

Who's Holding the Cards?... the Bipartisan War Agenda

As we go to press, the borders of Syria are being threatened. The Bush administration has identified Syria as the next stage of "the road map to war". The bombing of presumed 'terrorist bases' in Syria by the Israeli Air Force in October was intended to provide a justification for subsequent pre-emptive military interventions. Ariel Sharon launched the attacks with the approval of Donald Rumsfeld. (See p. 6.)

This planned extension of the war into Syria has serious implications. It means that Israel becomes a major military actor in the US-led war, as well as an 'official' member of the Anglo-American coalition. The US, Britain and Israel already have a coordinated nuclear weapons policy. Meanwhile, Israeli nuclear warheads are pointed at certain major cities in the Middle East. The governments of all three countries have stated quite openly that they plan to use nuclear weapons "if they are attacked". (See p. 51.)

The Pentagon views 'territorial control' over Syria, which constitutes a land bridge between Israel and occupied Iraq, as 'strategic' from a military and economic standpoint. It also constitutes a means of controlling the Iraqi border and curbing the flow of volunteer fighters, who are traveling to Baghdad to join the Iraqi resistance movement.

This enlargement of the theater of war is consistent with Ariel Sharon's plan to build a 'Greater Israel' "on the ruins of Palestinian nationalism". While Israel seeks to extend its territorial domain towards the Euphrates River, with designated areas of Jewish settlement in the Syrian heartland, Palestinians are imprisoned in Gaza and the West Bank behind an 'Apartheid Wall'.

In the meantime, the US Congress has tightened the economic sanctions on Libya and Iran. As well, Washington is hinting at the need for a 'regime change' in Saudi Arabia. In turn, Turkish troops have entered the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq and a war of resistance against the occupation forces is ongoing in Afghanistan. So, the war could indeed spill over into a much broader region extending from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Indian sub-continent and China's Western frontier.

Regime Rotation in America

Some people think that a change in direction will occur if the Democrats win the 2004 presidential election. Yet the Democrats are not at all opposed to the illegal occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. They have not committed their party to "bringing the troops home now!" (See p. 5.) Nor do they oppose President Bush's request to Congress to allocate \$87 billion to finance Iraq's occupation and 'reconstruction'. (See p. 40.)

The war is in fact a bipartisan project. The Republicans led the first Gulf war, the Democrats led the wars in the Balkans leading to the military occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina under the Dayton Accords in 1995 and the invasion of Kosovo in 1999. The Democrats and the Republicans joined hands in enforcing the "No Fly Zone" (1991-2003) over Iraq plus a twelve year program of economic sanctions and indiscriminate bombings.

The Republicans' war agenda is defined in terms of "multiple and simultaneous theater wars" as called for in the Project for the New American Century (PNAC).

While there are substantive differences between the Republicans and leading Democrats, Bush's National Security doctrine is, in many regards, a continuation of that formulated by Clinton in 1995, which was based on a "strategy of containment of rogue states".

While there are, nonetheless, significant differences between the two parties, the present administration, dominated by the Neo-Cons, is more reckless compared to the Democrats, particularly with regard to nuclear policy. The Democrats

under the Clinton administration were more skillful in using the UN system and multilateral framework to their advantage to effectively pursue their war agenda. It is worth mentioning, however, that US Central Command (USCENTCOM) had already, during the Clinton administration, formulated "in war theater plans" to invade Iraq and Iran. It was no secret that the stated objective of these 1995 war plans was oil.

In fact, broadly speaking, the same concepts of Homeland Defense, pre-emptive war, etc. are contained in Clinton's 1999 and 2000 National Security Strategy documents. In other words, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq under the Bush administration were part of a bipartisan war agenda which had already been decided upon well in advance of Bush's accession to the White House in January 2001.

Who's Got the Jokers?

Increasingly, the military-intelligence establishment (rather than the State Department, the White House and the US Congress) is calling the shots on US foreign policy. Meanwhile, the Texas oil giants, the defense contractors and Wall Street, operating discreetly behind the scenes, are pulling the strings, or playing the Bush card (in the US) or the Blair card (in the UK) when needed. Moreover, if 'the two jokers' become a source of major embarrassment, they can easily be discarded and a new team of political puppets can be pulled from the deck.

Ultimately, the war agenda and 'Homeland Security' (including the ongoing militarisation of civilian police and judicial institutions) are determined by powerful economic interests. Party politics largely serves as a smokescreen. It is, therefore, unlikely that the Democrats would undo either the war agenda or, for that matter, the dreaded Patriot Act.

So, behind the democratic facade and the bipartisan ritual, a de facto military dictatorship prevails, which endorses and enforces the global 'free market' system on behalf of dominant economic and financial interests.

To effectively build their 'legitimacy', both the Democrats and Republicans need to uphold the falsehoods behind the so-called "war on terrorism". Sustaining the "freedom and democracy" rhetoric is not only part of this bipartisan strategy, it is also part of the process of building a totalitarian State in America under the guise of a functioning democracy. Let us be under no illusion: the 2004 presidential elections will not result in a significant change of direction.

To reverse the tide of war, the President's War Powers Resolution (adopted by the US Congress in September 2002) must be revoked, overseas military bases must be closed down, the war machine (namely the production of advanced weapons systems like WMDs) must be stopped and the burgeoning police state must be dismantled.

To achieve these broad objectives, it is essential to forcefully reject the legitimacy of the military and political actors who rule in our name.

The falsehoods which sustain the legitimacy of the current US government must be unraveled. Both Republicans and Democrats share the same war agenda and there are war criminals in both parties. Both parties are complicit in the 9/11 cover-up and the resultant quest for world domination. All the evidence points to what is best described as "the criminalisation of the State", which includes the Judiciary and the bipartisan corridors of the US Congress, for the benefit of a few monopoly capitalists.

In the words of Andreas van Buelow, former German Minister of Technology and author of *The CIA and September 11*: "If what I say is right, the whole US government should end up behind bars." ■