

**AS HORRORS OF WAR MULTIPLY**

**Global protests April 12**

**World demands regime change in Washington**

By Deirdre Griswold

With the horrific images of war burning into their consciousness every day, people around the world are now gearing up for April 12—the next globally coordinated wave of demonstrations aimed at halting the imperialist blitzkrieg against the people of Iraq that has been unleashed by the governments of the U.S. and Britain.

To the slogan “Stop the war on Iraq,” they are now adding, “Bring the troops home now.”

In the United States, the ANSWER coalition is organizing mass protests in Washington, San Francisco and Los Angeles. ANSWER brought half a million people to the capital and 200,000 to the streets of San Francisco on Jan. 18 to try to stop the war before it started.

The Stop the War Coalition UK, which turned out more than a million people in London on Feb. 15, is calling its next national action on April 12. Huge protests have also been announced for that day in other countries in Europe, Latin America and Asia. (See internationalanswer.org for latest details.)

Opposition to this war, even before the first bomb was dropped, has been unprecedented. Since January, hundreds of thousands have been demonstrating every few weeks in the United States alone. On Feb. 15, some 15 million people marched all over the world.

Once the war started on March 19, the protests escalated to mass resistance in San Francisco, where ANSWER and several other groups united to shut the city down on the weekend of March 22-23.

The anti-war news and analysis you've been searching for:

- **IRAQI RESISTANCE**  
and the Rumsfeld strategy 7
- **Anger erupts in Arab world** as  
Washington menaces Syria & Iran 6
- **GENERATIONS OF BLACK RESISTANCE**  
to racist Pentagon war machine 3

A mass march in New York on March 22 called by United for Peace and Justice brought out a quarter million people.

In cities and towns across the country, there have been hundreds of actions, including students walking out of school, marches, teach-ins and disruptions. Now, some families of wounded and dead soldiers are speaking out against the war. And, as stiff Iraqi resistance has led the Pentagon to announce it will send another 100,000 troops to Iraq, young recruits who joined the military on the promise of education and job skills are starting to refuse to participate in this unprovoked assault, say-

*Continued on page 2*

**YEAR OF STRUGGLE**

Revolutionary process deepens in **VENEZUELA** 9



WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

**WW REPORT FROM HAITI**  
*'Independence, yes! Occupation, no!'* 8

**APARTHEID WALL**  
No 24-hour coverage on war against Palestinians 11

**Protests across U.S. & around the world** 4-6



Protesters in downtown Los Angeles on March 30 demand "U.S. out of Iraq! Stop the war!"

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

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# Global protests April 12

Continued from page 1

ing they were lied to about the war.

In less than two weeks of combat, the realities on the ground have demolished every single argument put forth by members of the Bush administration to justify their criminal invasion of Iraq.

Those who listened to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld expected a short war in which the Iraqi people would welcome the U.S. and British as "liberators." They never dreamed that the Iraqis, despite their enormous disadvantage in weaponry, would put up such a heroic resistance against the invasion.

The Bush administration had a public relations strategy to gain popular acceptance of the war: it was against one person, Saddam Hussein. Getting rid of him would be easy. But the Iraqi people have shown with their resistance that they know better. This war is against them and against the independence that they won from British colonialism back in the 1950s.

As they attack tanks and helicopters with nothing but small arms and grenades, they are telling the world that they would rather die than go back to colonial slavery. They built a prosperous country—the most egalitarian in the Middle East—with their oil revenues. They will not let U.S. and British oil companies take control of their resources again.

In these first weeks of war, the realities on the ground have totally contradicted the press briefings in Washington. The lies, hypocrisy and imperial arrogance of the architects of this war, added to daily accounts of civilian casualties that cannot be suppressed, even with Pentagon censorship and a captive media, are filling the anti-war movement with renewed determination and energy.

Not only elementary and high school youth, but veterans of the last Gulf War can be found at every anti-war demonstration. They know first-hand how this administration—which has just cut veterans' benefits—used them and then abused them when they returned home sick and disillusioned.

The young troops now fighting in Iraq have been deliberately kept in the dark about the crass motives for this war, which is being driven by the imperial ambitions of the super-rich ruling class in both the U.S. and Britain.

The hundreds of thousands who were told they must risk their lives to "liberate" Iraq are becoming increasingly bewildered—and many are angry. The reasons given for sending them into combat have proven to be completely false.

There is no connection between the 9/11 attacks and Iraq. Iraqis are not welcoming a U.S.-imposed regime.

And while U.S. bombs and missiles are massively destroying the country, no "weapons of mass destruction" have been found. The U.S. is now trying desperately to produce such weapons—needed to justify the carnage—by creating its own "weapons inspectors" in total disregard of the United Nations.

Now the troops are caught up in a Vietnam-type situation. They are told their survival depends on killing civilians because they could

be combatants "in disguise." This merely compounds the totally criminal character of this war. Civilian deaths are growing into the thousands as Baghdad and other cities are bombed night and day. While on the one hand the U.S. government claims it has the support of the Iraqi people, its troops are so afraid of the people that they are firing on anyone they encounter—including a car packed with 15 women and children trying to flee Najaf. At least 10 in the car were killed.

Planes streaking across the country are bombing schools and hospitals, even in little towns, according to a group of U.S. peace activists who drove from Baghdad to Jordan on March 29, encountering devastation along the way. (Associated Press, March 31)

The organizers now filling buses to Washington for April 12 are propelled by another kind of crisis, too—the continued assault on the workers and poor here at home. At a time when Bush is demanding sacrifice from U.S. workers in uniform, and sacrifice from working-class taxpayers to pay the huge cost of this war, it is reported that top executive earnings went up by 15 percent last year, while wage workers saw only a 3 percent gain. In other words, the gap between the super-rich and the rest of us continues to grow, even with the huge stock market losses.

Jeffrey Barbakow of Tenet Healthcare came away with the biggest capitalist jackpot: \$188 million for 2002. Meanwhile, 45 million people in the U.S. can't afford any health care at all.

Bill Frist, now the Senate Majority Leader and a prime backer of Bush's war, is linked to Tenet and the health-for-profit industry through both his father and brother.

That is why a sea change is taking place in organized labor in the U.S., as rank-and-file workers demand that their unions take a stand against this war and against the domestic repression and anti-labor measures that go along with the policy of endless aggression against the world.

At ANSWER's last rally in Washington, on March 15, the head of the Washington Metro Labor Council AFL-CIO, Josh Williams, spoke out strongly against this war, as did Gene Bruskin of U.S. Labor Against the War.

Workers, students, veterans, civil rights leaders, lesbian/gay/bi/trans activists, feminists, religious peace activists—and members of the many anti-imperialist groups that make up the ANSWER coalition steering committee—will join with the world on April 12 in solidarity with the Iraqi people and their struggle to expel the invading forces from their homeland—which translates here into bringing the troops home. □



Protest in Romania.

This week ...



★ **National**

Black resistance to racist war machine . . . . . 3  
 Two NBA players say no to war . . . . . 3  
 Emperor Bush's Rubicon . . . . . 3  
 Dogging Bush in Philly . . . . . 4  
 Cleveland youth halt rush to war . . . . . 4  
 Los Angeles: U.S. out of Iraq! . . . . . 4  
 Boston protest largest since Vietnam era . . . . . 4  
 Cesar Chavez—presente! . . . . . 4  
 Nurses' victory in Los Angeles . . . . . 5  
 Iraqi resistance and the Rumsfeld strategy . . . . . 7  
 NYC march for Palestine . . . . . 10

★ **International**

Global protests April 12 . . . . . 1  
 Three UK soldiers sent home . . . . . 5  
 Protests span Middle East, Latin America, Asia . . . . . 5  
 Protest grows in Arab world . . . . . 6  
 Liberation? . . . . . 6  
 Shipping Iraqi civilians to Guantanamo? . . . . . 6  
 Report from Haiti . . . . . 8  
 A year of struggle in Venezuela . . . . . 9  
 West Bank, Palestine . . . . . 11

★ **Editorials**

Murder Iraqi children, or fight for rights at home? . . . 10

★ **Noticias En Español**

Iraquíes contra el imperio . . . . . 12

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## From Vietnam to Iraq

# Black resistance to racist war

By Monica Moorehead

Thirty-six years ago, on April 3, 1967, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a powerful speech against the U.S. war in Vietnam at Riverside Church in New York City.

King raised the inseparable links between racist injustice at home and U.S. military escalation against the Vietnamese.

He said, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government."

Today, millions upon millions of people around the world are expressing a similar view in words and actions as the U.S. leads a brutal aggression against the people of Iraq and intensifies the violation of their sovereignty.

Inside the U.S., anti-war activities are being organized by African Americans and other activists of color in Harlem, Baltimore and elsewhere to coincide with the 35th anniversary of King's assassination on April 4. These events will include King's anti-war stance, which many believe led to his government-sponsored assassination.

These protests reflect the fact that the overwhelming majority of Black people across the United States are against this war.

Sixty-four percent of African Americans voiced opposition to the war in one sample poll conducted by the New York Times on March 26. A New York City poll cited 78 percent against the war. Some stated that they felt a strong sense of solidarity with the Iraqi people because, like Black people here, the Iraqis are victims of a racist war by the U.S. government.

There are many oppressed people in the United States who view the police as unwanted armed occupiers in their communities, similar to the armed occupation by the U.S. and British imperialist military in Iraq.

And a number of those polled noted that the Bush administration blatantly hijacked the 2000 elections from African Americans and other working-class voters in Florida.

### Who's on front line of imperialist wars?

Fighting the racist character of the U.S. military has always been a component of the struggle for social equality for African Americans.

During World War I, many Black soldiers joined the military and faced racism in every aspect of military life.

Black labor leader A. Philip Randolph threatened a march by hundreds of thousands of Black workers in 1941 against racism in the defense industries and the military. This threat forced President Franklin Roosevelt to issue an executive order reaffirming the desegregation of these institutions on the eve of the U.S. entering World War II.

On July 26, 1948, President Harry Truman issued an executive order calling for the full integration of the U.S. military.

### Correction

The article "Women slam war and budget cuts" in the April 3 issue of Workers World should have read that Minnie Bruce Pratt "evoked Marx and Engels in reminding women how their dual role as laborers as well as reproducers of laborers is exploited by the capitalist class." □



Some of the estimated 50,000 youths, predominately Black and Latino, at a rally in support of affirmative action at the U.S. Supreme Court on April 1. These young women and men, and millions more, are the most vulnerable to the economic draft because of racist attacks on education and lack of job opportunities.

Once the Korean War broke out in 1950, Black soldiers constituted 13 percent of the U.S. military. Forty percent of them were placed in combat units—meaning they faced a significantly disproportionate casualty rate.

Like Black soldiers in World War I and II, soldiers involved in the Korean War consciously hoped that by proving to be some of the best fighters in the military, they would be seen as equal in the eyes of whites after the war and that this would result in either the reduction or eradication of racism. This proved to be a pipe dream.

During the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s, Black people were drafted into the military and were once again placed in combat units in disproportionately high numbers.

Between 1961 and 1965, Black soldiers accounted for one out of every five combat-related deaths in Vietnam. In 1965 alone, Black soldiers accounted for one of every four combat-related deaths. The overall U.S. Black population was about 13 percent during this period.

The emerging anti-Vietnam War movement and national liberation movements encouraged young people—Black and white—to avoid the draft by fleeing to Canada and elsewhere.

Although the leadership of the anti-war movement was predominantly white and middle-class, the anti-war views of Dr. King and former heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali had a great impact, especially on the campuses.

Many soldiers became anti-war while in Vietnam. Some even carried out acts called fragging. This means they refused orders and turned their guns on their superior officers, instead of the Vietnamese. The spread of fragging played a strategic role in the defeat of the U.S. military in Southeast Asia.

In the early days of the new U.S. war against Iraq, fragging has already appeared. Sgt. Asan Akbar, a young Black Muslim, is accused of shooting at the top officers of the 101st Airborne and throwing grenades into their command center.

### Economic draft a means to escape poverty

Today, there are an estimated 1.4 million U.S. military personnel. No matter

what their nationality, the overwhelming majority come from the working class.

The soaring cost of tuition means fewer families can afford to send these youths to college. So many see the military as a means to get a job skill, education and other benefits. Hardly any youths from families of great wealth and privilege join the ranks of the military.

Black people make up close to 13 percent of the overall U.S. population in 2003, but comprise 22 percent of the enlisted personnel. Half the enlisted women in the Army are Black.

Today a large number of Black women who join the military are working-class single mothers like Shoshana Johnson, the Army cook who is reportedly a prisoner of war in Iraq.

Dr. King's words still ring true today. "The pursuit of this widened war has narrowed domestic welfare programs, making the poor, white and Negro, bear the heaviest burdens both at the front and at home," he stated in a Feb. 25, 1967, speech entitled "The Casualties of the War in Vietnam."

He continued, "While the anti-poverty program is cautiously initiated, zealously supervised and evaluated for immediate results, billions are liberally expended for this ill-considered war. The recently revealed mis-estimate of the war budget amounts to ten billions of dollars for a single year.

"The security we profess to seek in foreign adventures we will lose in our decaying cities. The bombs in Vietnam explode at home: they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America. ... Poverty, urban problems and social progress gen-

erally are ignored when the guns of war become a national obsession."

The disproportionate numbers of Black and other oppressed peoples in the ranks of today's Pentagon military are not a sign that they wanted to fight wars abroad.

It is economic factors that force many people of color to join the armed forces.

Three million jobs have disappeared so far during the Bush regime. There was the destruction of welfare under the Clinton regime, along with the erosion of health care and other social programs.

Two million people are in U.S. prisons, a hugely disproportionate number of them Black and Latino, due to drug-related convictions.

Half of African American children are still born into poverty.

Organizing against racist wars of capitalist expansion abroad and for money for jobs at home are important messages that must reach oppressed and working-class youths—inside and outside the military.

*Two major sources for this article were the Web site [www.africanamericans.com](http://www.africanamericans.com) and the March 30 New York Times article, "Military mirrors working-class America." □*

## Two NBA players: NO to war

National Basketball Association players seldom make public statements against the international policies of the U.S. government. So when professional athletes come out against the war on Iraq, it deserves attention.

Steve Nash is a white Canadian and an All-Star guard with the Dallas Mavericks. Nash first drew ire from some in the mainstream media in early February when he wore a "No War, Shoot for Peace" T-shirt at the NBA All-Star weekend in Atlanta.

Since the start of the military aggression against Iraq, Nick Van Exel—Nash's Black teammate—has reportedly raised his opposition to the war. Nash states that the response of fans to his position has been "unbelievably positive." —M.M.

### Crossing the Rubicon

The headline on Fred Goldstein's article last week, "Bush Crosses the Rubicon," was very apt. When Julius Caesar led his army in 48 BCE across the Rubicon, which separated the province of Cisalpine from the Roman heartland of Italia, he began the struggle that ended the Republic of Rome and replaced it with the Roman Empire.

— G. Dunkel  
New York



# Dogging Bush in Philly

In the largest demonstration in Philadelphia since the U.S. military aggression began, more than 5,000 people braved wind-driven freezing rain for a March 30 protest to stop the war on Iraq and bring the troops home.

The demonstration, organized by the Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network, began with a rally at Penn's Landing. Protesters then marched past the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, against traffic on South Street through a heavily traveled commercial district. They ended at the Federal Building with spirited chanting and drumming.

Several hundred protesters took time off from work and school to return the next day to confront President George W. Bush,

who was in Philadelphia to award "Homeland Security" contracts.

Despite a daunting police presence that made getting to the rally nearly impossible, demonstrators massed across from the Port Authority building where Bush spoke. They were able to confront his motorcade when it sped away after the event.

Among the protesters were Vietnam-era veterans who denounced planned Congressional cuts in veteran benefits. Members of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union pointed out that homeless people have no security under the Bush administration's cuts in social programs that are being used to pay for his multi-billion-dollar war.

—Betsey Piette



WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

# Boston protest largest since Vietnam era

In what is believed to be the largest anti-war demonstration in Boston since the Vietnam War, more than 25,000 rain-soaked protesters converged on Boston Commons March 29. They marched throughout downtown demanding an end to the brutal U.S. war against Iraq. The demonstration was called by the Boston chapter of the United for Peace and Justice coalition.

Moonanum James (pictured above), co-leader of United American Indians of New England, addressed the rally on behalf of the International ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—an endorser of the event.

James urged the crowd to mobilize for the April 12 national protest at the White House to demand: "Stop the war on Iraq" and "Bring the troops home now!"

—Workers World Boston bureau

## 'Bush & Blair—put the handcuffs there!'

# Cleveland youths halt rush hour

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

Instead of a typical Friday evening rush hour, Cleveland's downtown streets were virtually empty of automobiles March 28 as hundreds of anti-war youths took over the streets. They left their high schools and college campuses in response to a call issued a few days before to "Shut down Cleveland, no business as usual!" The action was called by a network of local activists and endorsed by the ANSWER coalition and Not In Our Name.

As in other cities, the murderous bombing of Iraq has ignited militant street protests here, with a rage that police have been unable to contain. In fact, the cops had to block off the main downtown area and divert traffic away from the demonstration. Although the marchers lacked a permit, they were able to hold the streets for almost two hours.

It wasn't until the march was nearly over that police began arresting leading activists and other participants, handcuffing people while they were forced to lay face

down on the ground.

Then cops in riot gear surrounded the demonstration, forcing everyone back on the sidewalk, also shoving newspaper and radio reporters in the process.

The demonstrators responded to the arrests with chants of "Bush and Blair, put the handcuffs there" and "Let them go!"

Chanting and drumming continued into the night.

As of March 31, three of the five arrested activists remained behind bars and may face felony charges. The anti-war movement plans to pack the courtroom when they are arraigned and to mobilize to get the charges dropped against the dozen or more activists who have been arrested since the bombing began. □



WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

## CESAR CHAVEZ—PRESENTE!

# From the picking fields to the battlefields

On March 29, farm workers, labor unionists, the Latino community and supporters marched in California for the third year since the state established Cesar Chavez's birthday as an official holiday. The events commemorate the life of the founder of the United Farm Workers union.

This year's marches carried special significance, because the celebration of Chavez's life coincided with the brutal and racist U.S. attack against the people of Iraq.

An anti-war contingent organized by the ANSWER coalition took part in the San Francisco march (above). Signs, banners and chants drew the connections between the struggle for the rights of farm workers that Cesar Chavez dedicated his life to and the injustice of the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

In San Diego, ANSWER supporters handed out bilingual informational flyers to hundreds of people at the local parade (upper left).

—Gloria Verdieu and Bill Hackwell



WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

## LOS ANGELES

# U.S. out of Iraq!

An estimated 20,000 to 25,000 marched in downtown Los Angeles on March 30 to demand "U.S. out of Iraq! Stop the war!"

Hundreds of community, labor, religious and grassroots organizations participated in a strong showing of outrage and opposition.

At a rally at the downtown Federal Building, speakers included Ron Kovic, Vietnam veteran and author of "Born on the Fourth of July"; television actor Mimi Kennedy; Michael Shahin of the Free Palestine Alliance; and California State Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg. Music was provided by hip-hop artist Will Be and folk performer Michelle Shocked. Magda Madrigal and John Parker of International ANSWER of Los Angeles co-chaired the rally.

Sponsors included Coalition for World Peace, Not in Our Name, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, and Women's Global Strike.

—Scott Scheffer



Sao Paulo, Brazil

## LOS ANGELES

# Major nurses' victory

By John Beacham  
Los Angeles

March 25 marked a major union victory in Los Angeles. In a case it brought before the National Labor Relations Board, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center of Los Angeles—one of the largest and wealthiest hospitals in the world—failed in its attempt to slander and discredit the organizing efforts of its Registered Nurses.

The RNs at Cedars-Sinai had voted 695 to 627 to join the California Nurses Association in December 2002. The CNA has 50,000 members statewide.

Since the vote, the hospital has spent more than \$4 million to build an aggressive campaign against the RNs. Among other things, hospital bosses accused the organizers of intimidating workers and stuffing ballot boxes. Before the vote, the hospital waged a furious and non-stop campaign to convince the RNs that it would take better care of them than the CNA would.

In a letter written to the chairperson of Cedars-Sinai's board of directors, the nurses wrote, "A majority of the nurses are professional immigrant women who arrived from foreign lands. We expected that in America we would have a voice and be able to freely associate and participate in the democratic process. Sadly, this has not been the case."

"It is terribly disappointing that a prestigious institution such as Cedars-Sinai would not only express fierce opposition to the union—even though a third of Cedars employees already have a union—but also resort to legal maneuvers to try and overturn our democratic vote."

The CNA has a solid history of organizing and struggling alongside its rank and file. During the fight with the hospital, the RNs kept up the pressure by picketing, tirelessly combating the hospital's campaign of misinformation and rallying together. It is this pressure that brought the RNs and CNA their victory.

Cedars-Sinai has 12 days to appeal the ruling. While the CNA hopes that the hospital will open up negotiations regarding patient ratios, wages and benefits, the RNs remain undeterred by management's money and tactics.

RN Eva Buenconsejo promised at a March 28 rally celebrating the NLRB's ruling: "This is only the beginning. If there is another fight to be fought we will fight that too." □

## Solidarity with Iraq

# Protests span Middle East, Latin America & Asia

By John Catalinotto

During the first weekend after the U.S.-British invasion of Iraq, the major sentiment around the world was revulsion at the imperialist crime. By the second weekend another element was also present: solidarity with the heroic resistance of the Iraqis.

This was certainly true in protests in mostly Muslim areas and in other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. And while protests continued at a high level in Western Europe, the hot spots were south and east. In many of the countries, protesters braved heavy police repression to demonstrate.

Here are reports on just some of the many demonstrations that took place on March 29-30.

In Rabat, Morocco, 200,000 people rallied—the largest of the almost daily protests since the invasion began. They pledged their support to the Iraqis. Some demonstrators threw stones, burned U.S. flags and tore down posters advertising U.S. products.

An estimated 100,000 people demonstrated in Peshawar, Pakistan, and some 250,000 protested in Jakarta, Indonesia. Though the regimes in both countries have been lined up with the U.S., they have also both distanced themselves from Washington's policy regarding Iraq.

Smaller but quite militant demonstrations took place in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria and the Palestinian West Bank. Some 15,000 marched in Alexandria in Egypt, and students in Cairo demanded a holy war to defend Iraq. Protesters also demanded that the Egyptian government close the Suez Canal to U.S. warships.

The first mass government-backed anti-war demonstration took place in Tehran, Iran, on March 28. Some 15,000 took part. Students tried to attack the British Embassy. Although the Iranian government has considered the Iraqi regime an enemy, opposition to a U.S.-British takeover is even stronger. On March 31, someone in Tehran drove a small truck into the wall of the British Embassy.

Some 30,000 workers demonstrated in Seoul, South Korea. They forced the National Assembly to postpone authorizing the participation of 600 military engineers and 100 medics in the U.S.-British invasion.

Protests also took place in the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Perhaps the largest protest on March 30 was a six-mile-long march of 300,000 people in Calcutta, India, organized by 18 mostly left-wing political parties. U.S. flags

and effigies were burned.

### Latin America and Caribbean

Demonstrations spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Five thousand people in Sao Paulo, Brazil, marched on March 29. Many carried posters of George Bush with a Hitler-like moustache. Another 3,000 protested in Santiago, Chile.

Demonstrations also took place March 29-30 at U.S. embassies and consulates in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; La Paz, Bolivia; Lima, Peru; Caracas, Venezuela; Bogotá, Colombia; Mexico City; Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and other places in Central America. Ten thousand protested in Havana, Cuba.

Much political activity in this region has been directed at the U.S. policies of imposing further economic domination through the Free Trade Area of the Americas, military intervention against the people's struggle in Colombia and attempts to subvert the Venezuelan government.

The progressive movement in this region has joined the worldwide struggle against the U.S. invasion of Iraq at the same time that they are combating U.S. imperialism on their own fronts.

### Eastern Europe

Called by the Communist Party, some 6,000 people protested at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Waving red banners, they called on the Russian government to form an international coalition to oppose the U.S.-led strikes and to help Iraq.

Another 6,000 protested in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government backs Washington.

In the largest demonstration there to date, 2,000 mostly young people marched to the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, banging drums and chanting, "No blood for oil." Another 700 demonstrated in Prague.

The Polish regime has committed up to 200 soldiers to the U.S.-led war against Iraq, despite mass opposition. The resistance shows that support for Washington's policies in "the new Europe" comes from a narrow, pro-imperialist elite.

### Western Europe: focus on military bases

In Western Europe there has been an almost continuous mobilization against



Calcutta, India

the war, especially in Greece, Italy, Spain and Germany. Actions have included strikes by workers and massive walkouts by high school and university students.

On March 29-30, many protests focused on U.S. and British military bases—support areas for the war crimes being committed by U.S. and British forces in Iraq.

More than 5,000 people marched on the British air force base at Akrotiri in Cyprus.

In the Spanish state, some 50,000 people holding banners that read "No to war" and "Not in our name" marched to the Rota Naval and Air Base, which is shared with U.S. forces. Thousands more marched to military bases in Torrejon, near Madrid, and to the Moron, Zaragoza and Albacete bases.

In Stuttgart, Germany, about 6,000 protesters encircled the Pentagon's European Command. Police arrested 100 demonstrators at a sit-down protest outside the main gate of the Rhine-Main Air Base near Frankfurt, a key transit point for U.S. military traffic to the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan.

More than 100,000 demonstrated throughout Germany, where the movement is criticizing the Schroeder government for talking peace while allowing the U.S. to use its German bases for logistical support for the war.

Tens of thousands also marched in France, Britain and other West European countries. □



Peshawar, Pakistan

## 3 UK soldiers sent home

Three British soldiers in Iraq have been ordered home, "for protesting that the war is killing innocent civilians," according to the March 31 Guardian.

The three reportedly face court martial and are seeking legal support.

"The fact that they are seeking legal advice makes it clear they have been sent home for refusing to obey orders rather than because of any medical or related problems such as shell shock," the newspaper observed.

"It is also causing concern to British military chiefs who are worried about growing evidence of civilians being killed in fighting involving American soldiers around urban areas in southern Iraq."

—Leslie Feinberg



## U.S. threatens Syria & Iran

# Protest grows in Arab world

By Richard Becker

The corporate media's coverage of the U.S. war on Iraq goes way beyond what is generally termed propaganda. They have created an "alternative reality" for their U.S. viewers.

In their fabricated "reality," there is on one side an evil demon, a "new Hitler," who plans to dominate the world, spread terror and crush freedom at home and abroad. Never mind that the "new Hitler" has no navy, no real air force, no long-range missiles and an atrophied industrial base.

On the other side is "Freedom-loving America," supported by "Democratic Britain," riding to the rescue, bringing liberation, protecting civilian life and Iraq's oil wealth from the demon, in order to usher in a new era of freedom and democracy for the people of Iraq and the entire Middle East.

"Invaders" should never be used to refer to the U.S./British troops. And never, never call their cruise missiles and 5,000 pound bombs "weapons of mass destruction."

A "cowardly terrorist" is someone who sacrifices his or her life fighting the invaders, oops, liberators. Civilians fighting to defend their homeland without proper uniforms are committing "war crimes."

True courage consists of sitting in a submarine hundreds of miles away, or in a B-52 at 35,000 feet—high above the other side's anti-aircraft range—and firing cruise missiles into populated areas.

This is the science fiction movie running on eight networks, 24/7 in the United States. Because it is so pervasive, it has an influence on the population here.

But it doesn't play in the Middle East. With the exception of the royal families and other U.S. clients and hangers-on in

the area, virtually the entire population is vehemently opposed to the war.

There, the war is seen plainly and simply as an imperialist invasion of Iraq by two "great" powers—"great" only in their violence, as V.I. Lenin once said—who have dominated the region for the past half-century and more.

It is universally viewed as a war not only against Iraq, but against all the Arab and other oppressed peoples of the Middle East.

### War to dominate oil wealth

As is well-known by every Iraqi school-child, Britain was the colonizer of Iraq from 1918 until the revolution of 1958, during which time it shared-out Iraq's oil wealth with U.S., French and Dutch oil companies. Iraq owned 0 percent of its petroleum reserves then.

Above all, the war is viewed as an attempt to "liberate" Iraq from control of its oil resources as well as its independence, and to restore its pre-1958 colonial status. Equally widespread is the perception that if successful, the U.S./British "coalition" would then move on to "restructure" the entire region along the same lines.

The militant and growing demonstrations throughout the Arab and Islamic world are fueled by this mass understanding of the real motivation behind the war on Iraq.

Protests have swept across Lebanon, Morocco, Iran, Yemen, Bahrain, Turkey and elsewhere. The repressive Egyptian and Jordanian regimes, both of which are heavily supported and dependent on Washington for their survival, have taken actions designed both to suppress and co-opt the wave of protest.

Angry demonstrations on March 22 in Cairo, capital of the largest of the Arab countries, were brutally attacked by the U.S.-supplied Egyptian police. Many



A McDonald's sign falls in Rabat, Morocco.

organizers, including a progressive opposition member of parliament, were severely beaten and imprisoned. According to many news reports, the demonstrations were the most militant in recent times.

Given the intensity of the anger in the country, the government of President Hosni Mubarak couldn't completely stop the protests. A week later, on March 29, the authorities allowed the outlawed, right-wing Muslim Brotherhood to lead a march through Cairo, with the Brotherhood agreeing to keep the protesters under control.

Egypt's second-largest newspaper, Al Akhbar, carried a typical headline on

March 28: "A total war of genocide against Iraqis."

Other newspapers in the region, most of them generally considered moderate in their political views, carried similar headlines. "Monstrous martyrdom in Baghdad" read the front-page of Al-Dustur of Amman, Jordan, on March 29, the day after a U.S. missile killed at least 58 Iraqis in a Baghdad market.

"Yet another massacre by the coalition of invaders," was the main headline on Saudi Arabia's al-Riyadh newspaper. Summer Said, a journalist for the pro-Western Cairo Times, an English-

*Continued on page 8*

## This is liberation?

As the Iraqi resistance to the U.S.-British invasion and occupation has intensified, so have the indiscriminate attacks on Iraqi civilians. The March 30 Times of London carried the following information in an article by Mark Franchetti from Nasiriyah:

"Some 15 vehicles, including a minivan and couple of trucks, blocked the road. They were riddled with bullet holes.

"Amid the wreckage I counted 12 dead civilians ... all had been trying to leave this southern town.

"One man's body was still in flames. ... Down the road, a little girl, no older than five and dressed in a pretty orange and gold dress, lay dead in a ditch next to the body of a man who may have been her father. Half his head was missing."

On March 31, 10 women and children were killed inside a civilian vehicle by U.S. Army forces at Najaf.

On April 1, the French Press Agency reported that 33 people had been killed and 310 wounded by U.S. bombing raids on the outskirts of Hilla, 50 miles south of Baghdad. The day before, 15 members of a family were killed, with only one survivor, in an Apache helicopter rocket attack.

The massacre at Nasiriyah reported in the London Times has been little covered in the U.S. media. Even less attention has been given in the big business press to the

racist attitudes inculcated in U.S. troops, reminiscent of the Vietnam War.

Franchetti noted the "bitter satisfaction" of some of the Marines looking out over the 15 destroyed vehicles in Nasiriyah. He quoted a U.S. army corporal, Ryan Dupre, as saying: "The Iraqis are sick people and we are the chemotherapy. I am starting to hate this country. Wait till I get hold of a friggin' Iraqi. No, I won't get hold of one. I'll just kill him."

On March 31, the Guardian reported that three British soldiers were being sent home and faced possible court martial for protesting against the killing of Iraqi civilians.

The Times of London reported on the same day that three other British soldiers had been wounded and a fourth killed by a U.S. A-10 fighter plane. Lance Corporal Steven Gerrard described how the plane attacked in two separate runs while the British troops were amidst civilians: "There was a boy of about 12 years old. He was no more than 20 meters away when the Yank opened up. There were all these civilians around. He had absolutely no regard for human life. I believe he was a cowboy." Lt. Alex MacEwen said he was glad to be going home. His friends and family had joked: "Don't worry about the Iraqis, it's the Americans you want to watch."

—R.B.

## Shipping Iraqi civilians to Guantanamo?

Washington is considering shipping some 300 Iraqi civilians detained by the Marines to its infamous detention center at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Washington Post reported on March 30.

Who is subject to imprisonment? Any man of any age who appears to have eaten recently. "Seeing young, healthy males in the middle of a firefight makes you wonder what they're doing there," said a senior officer.

These detainees will be treated like POWs, but without official status, pending a hearing under Article 5 of the Geneva Conventions.

"U.S. officers say they recognize that roundups of men who appear to be civilians, and who may or may not be armed, will be among the most controversial tactics they could employ, and, if applied

indiscriminately, could undermine their campaign to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Iraqi people." That's a battle the Pentagon military machine appears to have already lost.

Currently some 660 men captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan are imprisoned at the naval base, held without trials or other legal rights. Reports of torture there are rampant.

Now military lawyers are scrambling to justify the roundup of Iraqi men lucky enough to have foraged food in the wasteland of death and destruction, hunger and thirst that the U.S.-British siege has left in its tank treads.

"We're still figuring this out," concluded the arrogant official, "because we thought we'd have mass surrenders, not this crap."

—Leslie Feinberg

## The death of a delusory doctrine

# Iraqi resistance and the Rumsfeld strategy

By Fred Goldstein

The heroic resistance by the people of Iraq to Washington's relentless high-tech military onslaught has inspired the world, shocked the Pentagon high command and dealt a severe blow to the Bush administration's ambitions to vastly expand U.S. capitalism's world empire.

Millions of people have taken to the streets, from Indonesia to Bangladesh, from Seoul to San Francisco, from Syria and Morocco to the Philippines, marching on the U.S. and British embassies and their own governments, demanding an end to the criminal war of aggression, the bombing of cities and towns, and the massacre of civilians.

The Pentagon has brought enough cruise missiles, bombs, rockets, aerial machine guns, tanks, and armored personnel carriers to launch a world war. The U.S. military has bombed Baghdad, including working class districts, markets, the telephone system, a maternity hospital, television stations and government buildings. It has launched attacks on major cities and towns such as Karbala, Najaf, An Nasiriyah and Samawa. The British have attacked Basra for two weeks running, bombing this city of 1.5 million and sending rockets and mortars into civilian areas.

The Iraqi people have answered by defending the cities, digging in for the battle of Baghdad, and opening up a widespread, classical campaign of guerrilla warfare to impede the advance of the imperialist forces.

### Resistance brings split in U.S. military

The national resistance of the Iraqi people to colonial invasion and occupation has revealed the complete bankruptcy of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's war strategy and opened up a deep split in the U.S. military and a hail of criticism of the "war plan."

The capitalist media suddenly became brave enough to criticize the Rumsfeld strategy—but only because they were speaking for a large section of the military brass who have been opposed to this strategy for over a year. The humiliation of the Pentagon war machine by the Iraqi masses determined to defend their country opened up a torrent of criticism and "I told you so" from the Army and the Marines over failure to provide sufficient troop strength and excessive reliance on air power.

The split surfaced when Gen. William Wallace, the commander of the Army forces in the Persian Gulf, was quoted in numerous publications on March 27 as saying: "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against because of these paramilitary forces. ... We knew they were there but we did not know how they would fight." (New York Times, March 28)

Gen. Wallace spoke while visiting Forward Operating Base Shell where the 101st Airborne was stationed. He was "stating aloud what many soldiers have been saying privately," continued the Times. "The general said that during this week's battle for the town of Najaf, south of Baghdad on the Euphrates River, Iraqi men in trucks took on American tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles, with nothing

more than light arms mounted in the beds of pickup trucks.

"Technical vehicles with .50 caliber weapons—any kind of weapon—leading the charge," the general said, incredulous. "They were charging tanks and Bradley's." He termed the behavior "bizarre."

Then came the phrase that touched off a virtual civil war in the high command. Said Wallace, "I've got to give my best military judgment, given the weather, the long lines of communication, and given that we have to pull up our long line of logistics. We've got to take this pause. We're still fighting the enemy every night."

This was echoed on the same day by the chief of staff of the First Marine Division, Col. Ben Saylor. "We've been contested every inch, every mile on the way up."

It is no accident that the Army and Marines have led the criticism. The ground troops under those commanders have to face the masses of the Iraqi people, have to feel the fury of the national resistance. These troops on the ground have been utterly unprepared to fight against a popular war. Unlike that of the officer pilots who bomb with impunity, and of the naval forces that are far from the battlefield and well protected, the ground troops' morale is sinking, creating a dire situation for the brass.

### Ignored their own intelligence warnings

Shortly after Wallace's public outburst, a spate of articles exposing the long and intense struggles in the Pentagon over the war plan began to appear in the capitalist press. A long and detailed inside account by Seymour Hersh appeared in the New Yorker magazine cover-dated April 7.

Another extensive article in the London Guardian of March 29 revealed that Gen. Tommy Franks, head of the Central Command, had sent Rumsfeld a plan requesting 400,000 troops before the campaign began. "An angry Rumsfeld sent it back three times," wrote the Guardian, "on each occasion asking for a cut in the number of soldiers needed for the job, so that at the outset of the war, Franks had seen his forces reduced to 250,000." And of those 250,000, only 90,000 were in the theater when the war started.

Most important, the Guardian revealed that, "Last month, the CIA issued a report saying that paramilitary units loyal to Saddam Hussein would threaten the rear of an advance on Baghdad. Similar warnings came from the Defense Intelligence Agency inside the Pentagon during the months leading up to the war."

In fact, Orville Schell, writing in the San Francisco Chronicle on March 31, quoted Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz: "People say to me, 'You are not the Vietnamese. You have no jungles and swamps.' I reply, let our cities be our swamps and our buildings our jungles." He had said this to a University of Warwick researcher six months ago.

How can it be that the Pentagon and the White House ignored not only the Iraqis, but the CIA and the DIA, both of whom have huge budgets just for the purpose of finding out such information? How could Rumsfeld, his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, all of whom planned this war, put the U.S. military effort at such a risk in the face of blunt

This goes beyond a mere miscalculation.

The Rumsfeld group needs this military strategy to uphold its political strategy of world domination, which has been dealt a severe blow in Iraq.

warnings by their own spy agencies?

The most important thing to note about the controversy over the war plan is that it is entirely superficial. The dispute has been reduced to a question of judgment. In fact, it is not merely a question of poor judgment on Rumsfeld's part. It is a question of ideology and world outlook that underlies the disastrous miscalculation.

### Doctrine of world domination

The Bush administration developed its doctrine of world domination in a National Security Strategy document of September 2002. This is an evolution of the Defense Planning Guidance first promulgated in March 1992, authored by Wolfowitz and approved and later modified by Cheney. It has been brought up to date and couched in language about countering terrorism. But it basically asserts the right of U.S. imperialism to intervene and remove any government that Washington deems a threat. The document further flatly states that no power or combination of powers shall be allowed to challenge the world supremacy of the Pentagon.

Such an outrageously aggressive and delusory political doctrine, which proclaims the intention of U.S. imperialism to dominate the globe and its population of 6 billion people, must of necessity have an enabling military doctrine that can envision such a world conquest within the means available to U.S. capitalism.

Richard Perle, recently deposed as chair of the Defense Policy Board, who had been a Rumsfeld appointee and an architect of this war, told PBS last July 11 that the Iraqi government was "a house of cards ... Support for Saddam, including within his military, will collapse at the first whiff of gunpowder."

And Paul Wolfowitz, speaking to the Veterans of Foreign Wars on March 11, said his Iraqi contacts in the United States tell him that "their friends and relatives want to know what is taking the Americans so long. When are you coming?"

These are the ideological and doctrinal collaborators of Rumsfeld. Their miscalculation stems from the absolute need for this strategy to work. It must work, or their doctrine of world domination falls to earth.

The Rumsfeld military doctrine—the supremacy of air power, high technology and threats of "shock and awe"—is a 21st-century version of 19th-century gunboat diplomacy. It harkens back to an era when the masses of the world were as yet isolated from one another, cut off from modern technology, military means, means of communication, and historical experience of struggle and organization. It recalls the era when British gunboats could sail to the coast of China or Africa and fire their cannons—a vastly superior military technology at the time—and devastate a coastal area in order to bring the local rulers into submission. Or when

Commodore Matthew C. Perry "opened up" Japan in the 1860s by sailing his fleet into the harbor, firing menacing cannon rounds, and demanding trading rights and other concessions.

This was the "shock and awe" of the 19th century, which is being resurrected for the 21st century with computer-guided bombs instead of cannon balls.

### The fatal flaw in their doctrine

Its two principal and interconnected assumptions are that Washington can get its way by threatening governments into submission or changing "regimes" around the globe so as to establish absolute sovereignty and domination. And that the people of the world are an inert mass—they are mere objects sufficiently disorganized and non-threatening that they do not have to be taken into account as the fundamental factor in world history. All that is needed is to send some smart bombs, cruise missiles, killer helicopters and computerized tanks, and U.S. domination is assured.

This, of course, is a necessary military doctrine for any faction of the ruling class that dreams of establishing a world empire. It means that you don't have to use millions of soldiers to go kill and be killed in massive combat. It means that the role of the infantry and the marines is to go in and "mop up" after murderous bombardments and then be transitional occupation forces helping to usher in new puppet governments that will do the beck and call of Washington.

It means that the working class here being sent to the wars of conquest will not have to undergo hardships; will not rebel against being used as shock troops for the transnational corporations and the oil companies. It means the ruling class can have "endless war" abroad and social stability at home.

But the Iraqi government, which has become a government of national resistance, and the Iraqi people in every city, town and village, have already proven decisively on the ground that the Rumsfeld strategy, and the Bush doctrine of empire that it is calculated to uphold, are false to the core. The forces of this mighty imperialist power have had to fight every inch of the way against a small, impoverished country, weakened by 12 years of sanctions and bombing.

The immediate danger is that these war criminals, in order to vindicate their bankrupt strategy, shall try to produce a victory by intensifying their already unspeakable crimes against the Iraqi people. They feel that they have enough military power to compensate for their staggering miscalculations of the resistance, and will wade through rivers of blood to avoid the ultimate humiliation of defeat.

The worldwide anti-war movement must do all possible to show total solidarity with the Iraqi people and whatever is necessary to stop this criminal war. □

## Report from Haiti

# 'Independence, yes! Occupation, no!'

By Pat Chin  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Haiti's first major protest against the U.S.-led war on Iraq, linked to the key demand that Washington stop meddling in Haiti's internal affairs, took place here in the capital on March 27.

The fired-up demonstration of more than 3,000 people, organized by the National Popular Party (PPN), occurred one day before the PPN convened its fifth national congress. The protest, joined by other popular organizations, ended with a loud rally in front of the U.S. Embassy where an effigy of President George W. Bush was burned to cheers from the crowd.

Speaker after speaker denounced the Bush administration through a gargantuan sound system facing the compound. "George Bush, terrorist, George Bush, oil thief," shouted the protesters in Creole. "Independence yes, occupation no."

As in Venezuela and elsewhere, the Bush regime has been brazenly attempting to execute "regime change" in Haiti by collaborating with the local bourgeoisie to topple President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

This is the second time that Aristide, who was re-elected on Nov. 26, 2000, has been targeted for imperialist destabilization—even though he now moderates his once fiery and outspoken anti-

imperialist views.

The PPN, which transformed itself in 1999 from the National Popular Assembly to a political party, supports, though critically, Aristide's government and his Fanmi Lavalas Party.

On March 28, 600 PPN militants gathered for their "fifth congress for a second independence" at a site that was once the "Ranch Croix des Bouquets" owned by U.S.-backed dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier, who was driven from Haiti by the masses. The spread, just outside Port-au-Prince, is now a sports training center for Haitian youths run by Cuban coaches, and a conference center.

The congress was opened by Georges Honorat of the PPN's Political Bureau, who led the assembly in chants of "the country is not for sale"—Creole style.

Undersecretary General Evariste Wilson summarized the last four years' work and outlined the PPN's perspective for the future.

Secretary General Ben Dupuy denounced the dominant class "for the widespread deterioration of the country." He stressed the importance of party work in developing political consciousness and mobilizing all strata, especially the poor masses.

PPN is a national revolutionary and anti-imperialist party based in the popu-

lar masses, specifically the peasantry. "Its goal is to bring the masses out of the darkness in which the traditional elite has kept them for 200 years," explained Maude LeBlanc of the Political Bureau. "PPN," she added, "is a party fighting for Haiti's national independence and against the domination and meddling of imperialist powers."

The delegates laid out tasks for the future, including organizing internal elections at all levels and "reviving the struggle of the people for our second independence as we approach 2004."

Resolutions were issued denouncing "the Macoute-bourgeoisie alliance against the Haitian people" and foreign meddling in Haitian affairs.

Resolutions also demanded freedom for the Cuban Five, and expressed solidarity with the people of Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba and Iraq, among other issues.

Foreign delegates included Zhang Boqing, Permanent Representative of the Development and Commercial Bureau of China, and Cuban Ambassador Rolando Gomez.

Cuban Communist Party Central Committee Representative Ricardo Garcia read a solidarity message from the Cuban people. He also denounced U.S. aggression against Cuba and the detention of the Cuban Five imprisoned by the U.S. gov-

ernment for working to prevent terrorism against socialist Cuba.

Kim Ives from the Haiti Support Network and Katherine Kean of Crowing Rooster Arts were also there, among others.

Johnny Stevens of the International ANSWER coalition described the growing anti-war movement worldwide and in the U.S. and invited Haitian participation in April 12 mobilizations.

This writer, representing Workers World Party, brought solidarity greetings from the U.S., including from the Bedford-Stuyvesant Coalition for Peace, and linked the anti-war movement to Haiti's struggle for self-determination.

Speakers also condemned the capitalist economic system that breeds racism, poverty and war. Some echoed the demands for freedom for the Cuban Five, freedom for Palestine, and an end to repression and cuts in social programs in the U.S.

PPN's strong ties to Cuba were very evident. Not only did the Cuban flag flutter next to the Haitian flag on the podium, but everywhere could be seen portraits of Che Guevara alongside Haitian heroes Jean Jacques Dessalines and Charlemagne Peralte. There were also rainbow peace flags from the Italian anti-war movement, reading "Pace." □

## U.S. threatens Syria & Iran Protest grows in Arab world

Continued from page 6

language news magazine, told the March 30 Washington Post: "I thought at first, okay, maybe it isn't a war for oil. Maybe America does want to help. Now it's genocide to me. Is the American government trying to exterminate the Arabs?"

### Protests in Syria and Palestine

Among the largest and most militant demonstrations have taken place in Syria and the occupied Palestinian West Bank and Gaza. On March 28, tens of thousands of Palestinians marched in what was called "the biggest show of support ever for Iraq." In Hebron, marchers burned a mock coffin inscribed with the names of Arab leaders who have "betrayed Iraq." Similar demonstrations have taken place in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan.

Hundreds of Palestinians, mostly residents of these same camps, have traveled to Iraq to join the fight against the U.S./British invaders. So too have at least 5,000 Iraqis who live outside the country, most of whom have made the dangerous trip overland by bus from Jordan and Syria.

Many more Iraqis have entered Iraq than have left as refugees, despite the intense U.S. bombing campaign. A refugee camp at Ruweished, Jordan, just across the border from Iraq, remains almost empty, despite the pre-war anticipation that it would be overwhelmed with fleeing Iraqis.

Syria has also seen its largest demonstrations in recent history. On March 26, following a U.S. missile strike on a Syrian bus inside Iraq that killed five people and wounded 15 more, some

200,000 marched in the capital, Damascus.

In recent days, Secretary of "Defense" Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell have threatened Syria, which shares a long border with Iraq, for allegedly "meddling" in the war and supporting Iraq. Both Rumsfeld and Powell have also made menacing gestures toward Iran, another of Iraq's neighbors.

Syrian President Bashar Assad told the Lebanese paper *As-Safir* on March 27, "We will not wait until we become the next target."

The Syrian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on March 31: "Syria chooses to be with international official and popular consensus that says: 'No to the aggression against Iraq; no to the bombing of cities and the killing of people.' Syria also chose to side with the brotherly Iraqi people who are facing an illegitimate and unjustifiable invasion."

Powell's menacing words, in a speech to American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the leading pro-Israel lobbying group in the U.S., made it clear that "next target" may be exactly how Washington views Syria.

"Syria now faces a critical choice," said Powell on March 31. "Syria can continue direct support for terrorist groups and the dying regime of Saddam Hussein, or it can embark on a different and more hopeful course. ... Either way, Syria bears the responsibility for its choices, and for the consequences."

But Syria also had a warning for the United States, though one very different from Powell's threat.

Syrian Information Minister Adnan



Lebanese and Palestinian demonstrators in anti-war protest April 2 in Lebanese port city of Sidon.

Omran, in a March 25 interview with the *Toronto Star*, predicted that the U.S. faced a future filled with resistance. "In Baghdad, they will find themselves facing daggers drawn from every corner. It will be a small-scale Vietnam. Small cuts will be made day after day and week after

week until the Americans are gone.

"It is incredible that George Bush has been deceived by his advisers into believing he is poised for victory," Omran said.

"This advice is based on the most stupid calculations ever made of the social dynamic in Iraq." □



## A YEAR OF STRUGGLE IN VENEZUELA

# New challenges await Bolivarian movement

By Greg Butterfield

The unfolding revolutionary process in Venezuela survived many difficult tests in the past year, including a coup attempt, internal economic sabotage by the capitalist elite and U.S. political pressure to depose popularly elected President Hugo Chávez.

The growing, organized activity of workers, peasants and the urban poor to defend the revolutionary process and push it forward has been key to this success.

After winning office in 1998 and again in 2000, Chávez used his mandate from Venezuela's oppressed to dismantle the entrenched two-party political system. Under his leadership, a National Assembly was formed. A new Constitution was written and approved by the masses.

Chávez championed measures to redistribute the country's oil wealth to benefit the 80 percent of Venezuelans who live in poverty. He called for distributing to poor farmers the 60 percent of arable land owned by 1 percent of the population.

He fought for a foreign policy independent of U.S. imperialism, including friendship and solidarity with Cuba.

Chávez has in fact become a world symbol of resistance to U.S. domination. In 2000 he became the first head of state to defy Washington by breaking the travel blockade to Iraq. This year, on March 22, Chávez denounced the new U.S./British war of conquest in Iraq and applauded anti-war protesters.

"Venezuela rejects ... the war which has been unleashed in recent days," he said. "We are highly comforted to know that the great majority of the world's countries have come out against the war in Iraq."

Chávez has named the social movement initiated by his election the "Bolivarian Revolution," after the great 19th-century liberator Simón Bolívar.

Venezuela's revolutionary process can only be understood in the context of the upheaval gripping South America. From Colombia and Ecuador to Peru, Brazil and Argentina, people are rebelling against decades of grinding poverty imposed by U.S., European and Japanese banks and transnational companies, and worsened by the global capitalist economic crisis that began in the 1990s.

The movement fighting for Venezuela's liberation views itself as part of a continent-wide struggle that takes many forms, including electoral victories, mass protests and guerrilla warfare.

### Mass uprising defeated coup

It was one year ago—on April 13–14—that the wealthy Venezuelan oligarchy and a handful of military officers, with the full aid and support of the Bush administration, staged a coup d'état in Caracas.

President Chávez was arrested; Pedro Carmona, head of the business association Fedecameras, named himself president.

The pretext for the coup was a clash between pro- and anti-Chávez demonstrators in which 11 people died. The coup plotters blamed Chávez supporters for starting the shooting. In fact, snipers had fired on the pro-Chávez crowd first. It is obvious now that they were prepared to launch the coup, and needed a pretext.

Carmona immediately declared all of

Chávez's social, economic and political reforms null and void. The Bush administration immediately recognized the coup plotters as the "legitimate government" of Venezuela.

It quickly became apparent that Washington had been part of the planning and had even been consulted about the timing of the coup.

But the Venezuelan masses had no intention of being pushed back.

Some 200,000 people poured out of Caracas's eastern and western slums and surrounded the presidential palace, many with arms in hand, demanding Chávez's return. In towns and villages throughout the country, peasants boarded buses and headed for the capital.

They fought pitched battles with police, and many died in the struggle.

The military rank and file and junior officers refused to fire on the crowds. Instead they joined the people in the streets.

Early on the morning of April 14, President Chávez was freed and returned to office. The coup plotters were placed under house arrest; many later fled the country. Top military officers were fired.

The Bolivarian Revolution had survived its first major test.

### Bolivarian Circles

Across Venezuela over a million working people are organized in 30,000 Bolivarian Circles—neighborhood-based organizations that constitute an embryonic form of workers' and peasants' power. This broad, militant organization of the people made victory over the coup possible.

Chávez's encouragement of the Bolivarian Circles distinguishes his regime from those of bourgeois nationalists who sometimes oppose U.S. imperialist dictates but are no friends of the workers and peasants.

What sparked the counter-revolutionary coup last April?

It was the Chávez government's move from political reform to measures directly aimed at the oligarchy's control of industry and land. Chávez signed 49 economic and land reforms into law in November 2001.

Following the classic counter-revolutionary model refined and tested by the CIA in Chile and other countries, the oligarchy mobilized its loyal base among small and medium-sized capitalists to march in the streets calling for Chávez's overthrow, creating the pretense of a "democratic opposition."

They had the full support of the privately owned Venezuelan media and the U.S. corporate media.

### Lockout collapses

Now it appears the Bolivarian movement has successfully weathered another test.

On Dec. 10, 2002, Fedecameras, in collaboration with the corrupt union federation CTV, staged a national lockout in an attempt to force Chávez from office.

The lockout was misrepresented as a "strike" by the U.S. media, even though it was organized by the bosses.

Its principal aim was to sabotage the state-owned oil industry, known as Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. Oil is Venezuela's

main source of cash and its major export, accounting for 60 percent of the country's annual budget.

Oil production plunged from 3 million barrels a day to 300,000. But oil workers soon took matters into their own hands, reopening closed facilities and running them without the bosses and managers. This further exposed the anti-worker character of the CTV.

By late January, some 75 percent of manual workers and 50 percent of administrators had returned to work, reported Ali Rodríguez, a former guerrilla leader whom Chávez appointed to head the state-run oil company.

Chávez ordered the National Guard to liberate stores of food and drink being hoarded by bosses during the lockout, and distribute them to the poor.

The right wing staged daily demonstrations in December and January calling for Chávez's ouster. But their base of petty capitalists quickly lost steam. It became apparent that the oligarchy was willing to hang its supporters out to dry. By the time the lockout collapsed in early February, some 50 percent of small businesses were in danger of going bankrupt.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of poor and working people continued to rally in Chávez's defense. At a Jan. 23 demonstration in Caracas, the president declared, "I have been to a lot of marches. But this is not a march. It's a flood of the people from all parts of the country." (CNN, Jan. 23)

A bomb exploded near the main square where demonstrators had gathered to hear Chávez. It was the first in a string of bombings that have also hit the Spanish and Colombian embassies and the oil city of Maracaibo.

"Some desperate sectors, since they failed in the coup and failed in the oil sabotage, have now opted for terrorism and are going around setting off bombs," Chávez charged. (Reuters, March 2)

Some U.S. and British media reports have acknowledged the despair many of the privileged feel after the collapse of their "strike."

"Fearful that their homes—and their lives—are in danger of violent attack from angry hordes in the city's sprawling slums, residents of middle and upper-class neighborhoods all over the city are meeting to draw up contingency plans," the London Times reported Jan. 20. "Discussions vary from stocking up on food and water, to making inventories of available weapons."

"Depressed isn't the word for it. I'm totally crushed," pharmacist María José Alonzo told Reuters March 10. The report went on to say that "Alonzo's pessimism reflects a mood swing among the middle classes, the backbone of the

opposition, whose marches often ended in street battles with Chávez's mainly poor supporters."

Carlos Fernández, the new head of Fedecameras, was placed under house arrest for his role in organizing the lockout. Arrest warrants were issued for seven former executives of the state oil company.

On March 26, the government guaranteed safe passage to CTV head Carlos Ortega, who was granted asylum by Costa Rica after an arrest warrant was issued. Ortega had been summoned directly to Washington by the U.S. State Department on Jan. 11, an indication of the level of White House involvement with the lockout.

### Pressure of war

Another factor in the lockout's collapse was a change in course by the Bush administration.

Venezuela is the third-largest supplier of oil to the United States. With a protracted war looming in Iraq, the White House seems to have decided that the oil must flow again, while not for a second letting up on its hostility to President Chávez or the Bolivarian movement.

By mid-March, through the hard work and sacrifices of the workers, the oil industry was back near its pre-lockout levels.

Venezuela backed up its claim by telling foreign customers that all of its oil contracts for March would be fulfilled as normal. (Los Angeles Times, March 20)

In another blow to the oligarchy, the Venezuelan government took control of all foreign currency exchange, taking the power of U.S. dollars out of their hands. The government instituted price controls on food and other staples. Soldiers have confiscated heavy weapons from the opposition-controlled metropolitan police in Caracas.

No one should think for a moment that this struggle is over. In its growing desperation, the Venezuelan ruling class is bound to lash out again, especially if Chávez moves to further enact his economic program. And U.S. imperialism has yet to be reckoned with.

The continued growth and strengthening of the Bolivarian Circles as an alternative source of political power and militant action could be decisive in the battles that lie ahead.

In this struggle the Venezuelan people need the broadest possible solidarity from workers and progressives all over the world, especially in the U.S. In the words of Caracas street peddler Antonio López: "The people are with Chávez. They know he's fighting the rich who are responsible for all this mess." □

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# Murder Iraqi children ... or fight for rights at home?

**T**he Pentagon invasion of Iraq, for no legitimate reason, has made hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops—women and men—accomplices in the gravest of all possible war crimes: a crime against peace.

Bush, Rumsfeld and their generals lied about what these troops would face. Now, instead of being greeted with the promised flowers, they are confronted with a people's war, one that the U.S. has not faced since Vietnam. It is false to believe that the Iraqi fighters hide among the Iraqi population. The Iraqi fighters ARE the Iraqi population.

In an attempt to grab Iraqi oil and establish a U.S. empire, Washington has put young women and men from the U.S. in a horrible position. Their own lives and safety are at extreme risk in this adventurous aggression against 24 million people. And they have been turned into the executioners of Iraqi children, committing thus a second war crime—a crime against humanity.

The hypocrites in Washington who demand everyone here "support the troops" are the very people who endanger them the most. They even bombard Iraqi armor with the same kinds of depleted-uranium weapons that poisoned a generation of 1991 Gulf War veterans, along with hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. On top of that, even as the war was launched they cut veterans' benefits, including health care.

The U.S. troops in Iraq are on the spot. The anti-war movement, too, must make a difficult decision. Anyone who knows the truth about the war knows that U.S. troops have no more right to be in Iraq now than Hitler's soldiers had in Poland or France in 1939-40.

At the same time, these troops come from the U.S. working class.

Indeed, they are even more representative of people of color and from poorer regions and have joined the military to get jobs and benefits unavailable in civilian society.

The movement must demand that the troops—those at home and those on the sands of Iraq—have access to full information about the nature of the war, especially the worldwide resistance to this criminal venture.

It must demand that U.S. troops in Iraq have the right to refuse orders to shoot at civilians, that they have the right to declare their opposition to the war and refuse illegal orders to commit war crimes. As Bush himself pointed out earlier, in a different context, of course, it is no defense against war crimes charges to say, "I was only following orders."

U.S. anti-war groups report an increase in applications for conscientious objector status. Some cases have recently hit the media, including one involving three British troops.

It is important that the movement help provide legal defense for all service people who take a stand against the war—from those who refuse to fight, to those who strike out against the command center that orders them to commit war crimes, as one sergeant did in Kuwait.

Here in the U.S. there are many deep problems that can only be solved with a struggle—for the rights of education, jobs, decent pay and benefits, health care for all, against bigotry and racism, to name but a few. Many of those dragged into the Vietnam War had their lives changed by it and became conscious activists for progressive social change. That is where the spirit of heroism, combativeness and self-sacrifice of U.S. youth is welcome—not as oppressors of the Iraqi people. □



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

## From the river to the sea Palestine will be free!

More than 2,000 people took to the streets of Manhattan in a march from Times Square down Broadway to Union Square on March 29. Armed with colorful banners and spirited chants, they demanded "Free Palestine and stop the war on Iraq!"

The protest was organized by a coalition of Palestinian organizations including Al-Awda (The Right to Return) NY-NJ chapters, the Arab Muslim American Federation and the Defend Palestine Committee.

March 29 has been designated as the "Day of the Land," commemorating the murders of six Palestinians at the hands of Israeli soldiers in 1976. The current, heroic Intifada began in September 2000 against the apartheid Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, where an overwhelming

majority of the 1,900 Palestinian people killed by Israeli troops and settlers have lost their lives.

The demonstration was led by Palestinians of all ages, particularly the youth. They were joined by other Arab, Muslim and North American supporters. Many shoppers and bystanders were visibly moved by this protest.

The demonstration also made strong links to the heroic resistance that the Iraqi people are putting up against the U.S. and British military forces seeking to occupy their country as part of an overall strategy to deepen imperialist control over the oil-rich region.

—Monica Moorehead

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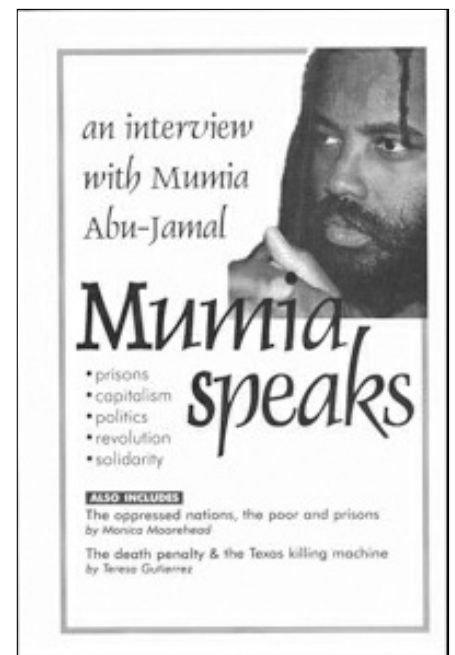
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## WEST BANK, PALESTINE

# No 24-hour coverage of this U.S.-backed war in the Middle East

By Leslie Feinberg

There's another U.S.-supplied war raging in the Middle East. You could scour the daily newspapers cover to cover, watch television news all day long, read every crawler, yet rarely hear a word about it.

This war involves Pentagon high-tech weaponry, ethnic cleansing, massive land theft, massacres of civilians, systematic destruction of the infrastructure that supports civilian life, wholesale violations of human rights and of the Geneva Convention, large-scale abductions and widespread torture of prisoners.

Why no seamless, 24-hour-a-day coverage with reporters embedded in the front-line action? Because this war is raging in historic Palestine, where Wall Street and the Pentagon are fully backing the apartheid Israeli regime that acts as its garrison state in the oil-rich region.

On the eve of imperial war against Iraq, Bush tried to placate anger in the Arab world by promising a road map to a Palestinian state by the year 2005. But it's a phony promise.

And the proof is that even as the U.S.-backed Tel Aviv government publicly agreed, they were redrawing the "road map" by drastically revising the blueprint for a 225-mile-long segregation fence to wall off the entire West Bank.

The serpentine metal barrier will be 50 yards wide—not feet, yards. It will stand 46 feet tall and include gun turrets, ditches, electronic detection systems and patrol roads.

Tel Aviv is now reportedly shifting the wall 12 miles east into Palestinian land so that about 40,000 additional illegal Israeli settlers would be placed on the Israeli side of the barrier. An additional 3,000 Palestinians would be isolated on that side. (New York Times, March 24)

According to Palestinians and human-rights groups, the new border would dislocate a total of more than 200,000 Palestinians, stranding them on the "Israeli" side of the newly imposed border. (Chicago Sun Times)

It's a further illegal annexation of thousands of acres of Palestinian land.

"Before these new proposals, Palestinians were going to lose between 8 to 10 percent of land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Now it's more like 20 percent," said Michael Tarazi, legal advisor to the Palestinian Liberation Organization. (Chicago Sun Times, March 24)

Palestinian Cabinet Minister Saeb Erekat stressed that the wall is "creating facts on the ground" which may annex as much as 40 percent of the West Bank. "This is part of Israel's exploitation of the war in Iraq," he concluded. (Palestine Media Center)

The U.S.-backed government of Ariel Sharon is also considering constructing a second "segregation wall" east of the West Bank to maintain its control over the Jordan Valley.

This one will also encroach deep into Palestinian territory and will almost encircle at least one and possibly two cities, turning them into completely isolated cantons. The Israeli prison wall has already divided the West Bank into eight separate, noncontiguous ghettos.

Palestinian cabinet member Nabil Shaath explained, "This is part of the ongoing Israeli effort to deepen its occupation."



Some 300 Palestinian children held a sit-down protest in front of the United Nations building in downtown Beirut, Lebanon, on April 2, to protest U.S.-British attacks on the people of Iraq.

Some ultra-rightists in Israel reportedly oppose this wall because it's not enough of an annexation. They think it will make it harder to grab even more land later on. (New York Times, March 24)

Could any of this be taking place without Washington's OK? Doesn't the presence of all those Pentagon troops and weapons in and around Iraq demand that every country in the region knuckle under to U.S. interests?

### Green light for state terror

Most towns in the West Bank have been under Israeli military occupation for the last few months.

Israeli political scientist Menachem Klein said Sharon's raids are "a kind of rehearsal. ... And the thinking is that if the world gets used to these short-term occupations, it will digest the long-term one."

The fenced-in Gaza Strip that is still Palestinian-controlled has been regularly pummeled by Israeli tank and helicopter raids.

The civilian infrastructure has been systematically targeted for destruction, including roads and electricity pylons. Fuel supplies can't get through Israeli cordons, leaving people without functioning generators. Medicines, in turn, are ruined without refrigeration.

According to International Solidarity Movement observers, badly needed water supplies are being purposely sabotaged or diverted to the illegal Israeli settlements. And ancient olive trees are being uprooted on Palestinian farms. (BBSNews, March 22)

Many Palestinian families are locked into one room of their home while Israeli troops use the rest.

Palestine Chronicle reports that more than 7,000 Palestinians are estimated to be held in Israeli military detention camps, arrested since the outbreak of the current Intifada on "suspicion" of involvement in anti-Israel activities.

This state-sponsored terror and the atrocities of life under occupation are just what international solidarity observers like Rachel Corrie have been trying to help Palestinians bring to world attention.

Corrie was killed by a nine-ton armor-plated Israeli Army bulldozer when she and other international solidarity activists tried to stop the military from demolishing the home of a Palestinian doctor and

his family in the southern Gaza refugee city of Rafah on March 16.

The International Solidarity Movement, of which she was a part, stressed after her death, "Rachel joins 1,900 Palestinians who have been killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers since September 2000."

At a memorial for Corrie held by Palestinians and internationals, those gathered confronted an Israeli armored personnel carrier, tear gas and concussion grenades. (Robyn Long, March 21, "Live from Palestine")

The Israeli media could not easily label Corrie a terrorist—a "blame the victim" policy that the Israeli government relies on in its war against the Palestinian people. So Israeli National News reported that she was killed trying to protect the home of a terrorist. (Arutz Sheva)

In fact, the home of Dr. Samir was one of some 602 civilian houses that have reportedly been completely razed in Rafah, Corrie revealed in the course of her work. And far more civilian homes have been partially destroyed.

### U.S. out of the Middle East

Since the start of the Goliath-versus-David war against Iraq, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has expressed his great concern for the upholding of the Geneva Conventions in regard to captured U.S. soldiers.

But demolishing civilian homes, which takes place daily in the apartheid settler state of Israel, is an act of violence that violates Articles 12 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 33, 53 and 54 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The ISM charges: "None of the governments or international bodies that criticize Israel's destruction of Palestinian homes has taken any concrete actions to stop it.

"Words of criticism are empty when they come at the very moment an additional \$1 billion in supplemental military aid to Israel and an additional \$9 billion in loan guarantees are under consideration by the U.S. Congress." (Scoop, a Wellington-based Internet news agency accredited to the New Zealand Parliament Press Gallery)

Israel is not just supported politically by Washington, Wall Street and the Pentagon.

Its economy is propped up by an average of \$3 billion to \$4 billion a year in official aid. The Pentagon and its adjunct military-industrial complex have built Israel into the world's fifth-ranking military power, despite its having a population of only 5 million people.

It was a U.S.-supplied D-9 armored tank that crushed Rachel Corrie to death.

Corrie was the first member of the international observers to be killed, but the violence against them by the Israelis has been increasing. And Washington has refused to lift a finger to protect them.

Shortly before the U.S. went into Iraq, Michael Sheikh, media coordinator of the ISM, concluded that repression was growing against international observers, "part of an Israeli plan to step up its campaign of terror against the people of Palestine once the U.S. commences its invasion of Iraq ... so that the army can carry out its crimes against Palestinians without witnesses and with impunity."

On March 22 in Ya'bad, a town just west of Jenin, Israeli troops pointed their weapons at three internationals from Mexico, Denmark and Sweden. Activists were trying to get to Palestinians trapped in their homes by the curfew.

Workers World spoke with another young international observer from the U.S. who was wounded March 20 in the Old City of Nablus. Eric Hawanith from Chicago told WW via cell phone that he was shot with three rubber-coated steel bullets fired by an Israeli border police officer.

He said he had been wearing a fluorescent yellow vest, in plain view of the troops and police all afternoon, monitoring their activities. There was no one else near him. The weapon used fires a volley of three shots. Since they hit him in the ankle, elbow and chest, he emphasized, it was clear that he was the target.

After being treated at a local hospital, he was back out that same day bringing food and other aid to Palestinians trapped in rooms of their homes that were being used as command centers by Israeli troops.

After Rachel Corrie's killing, her family made public an email she sent in February, in which she talked about how important the huge Jan. 18 protest in Washington, D.C., had been. This International ANSWER coalition protest bolstered what she was trying to convey to the Palestinians she worked with—that not everyone in the United States supports Washington's war drive in the Middle East.

That's the kind of message and the kind of international solidarity that the anti-war movement needs to send so loud and so clear that it can be heard even in the subjugated homes, detention centers and refugee camps in historic Palestine:

"Stop U.S. funding of Israel! U.S. out of the Middle East! Free Palestine!" □



# Iraquíes contra el imperio

Por Fred Goldstein

Sea lo que pase en la batalla por Bagdad, la resistencia inicial por el pueblo iraquí a la lluvia de bombas mortales sobre su capital y a la invasión por las tropas armadas de los Estados Unidos y Bretaña ha demostrado que los planes de la administración de Bush, de una rápida y total dominación de Irak, estaban basados en falsedades e ilusiones.

Los terribles bombardeos a Bagdad, Mosul y Kirkut con cientos de misiles y miles de bombas han cobrado ya muchas vidas y enormes destrucciones. El pueblo iraquí está en gran peligro de un bombardeo aún más fuerte a la vez que las fuerzas estadounidenses aumentan la batalla para tomar a Bagdad.

Sin embargo, las grandes dificultades enfrentadas por las fuerzas invasoras, a pesar de su gran superioridad militar, muestra cómo los constructores de estos planes de guerra en el Pentágono subestimaron la voluntad y la habilidad del pueblo a resistir la agresión imperialista.

## Iraquíes no actuaron según planes de Washington

Según los planes de los arquitectos bélicos en Washington, los masivos bombardeos sobre Bagdad estaban supuestos a lograr que el liderazgo iraquí desapareciera, que hubiera defeción de líderes, un motín nacional contra el gobierno de Saddam Hussein y que se le diera la bienvenida a las fuerzas militares estadounidenses como libertadoras.

Pero el pueblo iraquí no siguió estos planes del Presidente Bush, del Vice presidente Cheney, del Secretario de la Defensa, Rumsfeld y de todo el resto de los militaristas derechistas en la Casa Blanca y el Pentágono. En vez de actuar según las ilusiones de Washington, el pueblo actuó según su realidad. Tal parece que nunca creyeron que los ejércitos imperialistas de Estados Unidos y de los ex colonizadores de Irak en Londres iban a "liberarles". Actuaron en base a que la gigantesca máquina militar estaba allí para conquistarlos.

Rehusando a ser objetos de la historia y aguardar pasivamente su destino, ellos han decidido sus propios planes de resistencia. Han lanzado una amplia y determinada campaña de guerrilla urbana, la más difícil, para compensar por la gran desigualdad con la fuerza militar a la que se enfrentan.

Que esto cambie o no el resultado de la guerra, no deja de ser un gran ejemplo de heroísmo glorioso, auto sacrificio y determinación para todos los trabajadores y oprimidos.

Cuando las fuerzas invasoras cruzaron la frontera Kuwait/Irak, trataron sin éxito de entrar a una y otra ciudad en el sur de Irak. Esperaban ser recibidos con los brazos abiertos basado en la hostilidad de los Shiitas Musulmanes en sur contra el régimen de Saddam Hussein. En vez de eso, se encontraron con una pared de resistencia popular desde Umm Qasr a Basora, a A-Nasiriyah y en toda la región.

La crucial ciudad portuaria de Umm Qasr tiene una población de 4.000 habitantes. Un corresponsal del periódico Washington Post dijo a la cadena de tele-

visión MSNBC-TV el 24 de marzo que la ocupación de Umm Qasr se suponía que solo tomara de cuatro a ocho horas. Pero tomó cinco días debido a la fuerte resistencia.

La Marina Real Británica estaba supuesta a tomar control de Basora a comienzo de la campaña. Supuestamente, ellos entrarían fácilmente a esa ciudad de 1,5 millones, la segunda ciudad en el país y el centro de la región shiita sureña. Ellos tenían intenciones de exhibir a Basora como un ejemplo de los iraquíes dándoles la bienvenida esperando su liberación.

Al momento de este escrito—26 de marzo—las fuerzas británicas todavía no han podido entrar a la ciudad.

## Campesinos con rifles contra helicópteros Apache

Más al norte en Kabal, los campesinos derribaron a dos helicópteros Apache con armas pequeñas y ahuyentaron a otros 30 helicópteros que estaban en una misión de asegurar el área para la División de la Tercera Infantería. La milicia iraquí usando sólo camionetas y disparando ametralladoras y granadas de propulsión atacaron a las columnas armadas.

El periódico Wall Street Journal en su edición del 25 de marzo resumió la situación de esta manera: "Lejos de ser reconocidos inmediatamente como libertadores, las fuerzas invasoras de Estados Unidos y Bretaña en el sur de Irak están enfrentando fuego y gran hostilidad provenientes de los residentes quienes muy a menudo están desesperados por alimento y agua y furiosos por el continuo asalto militar contra su país."

"En el pueblo polvoroso de Az Zubayr, al sur de Basora," continuó el Wall Street Journal, "algunos iraquíes en ropas civiles dispararon granadas de propulsión y ametralladoras contra las tropas americanas y británicas. 'Los americanos están destruyendo nuestro país. Habrá una lucha,' dijo Ismail Hantush, un ingeniero en la compañía petrolera gubernamental."

Para dar una pequeña muestra de cómo las autoridades militares y políticas de los Estados Unidos ignoraron el odio al colonialismo de las masas, el periódico reportó que "tan solo unos días antes, una coalición de oficiales en Kuwait estaba haciendo planes de llevar equipos de televisión para filmar a las masas alegres y rebosantes en el sur de Irak."

Las fuerzas estadounidenses están ahora en posición de tener que suprimir a la gente para poder protegerse. El Comando Central de los Estados Unidos ha alineado sus abastecimientos en 200 millas por un territorio que supuestamente sería amigable y seguro. Ahora las



Bagdad, Iraq, 25 de Marzo.

fuerzas invasoras están bombardeando a la ciudad de Basora en preparación de una ocupación. Todo el plan militar estaba basado en la ilusión de que los imperialistas podrían aterrorizar a la gente y obligarlos a entregarse y engañarlos con falsas promesas de liberación.

El Washington Post reportó el 25 de marzo que, "la continua resistencia iraquí pone en duda específicamente la eficacia de la campaña más grande de operaciones psicológicas llevada a cabo por el ejército estadounidense. En los últimos seis meses, aviones estadounidenses soltaron más de 25 millones de papeletas sobre unidades militares iraquíes y el pueblo civil, urgiéndoles a que no lucharan contra la invasión estadounidense. También fue llevada la propaganda por radio y llamadas telefónicas a oficiales invitándoles a negociar su rendición. La falta de entregas en gran escala sugiere que los comandantes iraquíes a su vez pudieron haber estado manipulando las esperanzas de sus contactos estadounidenses."

## Engañaron a tropas estadounidenses

El estado mayor llevó 250.000 tropas como una fuerza invasora, alimentándoles las mismas mentiras. Les dijeron que eran liberadores. Ahora están siendo matados y heridos y confrontan a una muralla de hostilidad popular. Mientras aumentan las bajas, aumenta también la posibilidad de desmoralización entre los soldados y la pérdida aún mayor de apoyo político doméstico a la guerra.

La administración de Bush y el mando militar confrontan ahora la tarea de conquistar a Bagdad. El Pentágono está planeando aumentar los bombardeos en la ciudad y en los alrededores para intentar reducir las bajas entre sus fuerzas militares. Pero finalmente, las fuerzas estadounidenses tendrán que tomar la ciudad por medio del combate. Es posible que Washington esté preparando intensificar horriblemente sus crímenes de guerra en

contra del pueblo iraquí, así como lanzar a los soldados de los EE.UU. en una batalla gigantesca donde se verán forzados a asumir el papel de un ejército opresor y entonces enfrentar la ira del pueblo de Irak resistiendo la ocupación y la opresión.

El movimiento en este país tiene que intensificar su lucha para sacar las tropas y salvarles de ser presa del Pentágono, que está enviándolos a cometer agresiones y crímenes de guerra. El pueblo iraquí tiene todo el derecho a resistir.

Washington tiene el descaro de denunciar a los iraquíes por crímenes de guerra y violaciones de las convenciones de Ginebra porque la emisora de TV de Irak mostró a soldados presos mientras las autoridades preguntaban sus nombres y lugar de origen. Pero la guerra en su totalidad es un crimen—incluso el intento de derrocar a un gobierno soberano, bombardeando ciudades y matando civiles, invadiendo para saquear el petróleo y establecer a un gobierno títere.

No es simplemente un cambio de regímenes, sino un cambio en el estado de una nación de 25 millones de habitantes de independencia política hacia la dominación militar, económica y política por una superpotencia imperialista. Es un cambio de estado que va desde el control de su propio petróleo y otros recursos para el desarrollo nacional—no importa que esto haya estado restringido por sanciones económicas—hasta la dependencia total a Washington, a las gigantes empresas petroleras, al Pentágono y al imperialismo en general.

Irak ha luchado mucho tiempo por su independencia política, a través de rebeliones sangrientas primero contra el Imperio Otomano y luego contra el Británico. Irak llevó a cabo una revolución de liberación nacional en 1958. El pueblo iraquí no quiere volver a ser colonia y a la ocupación militar, que sería reemplazada por un régimen neo-colonial que conformaría parte del imperio de los EE.UU.

El pueblo de Irak y todos los pueblos del Medio Oriente saben que esta guerra es el comienzo de una nueva fase expansionista de la administración de Bush de conformar un paso hacia la hegemonía mundial de Washington y el Pentágono.

El Congreso, después de aprobar la guerra, se ha vuelto una institución silenciosa durante este histórico suceso implementado por los belicistas derechistas de la Casa Blanca y el Pentágono. Ellos están conduciendo el imperialismo estadounidense al sendero del imperio mundial, al sendero del militarismo desenfrenado en la lucha para vencer a todos los rivales imperialistas y expandir intensamente su explotación de los pueblos oprimidos del mundo.

El movimiento tiene que intensificar y ampliar su lucha contra la agresión imperialista y la ocupación en el extranjero y en contra de la imposición de un estado casi policial-militar acá. No importa el resultado final de esta guerra brutal, la resistencia heroica de Irak a la fuerza abrumadora debe ser un ejemplo y una inspiración para poner un alto a la maquinaria de guerra aquí en los Estados Unidos. La oportunidad próxima será el 12 de abril en Washington, D.C. □