

Editorial

U.S. Sinking Deeper into Iraq Quagmire

As the American occupation forces attempt to crush the Iraqi resistance they are setting the stage for the further deepening of the crisis the U.S. faces in Iraq. When the U.S. attacked the resistance fighters in Fallujah most of them left the city to carry on the fight in Samarra, Mosul, Baghdad and other cities. As the U.S. transfers forces out of Fallujah to counter the resistance elsewhere, there are reports that the resistance fighters are returning to Fallujah to continue the struggle there. The U.S. has resorted to the use of napalm, a prohibited weapon under international law, as well as chemical weapons in an effort to subdue Fallujah. Much of the city has been destroyed and hundreds of thousands of people have been left homeless.

The U.S. assault on Fallujah and other Iraqi cities was carried out with the stated objective of creating a

climate conducive to general elections scheduled to be held at the end of January. However, most observers report that it will be virtually impossible to organize meaningful elections in the Sunni areas of the country where the resistance has been most intense for the past several months. In any event, all of the major Sunni political parties have withdrawn from the election process and are calling for a boycott by electors.

In the Shia areas of the country, the fighting has been less intense since the deal brokered by the Shiite leader Ali-Sistani to end the assault on Najaf earlier in the summer. Since then the Mahdi Army led by Muqtada al-Sadr has been relatively quiet and al-Sadr is expected to participate in the elections.

These events have created an explosive situation

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Canada Adopts Pro-Israeli Stance at United Nations

In the lead up to the recent visit of U.S. President George Bush to Canada, the Martin government appeared to shift Canadian policy on the Middle East to one that is more openly pro-Israeli. According to media reports, the issue came up during Martin's discussions with Bush on his two-day visit.

Allan Rock, Canada's ambassador to the UN, speaking during a debate on the Middle East in November, told the UN General Assembly that resolutions on the Middle East are "often divisive and lack in balance". "References to Israeli security needs are often overlooked in the General Assembly", he said, adding "repeatedly emphasizing Israel's responsibility under international law obscures equally important responsibilities of other

parties to the conflict." He said that the UN has not adequately condemned the Palestinians for failing to stop terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and for failing to reform their own governing bodies. Rock argued that there is a need to evaluate the efforts being made at the UN to resolve the Middle East conflict to determine whether these efforts can be "redirected towards more constructive outcomes".

A few days after Rock's comments, Canada joined the U.S., Australia, Israel, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau in voting against two resolutions supporting the work of UN committees on the Middle East. The first resolution was in support of the UN committee working on the "exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". The

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throughout Iraq. If elections are not held on schedule at the end of January, it is expected that the Mahdi Army will escalate its attacks against American forces. If the elections are held, the resulting government will be heavily dominated by Shiite fundamentalists who are committed to ending the U.S. occupation. At the same time, such a result would intensify the crisis in the Sunni areas of the country. If the Americans use widespread electoral fraud in order to keep the Shias out of power and elect a puppet government loyal to the U.S., then the Mahdi Army will rejoin the resistance and the U.S. will face uprisings across the country. In other words, no matter what happens the resistance struggle against the U.S. occupation is likely to escalate in the New Year.

On top of this there is growing discontent within the U.S. armed forces. The U.S. is suffering almost 100 dead and 700 wounded soldiers per month. When U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld visited U.S. troops in the region last week he faced angry crowds of soldiers demanding to know why their vehicles were inadequately armoured and why their one-year tours of duty had been extended an additional two years. To date over 5,000 U.S. soldiers have deserted and recruitment drives have fallen far short of their goals. The U.S. is rapidly reaching a point where it will either have to start withdrawing troops from its scores of military bases around the world, thereby weakening its control of those regions, or reactivate the military draft in the U.S. Either option is fraught with dangers for U.S. imperialism.

In addition to its military problems, the U.S. is facing serious economic difficulties. Its severe balance of trade and balance of payments deficits, the largest in history, are forcing down the value of the U.S. dollar, essentially transferring part of the burden onto its trading partners who hold vast quantities of U.S. dollars. As a result, many countries are quietly divesting themselves of U.S. dollars and are talking about replacing the U.S. dollar with the Euro or a basket of currencies as the international currency standard. This is particularly the case amongst the oil producing nations who see their gains from high oil prices being eroded by the fall of the U.S. dollar. If such a change were to occur, the U.S. dollar would

collapse to a fraction of its current value, plunging the U.S. and most of the rest of the world into an economic crisis.

All of these factors point to the U.S. as an empire in decline, rather than an empire in ascendancy. While this creates conditions for a resurgence of movements for democracy and sovereignty around the world, it also creates conditions for the intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions and the danger of imperialist war.

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committee is tasked with working to realize the right to self-determination of Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories, supporting a Middle East peace process and mobilizing international support for the Palestinian people. The resolution was subsequently adopted by a 104-7 margin, with 63 abstentions. The second resolution Canada voted against was in support of the work of a UN committee investigating Israeli practices affecting the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. This resolution also passed by an overwhelming margin.

Historically Canada has either supported UN motions critical of Israel or abstained, along with the majority of UN member-states. The November vote marked a significant shift in Canadian policy. This shift has led several national commentators to conclude that the Martin government has committed to a more pro-Israeli stance. This is surprising given the recent public disclosure of the results of a poll conducted by the Canada-Israel Committee in 2003. The survey found the overwhelming majority of Canadians wanted Canada to pursue a balanced approach in the Middle East, with only 8 per cent saying Canada should favour Israeli positions.

Correction

The article entitled "Imperialism and Terrorism: The FLQ" in *Modern Communism* Volume 5, No. 35 incorrectly stated that Claude Ryan was a paid informant of the RCMP during the 1970s and 1980s. In fact it was Claude Morin who was a paid informant of the RCMP between 1974 and 1981. During the 1960s Morin was a supporter of the "Quiet Revolution" in Quebec led by Pierre Elliot Trudeau. In 1972 he joined the Parti Quebecois and became a member of its executive committee. He was elected to the Quebec National Assembly in 1976 and was appointed Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Until his exposure by Radio-Canada in 1981, Morin was paid by the RCMP for providing information on the sovereigntist movement in Quebec.

For Your Information

Imperialism and Terrorism Part VIII: U.S. Behind 40 years of Terrorist Attacks Against Cuba

This is the eighth in a series of articles *Modern Communism* is publishing examining the link between imperialism and terrorism. The most recent articles in the series have examined both how imperialism has used so-called revolutionary or left-wing groups to discredit progressive movements and the blowback phenomenon, in which terrorist groups originally sponsored by imperialist powers have turned against those same powers.

Besides covert support for terrorist groups, the Americans in particular also have a long history of openly conducting or condoning terrorist attacks to undermine various states. One of the most glaring examples of this the 40-year-history of U.S. sponsored, sanctioned and organized terrorist attacks against the Cuban people. This has included covert operations, such as the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and more open acts of terrorist aggression, including the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner, blowing a ship in Havana harbour and chemical and biological warfare against Cuba.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks against the U.S. on September 11, 2001, the Cuban government offered the U.S. government any humanitarian assistance required to cope with the devastation. It offered to send emergency medical personnel to the U.S., as well as to accept U.S.-bound planes that were forced to land when the Americans shut down their airspace. These offers were rejected. Speaking on the evening of the attacks, Cuban President Fidel Castro denounced the acts as crimes against humanity and called for the formation of an international coalition against terrorism. Cubans could assist such a coalition, he pointed out, as the Cuban people had withstood terrorist attacks for more than 40 years. This overture was also ignored.

The hypocrisy of the U.S. war on terror is such that the Bush regime can gravely speak of evil doers while continuing to provide safe haven to convicted terrorists responsible for the death of dozens of civilians. For example, all 73 passengers and crewmembers were killed in the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airline flight. Orlando Bosch, a member of several extremist anti-Cuba groups, was convicted in the U.S. as the organizer of the attack. Bosch was

freed by President George H.W. Bush in 1990, following intensive lobbying by two Florida Republican members of Congress, Ileana Ross and Connie Mack. Bosch currently lives in Miami and in 1996, he and Luis Posada Carriles, also involved with Miami-based extremist groups, gave a live television interview in which they pledged to continue using violence to bring down the Cuban government.

A few months after this interview was aired, the first in a series of bombings aimed at destabilizing Cuba's burgeoning tourism industry took place – an explosion at the Melia Cohiba hotel in Havana on April 12, 1997. On April 30, 1997, another bomb was discovered in the same hotel and in July of that year, bombs exploded at the Capri and Nacional hotels in Havana. On August 11, 1997, a statement from the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) was published in the English and Spanish press in Miami expressing support for the bomb attacks. CANF Chairman Jorge Mas Canosa wrote "We do not think of these as terrorist actions ... any action against Cuba is legitimate".

On September 4, 1997, bombs exploded in several Cuban hotels and a famous restaurant frequented by tourists; a young Italian, Fabio Di Celmo was killed. When the Cuban government arrested Raul Cruz Leon, a Salvadoran, for the series of bombings, he confessed that he was paid \$4,500 by Luis Posada Carriles for each bomb he planted.

Posada Carriles, in an interview with the *New York Times* published in July 1998, admitted to organizing the bombing campaign against tourist centres in Cuba, with financial support from the CANF. "Jorge Mas Canosa controlled everything. Whenever I needed money he would say that he would give me \$5,000 — \$10,000 - or even \$15,000 (US funds) and he did!," Carriles told the newspaper. When asked about the young Italian tourist killed in the campaign, Carriles just said, "He was sitting in the wrong place at the wrong time."

President George W. Bush spoke at CANF gatherings several times during his first term as president, and campaigned with CANF officials over the last year. (To be continued)

Twentieth Anniversary of Bhopal Disaster

On December 3, 1984 a massive leak from a Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, India killed more than 3,500 city residents in their sleep. Another 15,000 are estimated to have died from the effects of the poisoning over the past two decades. It has been well-documented that the disaster could have been prevented with simple safety measures, but the company management was more concerned with saving \$50 per day by shutting down a critical air conditioning unit for portions of the day. None of the other safety systems were functional.

Following the tragedy, Union Carbide immediately shut down its operations in India and flew its personnel out of the country to avoid prosecution. The Indian government has issued Interpol warrants for the arrest of the top managers found responsible for the disaster, but the U.S.

government has refused to act on the warrants. The Indian government has also done little to bring those responsible to justice, as it fears alienating foreign investors.

After years of litigation, Union Carbide finally agreed to pay compensation of approximately US\$2,500 per person affected by the toxic spill. However, the company, since taken over by Dow Chemical, has adamantly refused to clean up the plant. The Indian government has also refused to take responsibility for cleaning up the toxic materials. As a result children are still being killed and maimed by exposure to the toxic chemicals. By contrast, a similar though much smaller spill at one of the company's plants in Texas was quickly cleaned up and large compensation payments were voluntarily offered to the victims.

For Your Information

Subsidies to Corporate Farms Increasing in U.S.

According to a report by the Environmental Working Group's (EWG), direct farm subsidies in the U.S. rose to \$16.4 billion in 2003, a 27 per cent increase over the previous year. Direct farm subsidies include cash payments for production and crop insurance payments. While the total paid out in farm subsidies is growing, the EWG report shows that the number of small farmers receiving subsidies is shrinking even more rapidly, with 10 per cent of recipients receiving 72 per cent of the money.

In 2003, the largest single recipient of subsidies was Riceland Foods, based in Stuttgart, Arkansas. Riceland Foods is the largest rice producer in the U.S. The Producers Rice Mill Inc., also based in Stuttgart was the second largest recipient, with \$51.4 million.

On the livestock side, Pilgrim's Pride, based in

Texas and the second-biggest poultry producer in the U.S., received over \$11.4 million in subsidies, including insurance payments for losses caused by the avian flu epidemic, while Cargill's turkey production business received \$6.7 million. (Cargill posted record profits in 2003).

The EWG report found that small, independent farmers are receiving less and less direct aid – an average of \$768 a year for the past eight years.

Please note: This will be the final issue of *Modern Communism* until the New Year.

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