

The Masters of War are Ready to Strike – Build Resistance Now!

The drums of war are beating louder and louder. Bush and Blair say that they have no choice but to attack Iraq. “Inaction is more dangerous than action”, they claim, because the Saddam Hussein regime poses an urgent danger to its neighbours and to the world. But what is the real situation?

Ten years ago the US and its allies waged a massively destructive war on Iraq. They pulverised the country’s infrastructure, destroying its water supplies, its hospitals, its roads, its government centres and much of its military strength. In 42 days they dropped the equivalent of more than 7½ Hiroshima bombs on Iraq’s cities, industries and people. Since then, vice-like sanctions imposed by the US and its allies have strangled the country. The UN reported in 1997 that over 1.2 million Iraqis had lost their lives since the Gulf War as a result of medical shortages. Most of these were children and the elderly.

The Iraqi regime today is a weak shadow of its former self. Its military strength is far below what it was. The reason the US is going after it now has nothing to do with the dangers Iraq poses to its neighbours or the world, and everything to do with the global empire the US is determined to carve for itself.

Look at the evidence Bush and Blair have of Iraq’s “weapons of mass destruction” – almost none. Yet the less evidence they have, the louder they shout, trying to scaremonger people into supporting their sabre-rattling. We will protect you, they claim. This is the “protection” offered by a Mafia godfather: they “protect” you only so that they can squeeze you all the more intensely.

And what kind of bargain would accepting such “protection” be in the first place? For the hope of a bit more security, would people in the West be prepared to stand by and watch tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians be murdered from the skies? Haven’t they already suffered too much? And haven’t we already seen the kind of “regime change” the US has in mind in Afghanistan, where they have put in power the former US oil executive Karzai in league with the Northern warlords – a vicious gang of mass rapists and torturers – and where by all estimates the number of civilians killed by the US “war on terror” has surpassed the numbers killed in the World Trade Centre? But the leaders had no tears for them on September 11th this year. This is where their jingoistic patriotism leads: only “our” people count, only “our” blood is real.

This offer of protection from these godfathers is not only evil, it is an illusion. For it is *their* system, *their* plunder and pillage of the oppressed nations of the Third World, that is responsible in the first place for the reservoirs of rage and hatred that are seething against the US, Britain and the other imperial powers. Waging yet another unjust war will only throw fuel on these flames.

For over a hundred years now the US and the other imperialist powers have been plundering the Third World nations. They have carried out countless wars of invasion and innumerable assassinations and coups to institute “regime changes” and put in power vicious dictators to do their bidding and protect the interests of their multinationals (remember Zaire’s Mobutu, Iran’s Shah, Chile’s Pinochet, Philippines’ Marcos, to name but a few). They have carried

out these bloody deeds under different banners: the “white man’s burden”, “defending the free world”, “defending democracy”... and now the “war on terrorism”. But whatever the rhetoric, the goals have been the same: to protect the interests of the rich, the powerful, the few, over the poor, the weak, the many.

This is what the drive to war on Iraq is really about. The US is moving today to strengthen its empire and secure unchallenged control in the world, with their British lapdog eagerly hoping to lap up the scraps. They are determined to put on a bloody display of military strength to intimidate adversaries and would-be rivals. They are also seeking control over the energy reserves so vital to the global economy. Iraq has 112 billion barrels of proven oil resources, second only to Saudi Arabia. US control over these would mean greater dominance over the world economy, and would give it a tighter grip on the petrol jugular vein of Europe and Japan, which are especially reliant on Persian Gulf oil. This fact is a source of friction between the US and the major powers in Europe. But the US has openly told the European powers that if they do not join in under US command, they will be cut out of the rich bounty their war is designed to reap. All the cut-throats are maneuvering to make sure that they cut as many throats as possible in this situation without suffering the same fate themselves. Thus France and Germany are claiming to be “against” this war because they are currently only offering to take part in the occupation of Iraq and not the initial attack and invasion.

Some people are holding out hope that the United Nations might block the moves to war. But how much faith can be put in an institution that is itself dominated by the big powers, each with its own bloody history of bullying and oppression? Already the US has issued an ultimatum that if it does get a UN-resolution to support an attack on Iraq, it will declare the UN “irrelevant” and attack anyway. And it has combined this threat with the offer of bribes to try to squeeze compliance with its war plans from the other big powers.

The US accuses others of threats and aggression, while planning the most aggressive war in decades. It raises the spectre of weapons of mass destruction, while it has the most deadly arsenal in history, and has already used nuclear weapons. It insists on weapons inspectors going everywhere, while refusing to allow them into its own country. It talks of democracy, while it strips away democratic rights in its own homelands, threatens elected leaders it doesn’t like, like Arafat and Venezuela’s Chavez, and props up dictators it does like, like Pakistan’s Musharraf and the Arab sheikhs.

The people of Iraq are once again in the crosshairs of the world’s big powers. We cannot allow them to become yet more uncounted “collateral damage”. The World People’s Resistance Movement in Europe calls on the people here to resist the threats and patriotic jingoism of our rulers, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Iraq at this crucial time. We cannot wait for the bombs to begin to fall. Resistance is needed now.

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