

# Reversing the Tide of War

As we go to press, the Bush Administration is gearing up for an all out war. Battleships, including aircraft carriers and nuclear attack submarines, stationed off the coast of California and Hawaii, are heading for the Middle East. Thousands of US servicemen and women have joined coalition forces in the Persian Gulf and at US military bases in Qatar, Kuwait and the island of Diego Garcia in the Arabian Sea (see map on page 5). According to the Pentagon, a quarter of a million troops, made up of the various coalition forces, will be involved in the invasion of Iraq.

Washington's stated objective is not "to restore democracy", but to set up a US military government in Iraq similar to that established in Japan after World War II. The Iraqi economy will be re-vamped. The country's extensive oil wealth will be taken over by the Anglo-American oil giants (see details on page 4).

Washington has also stepped up its war of intimidation against the Iraqi people. Southern Iraq has been showered with tens of thousands of leaflets, which portray a dead Iraqi soldier next to an anti-aircraft gun and his grieving widow. Adjacent to that image is a warning in Arabic: *Before you engage coalition aircraft, think about the consequences, think about your family.*

## The UN Gives the Green Light

Instead of condemning the US/UK war plans, which constitute a blatant violation of the UN charter, the UN Security Council has provided Washington – "in the name of the international community" – with a *de facto* green light to wage war on Iraq in the months ahead. The Security Council resolution warns of "serious consequences" should Iraq not "meet conditions for monitoring Iraq's arms program".

Washington has no intention to support the implementation of this UN resolution. Quite the opposite! Its hidden agenda is to pull out of the weapons inspection program, at some future date, on the grounds of "non-compliance" by the Iraqi authorities. The very detailed conditions imposed on Iraq, under the Security Council resolution, are virtually impossible to meet: "Iraqis know that any little mistake will cost them a war." All the inspectors have to do is state that their work has been obstructed and this will be viewed by the Bush Administration as sufficient to wage war on Iraq.

Washington's intent is to fabricate, once again, "a war pretext incident", which will justify – under a UN rubber stamp – an all-out war. (On the history of war pretext incidents, see page 29.) Remember, the US Congress voted in October to grant Bush the power to go to war against Iraq "after exhausting diplomatic efforts".

## The Battle for Oil – Iraq First, Iran Second

George W's. war plans have nothing to do with Saddam's "weapons of mass destruction," or his alleged links to Osama bin Laden. The broader Middle East/Central Asian region encompasses more than 70% of the world's reserves of oil and natural gas. According to US Central Command: *"The purpose of US engagement... is to protect US vital interest in the region – [i.e. an] uninterrupted, secure US / Allied access to Gulf oil"* (detailed on page 4 and 5). In other words, this is a war of conquest, which also targets rival oil conglomerates, including those of Russia and France which have sizeable oil interests in Iraq and Iran. Why, then, did the three "reluctant" permanent

members of the UN Security Council not exercise their veto? Was there a behind-the-scenes deal with Russia, China and France on "sharing the spoils of a war"? For some reason, France too has now decided to join coalition forces against Iraq.

Although the US-led military operation targets Iraq, there are indications that the war could potentially engulf an area extending from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula into the heartland of Central Asia. The Pentagon's stated war plans consist in a "theater strategy" of "dual containment of the rogue states of Iraq and Iran".

Moreover, while Israel is not "officially" part of the US / UK coalition, the Israeli Defence Force High Command is in permanent liaison with the Pentagon. Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has called upon Washington to bomb Iran as a second step, after the bombing of Iraq. Israel's thermo-nuclear warheads are pointed not only towards Baghdad, but also towards other *major* cities in the Middle East.

## Building a Meaningful Anti-War Movement

We are at the juncture of the most serious crisis in modern history, requiring an unprecedented degree of solidarity, courage and commitment. America's war, which includes the "first strike" use of nuclear weapons, threatens our very civilization, as we know it. In the US, and around the world, the anti-war movement has gained in impetus. While millions of people have joined hands in opposing the war, the Bush Administration's fear and disinformation campaign, which is relayed by the corporate media, has managed to sway a significant sector of the US population into an unconditional acceptance of the war agenda (see Propaganda Preparation on page 19).

At this critical crossroads, the anti-war/pro-democracy movement must necessarily move to a higher plane. The momentum and success of the large anti-war rallies in the US and around the world, should lay the foundations of a permanent network composed of tens of thousands of local level anti-war committees in neighborhoods, work places, parishes, schools, universities, etc. (See Anti-War Rallies on pages 34 to 39.)

To shunt the Bush Administration's war plans, we must, in the months ahead reach out to our fellow citizens across the land, in the US, Canada and around the world, to the millions of ordinary people who have been misled on the causes and consequences of this war, not to mention the implications of the Bush Administration's Homeland Security legislation, which essentially sets in place the building blocks of a police state (see pages 50 to 54, 70 and 71).

To reverse the tide, we must develop a cohesive mass movement. We must *spread the word* by waking up and educating our fellow citizens as to what hazards lie ahead.

When the lies – including those concerning September 11 – are fully revealed and understood by everybody, the legitimacy of the Bush Administration's war rhetoric will be broken – Big Brother will have no leg to stand on, that is, no more wars to feed on.

While this will not necessarily result in a fundamental and immediate "regime change" in the US, a new "anti-war consensus" will have emerged, which will eventually pave the way for a broader struggle against the New World Order and the American Empire's quest for global domination.

## Contradictory Report by Weapons Inspector ‘Wags the Dog’

### The December 16, 1998 Impeachment Motion against Bill Clinton and the August 20, 1998 Grand Jury Testimony by Monica Lewinsky are downplayed by US Bombings

The official story repeated *ad nauseam* by the mainstream media is that Saddam Hussein defied the “international community” and obliged the UN weapons inspectors to leave Iraq on December 15, 1998.

But that is not what happened at all. On December 16, 1998, an impeachment motion against President Bill Clinton was launched by the Republicans in the House of Representatives. And the next day at the outset of the impeachment debate, in a typical “wag the dog” scenario, President Clinton ordered “punitive air strikes” against Iraq on the grounds that Saddam had not complied with the United Nations weapons inspection program.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright played a key role in setting the stage. One week prior to the impeachment debate, she was in permanent liaison with chief weapons inspector Richard Butler. On December 14, Butler presented a contradictory report which acknowledged that “the majority of the inspections facilities and sites under the ongoing monitoring system were carried out with Iraq’s cooperation”, yet concluded that ‘no progress’ had been achieved. (George Monbiot, *The Guardian*, Oct. 8, 2002.)

Former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter confirms that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright – overriding the authority of the United Nations Security Council – ordered the inspectors to leave Iraq on December 15; coincidentally, just one day before the impeachment motion, against Bill Clinton, was put to a vote in the House:

*Saddam Hussein didn’t kick out the UN inspectors. They were ordered out by the US government, which then used*

*information they provided to bomb 100 locations that had nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction. So the weapons inspectors were used by the United States. This is the reality: When Madeleine Albright called up Richard Butler and said, “Jump!” Richard Butler always said, “How high?” It was obvious from day one.*

(Scott Ritter quoted from *In These Times*, 14 October 2002. For further details see Scott Ritter’s article in this issue on page 6.)

#### The Bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan

December 16, 1998 was not the only time when punitive air strikes were used to diffuse public attention from the Lewinsky scandal. President Clinton launched air strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan on August 21, 1998 – the same day Monica Lewinsky was summoned to give her grand jury testimony.

In the words of the *New York Times* (August 20, 1998):

*Ms. Lewinsky’s appearance before the grand jury Thursday, which otherwise would have been prominent news, was relegated to brief reports near the end of the three broadcast-network evening news programs.*

\* \* \*

#### Notes

*Wag the Dog*: In its current usage, it refers to the media creating the crisis, instead of the crisis generating media interest.

## Estimated Death Toll in a US-led attack on Iraq

### This, according to a study of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)

“A US-led attack on Iraq could kill between 48,000 and 260,000 civilians and combatants in just the first three months of conflict, according to a study by medical and public health experts. Post-war health effects could take an additional 200,000 lives. The aftermath of a US-led attack could include civil war, famine, epidemics, millions of refugees and economic collapse, according to the report.”

According to Dr. Victor W. Sidel, Professor of Social Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New

York City, “a ‘pre-emptive’ attack would exacerbate the disastrous levels of death, disease, disability and despair already present in Iraq. At the same time, it would weaken the United Nations, weaken international law, weaken efforts to reduce terrorism and weaken the United States itself.”

If nuclear weapons are used, the IPPNW report estimates the death toll to be as high as 3.9 million.

(For more details visit IPPNW at [www.ippnw.org](http://www.ippnw.org))

\* \* \*

*The United States, with the help of our [UK] Government, shamefully, appears to have bullied and intimidated people into coming on line, and, perhaps, also promised the spoils of war – oil. The resolution is mined with trip wires to trigger a war. It should be named after the film “Wag the Dog”, because if Iraq does not trip up soon, I am pretty certain that the United States will make sure that it does.*

— Alice Mahon, Member of Parliament, British House of Commons