans then considered hyperbole: "the US is prepared to destroy the UN in order to save it." Did I exaggerate?

The ideologues behind Bush - the Sunday soldiers of the NeoConservative reaction, are even now celebrating what they see as the demise of the UN. The bible of the neoCons, the *Weekly Standard*, this week rejoiced at what it saw as the "implosion of the UN" and argues that the US should ditch the UN and launch what the magazine calls "The Big Three. This is to be an alliance between the US, Britain and Russia" - united no doubt as much by greed as by anything else. Unfortunately for the *Weekly Standard* and its adherents such as Perle, Wolfowitz and the rest, Russia seems clearly rational about where its prospects lie. Some people, apparently, still believe in a balance of power.

What comes over strongest in all the right wing rhetoric is a poisonous and dangerous nineteenth century ideology - to divide and Balkanise the Middle East - to be ruled by Israel as the American satrap; to Balkanise and rule Europe with its satraps Britain and perhaps Russia and to Balkanise and impoverish Latin America in the name of American hegemony.

Fortunately for the rest of us, the UN still exists, and the world is prepared to protect it. That is why the US/UK axis can get no joy in the Security Council. The bullied, the coerced and the bribed and the spied-on have resisted. They do not consider themselves irrelevant. They look at the US with less than 5 per cent of the world's population consuming 30 per cent of the world's annual oil production, and nearly 30 per cent of its Gross World Product and - spending more than 40 per cent of all the world's defence expenditures. They look, and they wonder, who is more dependent; who is less relevant?

In a way, it doesn't matter, because if they go to war, they will set fire to the entire Middle East, produce fundamentalist governments in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and possibly Indonesia and so disturb the whole course of world development that we will be in an even longer and more savage depression than is currently forecast.

### The Jamaican example

It isn't only Mr Bush, of course, who believes that it can always be business as usual. The Jamaican government can make all the noise it wants about Amnesty International, but, like the United States and Britain, we need to remember that there is now, on behalf of the poor and suffering of the world, a device called the International Criminal Court.

It would not surprise me if, within a few years, Jamaican policemen and perhaps politicians, join Ameri-

can soldiers and perhaps politicians before this court.

There is no real difference between the wars against the poor whether waged in Iraq or Jamaica. Anyone can complain to the ICE about any systematic criminality. Persistent organised police brutality and impunity is both systemic and systematic and is forbidden.

All the talk about putting safeguards into place, whether in

Kingston or Baghdad, is so much hogwash. If Justice is not seen to be done, if it isn't done, people now have recourse elsewhere.

### Vigil for peace

World public opinion has in three weeks, reshaped the power struggle in the UN. We can continue to shape it. This Sunday, at 6.30 pm local time, people in cities round the world will assemble for peaceful candlelight vigils in protest against

all that is war. The Jamaican protest will be in front of the US Embassy visa section on Oxford Road. If you live elsewhere, have a vigil there. Anywhere.

One of my candles will be for people "killed in error".

We Shall Overcome. And we don't need violence for that.

## WHY ARE WE CALLING THIS A "WAR"?

*The following article, taken from the Znet, is by Samir Hussain, a graduating medical student at McGill University. He is an independent writer, social justice advocate and a founding member of the Montreal-based Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement. The article was contributed on 25 March, 2003. He can be reached at [hussa03@med.mcgill.ca](mailto:hussa03@med.mcgill.ca)*

Time has shown us that the words we use heavily influence our perception of reality. Catch phrases - "war on terror", "liberating the people of Iraq", "regime change", "spreading democracy" - continue to be unabashedly promulgated by the spin doctors in Washington in tacit agreement with the corporate media. While many may be buying into the jingoistic fervour, there are others who see through the smokescreen of words, and realise that the intentions of the American government are far from benevolent. However, the one word which even dissenters have seemingly acquiesced to using is calling this a "war" with Iraq. Indeed, perpetuating this farcical and misleading term is occurring at the detriment of the resistance movement and any attempt at viewing the current situation through a realistic and just lens.

Political scientists and military analysts have surely debated what the pre-requisites are for calling a particular conflict a "war". However, it would seem that even those of us not well-versed in politics ought to realise the gross inaccuracy of calling this a "war" with Iraq. The United States, as sole superpower in the

world, dwarfs Iraq with respect to its military strength. The United States is known to have a panoply of weapons of mass destruction (e.g. chemical, biological, and nuclear); there has still been no concrete evidence to corroborate the allegation that Iraq possesses these same destructive capacities. It is the American government that sent over 250,000 troops to the borders of Iraq over the past few months; the Iraqi government did not send troops to Canada or Mexico awaiting the signal to invade the United States. While the hawks in Washington have ordered their troops to begin bombing Iraq, Hussein and his regime did not initiate an attack, nor did they threaten to prior to the declaration of this "war" by the United States. Perhaps most instructive, while the intensity of attacks has increased over the past few days, the decimation being inflicted upon the Iraqi people is nothing new; indeed, it has continued unabated through the UN-imposed sanctions and American- and British-led bombing raids over the past 12 years. During this time, Iraq has not once attacked the United States - admittedly because of its inability to do so, rather than any unwillingness on its part.

World War I and II initially saw opposing alliances with comparable military and strategic powers facing off against one another. The Korean and Vietnam Wars, meanwhile, are illustrative of other "wars" in which the "enemy" was significantly weaker, and thus did not pose a direct threat to the United States at the time. In these cases, the potential of "instability" that would arise from the spread of Communism was ostensibly the threat to which the United States reacted. However, even this is not a parallel which can be drawn to the current situation, as the ideology espoused by Saddam Hussein, although odious in its own right, does not pose a direct threat to the United States. Instead, it has become fairly clear that the economic leverage which will be gained through control of Iraq's oil reserves and the strategic dominance to be secured in the Middle East by occupying Iraq, provide the impetus for the American "pre-emptive" strike. Of course, to justify such ignoble intents, the war-mongers in Washington have done their best to convince the world of the threat posed by the Hussein regime in Iraq. Surely, there is nothing novel about using "war" to make the "enemy" a

legitimate threat in the eyes of one's citizens.

To call this a war intuitively suggests a battle between two foes of some comparability, whose armies are on opposing sides shooting at one another across a great divide. The reality is that this is a clash between two psychopathic, violent, arrogant men who find themselves in very different circumstances with very different resources at their disposal. Bush possesses half the world's military hardware and innumerable weapons of mass destruction, while the United States is indisputably the most influential economic and political player on the global scene. Meanwhile, claims that Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction remain unsubstantiated (although admittedly pos-

sible), while the dispossessed people of Iraq have been made to suffer as a result of a combination of his policies and the UN-imposed sanctions over the past 12 years. Consequently, to call this a war minimises the disparity in power between the two nations involved. It makes those opposed to the bombardment of Iraq internalise the notion that these two foes share some degree of equal footing. It undermines the flagrant injustice implicit in the Bush regime's unilateral drive to establish an oppressive global hegemony. But perhaps most importantly, to call this a war does no justice to the people of Iraq who will continue to pay the price in lives lost, as havoc is wreaked on them with impunity.

Although the argument may be made that this is a semantic debate, the truth of the matter is that if we want to begin exposing the budding American empire's lies, we must eschew their words of subtle indoctrination. We must create our own vernacular which accurately depicts the reality of what is happening so that it may be appropriately recorded for posterity's sake. Indeed, there are innumerable terms and expressions which aptly describe what is happening in Iraq, but "war" is not one of them. What we are witnessing is a US-Led Aggression against Iraq to advance an imperialist agenda. It is an Act of State Terrorism in defiance of international law and public opinion. It is an Unjustified Bombardment. It is an Invasion that will end in Occupation. It will be a Massacre.

### 'SHOCK AND AWE' TACTICS WAR CRIMES UNDER GENEVA CONVENTIONS

*continued from page 14*

must take action now to stop the slaughter, bring the US and its allies back under the rule of international law and find a peaceful resolution to this conflict."

\* 'Shock and awe' tactics are designed to launch intensive airstrikes in Iraq to make sure "there will not be a safe place in Baghdad" (Pentagon) and that water, power and other systems necessary to sustain civilian populations are disrupted.

\* 'Shock and awe' tactics are illegal and constitute a war crime.

\* They undermine the 'basic rule' of humanitarian law which says that parties to war must not target civil-

ians or infrastructure on which civilians depend to live.

\* It is also illegal to launch indiscriminate attacks or acts intended to spread terror among the civilian population.

\* The indiscriminate nature of a 'shock and awe' attack is likely to cause serious impacts on civilians, which is illegal under the following Conventions:

Fourth Geneva Convention  
Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions  
a Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)

\* President Bush 'unsigned' the

ICC Statute in the early days of his Administration

\* The US is not a Party to Protocol I of the Geneva Convention, but many of the provisions of Protocol I are widely considered to represent customary international law.

\* The US is a Party to the Geneva Conventions.

\* Britain and Australia are parties to all these conventions and, as participants in the war, whether or not directly participating in the specific attacks, could find their officials liable for war crimes as parties aiding, abetting or assisting the United States.



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