

Peace Now!



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The Bulletin of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament & Peace

Why now *Peace Now!*

This *inaugural issue* of the Bulletin of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace is being launched at a time of epochal, indeed cataclysmic, change in the world. The Iraq war threatens to radically alter politics and power balances around the globe, probably for the worse. Our part of the world—its “most dangerous region”—cannot remain unaffected by these changes.

The emerging situation confronts the global peace movement with challenges it has never before faced: How to halt, and roll back, recent setbacks to multilateralism, rule of law and peaceful means of conflict resolution? How to combat the new Empire the United States wants to build to achieve untrammelled global domination through raw military force untempered by international norms, the United Nations, public opinion, and its own allies? Which levers must we seize to reverse the damage to the goals of universal disarmament of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), peace and justice?

India, to our collective shame, today seeks to emulate the United States of America, which it courts as a “strategic partner”. Indian citizens have energetically campaigned against the unjust and illegal war on Iraq. Their protests have been

remarkable for their broad-based, plural and multi-religious character. The Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace has been an integral component of these all over India.

CNDP was set up at the collective initiative of some 120 civil society organisations and people’s movements at a National Convention in New Delhi in November 2000, attended by over 700 delegates. These diverse organisations were appalled at the crossing of the nuclear threshold in South Asia and India’s embrace of those very strategic doctrines which it had rejected for 50 years. They believed—and continue to be convinced—that nuclear weapons everywhere create insecurity, not security. They must be abolished.

CNDP’s adherents and supporters have since grown in number—to over 200 organisations, and many more individuals. They held a Northern India Regional Convention in Delhi in November 2002, as well as numerous state and city-level conferences. They have tried to broaden the scope of their activities by making structural connections between peace and nuclear disarmament and other burning problems of the day, including militarism, national

chauvinism, religious-ethnic communalism, and the people’s basic needs and priorities.

CNDP has acquired an identity of its own as a coalition. Its 30-odd-member National Coordination Committee has met six times so far—in Chennai, Bangalore, Goa, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai. It is recruiting both individuals and organisations as members on the basis of its agreed Charter. All these are significant achievements.

However, the activities of CNDP’s constituents remain geographically uneven and insufficiently coordinated. Our work and ideas have little influence at the level of policy. We lack a strong national profile. We haven’t created adequate spaces for exchange of information and views, and for collective reflection, analysis and discussion of strategy and tactics.

Peace Now!/Aman Varta seeks to fill this void. To start with, it will be published every quarter in English and Hindi. It will carry reports and sharp analyses of developments, in India, in the region and globally, of relevance to our work. It will promote a healthy debate among CNDP’s constituents, generate new ideas and strategies, and provide a forum for discussion.

Reports on CNDP activities

Special articles

by Sukla Sen, Sukumar Muralidharan, Vineeta Bal, Praful Bidwai, Kavita Srivastava, Achin Vanaik and Lal Bahadur Verma

Analyses of the Iraq situation

Alternative voices from abroad: Robert Fisk, Naomi Klein, Robert Byrd, Raymond Whitaker

Northern India Convention

End of Darkness?

There is some very good news as we go to press. Following Prime Minister Vajpayee's offer of the "hand of friendship" to Pakistan, there has been a flurry of moves to restore damaged diplomatic relations and aviation links. These raise hopes of resumption of a long-overdue bilateral dialogue. New Delhi and Islamabad have probably acted under external goading and in anticipation of heavy, overt US pressure to end their prolonged mutual hostility, during which they recklessly resorted to coercion and nuclear brinkmanship.

Regardless of pressures, the moves towards reconciliation must be unreservedly welcomed. The very least they will do is contribute to defusing tension in "the world's most dangerous place", which only six months ago was on the brink of war, with a distinct potential for a Nuclear Holocaust. For all peace-lovers, reduction of the nuclear danger is a top priority.

Breaking News

That's why we must welcome President Musharraf's May 5 offer to rid Pakistan of its nuclear weapons if India too de-nuclearises. Vajpayee must respond to it earnestly and comprehensively, without disingenuously citing the "China factor". The globe's highest real and present nuclear danger is right here, in South Asia. It must be squarely addressed through talks within the framework agreed at Lahore.

Yet, it's premature to speak of an India-Pakistan "summit" and one shouldn't expect a smooth process of dialogue and reconciliation. There will be many hitches and snags. Ending "cross-border terrorism" may no longer be Vajpayee's precondition for improving relations with Pakistan, but it remains his topmost concern. But it's not clear how much, how quickly and verifiably, Pakistan can deliver on this.

It's equally unclear if Vajpayee can bring the BJP and its extreme-Right *sangh parivar* associates on board as regards putting Kashmir on the negotiating table. Unless differences between government and BJP are reconciled, any agreement with Pakistan will remain vulnerable to a veto by the *parivar* Right—as at Agra, where a draft agreed between the heads of government was shot down by Advani. This is true even of the smaller steps indicated as necessary before road and rail links are restored, including a Pakistani commitment to freer trade with India.

The two states must end the long sterile phase in their relations, aggravated by their nuclearisation five years ago. For this, their leaders will have to show great flexibility, responsiveness, and above all, a resolve to pursue reconciliation. They must recognise that war is simply no option, and neither can compel the other to behave in a certain way by coercion—without risking a catastrophe. There's no alternative to peaceful co-existence. This requires, among other things, nuclear risk-reduction and confidence-building measures—not to legitimise nuclear weapons, but in the spirit of nuclear restraint, leading to disarmament.

India and Pakistan made a commitment at Lahore to measures "aimed at prevention of conflict", to meeting "periodically to discuss all issues of mutual concern, including nuclear-related issues", and "bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict", as well as to "consultation on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations ... in multilateral fora". None of this happened. Implementing these commitments is an urgent priority. Spadework is necessary on many other issues too, and at different levels, before a high-level meeting is attempted. What the

peoples of the subcontinent need most is relief from tension, rivalry, and fear—so they can live out of the nuclear shadow and in peace, and return to long-neglected social agendas. Their leaders must not fail them again.



LATEST BLOCKBUSTER: This spoof movie poster mocking the US-led coalition's war on Iraq was doing the rounds of the Internet on Thursday. The film credits on the poster are self-explanatory. It is one of the many novel methods used all over the world to protest against the war on Iraq.

The Day After

The Edit Page

As the world continues to reel from the moral shock of the Iraq war, the United States proceeds to set up a puppet regime in Baghdad—the first step in a radical restructuring of the Middle East and the global order. Yet, no amount of drum-beating about the Anglo-American coalition’s “military victory” in Iraq will whitewash this war’s grisly reality. It was grossly immoral, illegal, and blatantly violative of the will of the international community, multilateralism and the intention of the United Nations Security Council.

The attack on Iraq breached every criterion of a just war. It wasn’t fought in self-defence. Iraq posed no credible threat to its neighbours, leave alone the US. The force used was disproportionate to Iraq’s alleged offence, and killed at least 1,400 civilians. And the attack occurred just when diplomacy and UN inspections could have resolved the WMD issue. The very fact that the US and its small cabal of craven allies launched this war in the teeth of worldwide popular opposition means that a new international bully or brigand has emerged, with even greater contempt for civilised values and rule of law than medieval bandits, warlords and pirates. America’s motives behind the war go beyond Iraq’s oil, precious as it is, with reserves only second to Saudi Arabia’s. They have to do with establishing a new Empire, in which the US remains the world’s sole Superpower indefinitely, rejects all restraints and limitations on its conduct, and brooks no competitor, globally, even regionally. The means of achieving this goal will be primarily military, according to the neo-conservative ideologues who dominate the Bush administration.

The neocons are prepared to go to any length in pursuing their agenda: wrecking the UN, tearing up arms control treaties, sabotaging the Western political-military alliance, and unilaterally punishing those who didn’t fall in line on Iraq (e.g. France). Rather than eliminate horror weapons, they seek to eliminate regimes. In place of global arms control and disarmament, they want to perpetuate the military supremacy of one power. Their foreign and strategic policies are inseparable from their domestic agenda: elitist, pro-rich, anti-poor and corrosive of human rights and democracy. The Bush administration claims

that the Iraq war will be an “object lesson” for all “rogue” states, and impel them to abandon WMD programmes and “terrorism”, and encourage their people to overthrow dictatorial regimes. It will make for a better world. The claim is disastrously wrong. The sheer injustice of the war, its brutalisation of civilians, and the plunder of Iraq’s heritage, has horrified the global public, aggravated grievances and strengthened anti-American sentiments. Some of these will take extreme forms, reinforcing Islamic-fundamentalist terrorism—and its competitive religious rivals. What’s in progress in Iraq is a mockery and grotesque perversion of democracy. With the war, the Middle East stands destabilised. The world seethes with discontent. Many governments and people might draw the wrong lessons from Iraq—for instance, that possession of powerful WMD alone can deter invasion; that India should “do an Iraq” on Pakistan, which has WMD and exports “terrorism”; that given the new world order, it’s futile to fight US unilateralism; it’s better to fall in line.

These ideas would be less dangerous and ludicrous if they weren’t held by top-level decision-makers in India and weren’t at the root of their deeply deplorable cowardly policy on Iraq. These ideas are all wrong. The Iraq war strengthens, it doesn’t weaken, the case for universal WMD disarmament, for a balanced multilateral system, for radical reform of the UN, for a sustainable, just peace which will allow the world’s people room to address their long-neglected agendas, develop their human potential, and become masters of their own fate. Perhaps the only redeeming feature of this otherwise grim situation is the emergence of the world’s “Second Superpower”—global public opinion. This has asserted itself as never before. Millions of people, inspired by the noblest ideas of justice and peace, as opposed to narrow self-interest, have mobilised a huge global peace movement.

CNDP is, and must relate to and function as, part of that international movement even as it closely focuses on South Asian issues—regional denuclearisation, India-Pakistan reconciliation, communalism and militarism—while fighting in defence of people’s livelihood rights.

Letter to the Editor

We in the Pakistan Peace Coalition greatly appreciate CNDP’s decision to start a Bulletin of its own. This fills a definite need. We too should be thinking of some similar initiatives. On the issue of the war on Iraq, PPC has held meetings in Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar. We issued a number of statements on different occasions concerning peace and nuclear disarmament.

PPC joined the Pakistan-India Peoples’ Forum for Peace and Democracy in organising the annual convention of the Forum’s Sindh chapter. The function was a great success. PPC is also planning a number of events in the immediate future. Its sister organisation representing seafarers has been active in recent cases securing the release of Indian seafarers arrested by Pakistan’s forces.

PPC is greatly handicapped because of the severance of communication links between India and Pakistan. Very few people come from India, and fewer still go to India. Such visits usually generate useful activities.

We once again wish CNDP and its Bulletin well,

MB Naqvi, Karachi

CNDP in Action

Ever since CNDP was set up in November 2000, its individual members as well as affiliated organisations have regularly participated in numerous events and activities: hall meetings or demonstrations on the May 11-13 anniversaries of the Pokharan-II blasts, observance of Hiroshima Day and Nagasaki Day (August 6 and 9), schools- and colleges-related programmes, as well as events to educate the public on war and peace, militarism, communalism and India-Pakistan relations.

CNDP activists have tried to link all these issues with the imperative of justice and peace, with an emphasis on nuclear disarmament. The Gujarat pogrom of 2002 shocked the nation and brought CNDP activists into the streets in every city and town. We succeeded, to some extent, in making connections between communalism, militarist ideologies and Hindutva's obsession with weapons of mass destruction. CNDP activists participated in large numbers in the process leading to the Asian Social Forum and in the event itself. (See Box) The primary focus here was globalisation. CNDP co-sponsored one of the eight major conferences at the ASF.

What follows is a brief summary of CNDP activities from different regions over the past year or so. The emphasis is on protests against the war on Iraq. More than 200 Indian cities and towns witnessed such protests, many of them spontaneous. The account here is by no means exhaustive. There are obvious gaps: West Bengal, for example witnessed the greatest anti-war rallies, one attended by 300,000 people. And we have deliberately not mentioned most of the regular activities listed above, unless they are of special significance in a particular state or city. Even so, the summary is impressive for the sheer range of CNDP initiatives and actions, especially those focused on the anti-war protests.

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh has seen robust activity by CNDP members and affiliates on a range of issues over the past year, writes *M Chenna Basavaiah*. Some of them took place in the Hyderabad's old city. They focused on nuclear disarmament in meetings for students organised by CNDP and COVA (Confederation of Voluntary Associations).

A group of 30 students was specially invited to the first day of the NCC meeting in July, which discussed the general situation as regards nuclear weapons and the peace movement. CNDP has actively participated in protests against the US war on Iraq all over Andhra, from Hyderabad to the districts, and mandals, along with partners such as Jana Vigyana Vedika (JVV), Human Rights Forum (HRF), etc.

These Anti-War Forums (AWF) organised various activities like rallies, dharnas, human chains, public meetings, signature campaigns etc. The biggest event was a rally on March 30 by nine Communist Parties in Hyderabad from Charminar and to Exhibition

Grounds, which mobilised 30,000 people. On February 20, students of Osmania University, Hyderabad, organised a public meeting on Iraq, in which 300 students and faculty participated. On February 25, V.S.M. College, Ramachand-rapuram, East Godavari District organised a meeting with 100 students and faculty. On March 2, the Hyderabad AWF organised a silent rally of writers, academics, scientists, journalists, lawyers etc. About 2,000 participated. On March 15, a rally was organised with JVV at Miryalaguda Town, Nalgonda District, with 5000 participants.

On March 16, the HRF organised a public meeting in Warangal town, in which 300 members participated. The same day, a candlelight peace vigil was organised on the Tank Bund at Hyderabad and Secunderabad. On March 23, at Tadepalli Gudem Town of West Godavari, CPI (ML) Janashakti organised a rally in which 6,000 members, basically tribal women and men, participated. March 29 saw a human chain organised with 1,500 schoolchildren for about four hours at Chandanagar (Rangareddy Dt).

Bangalore

Bangalore's peace activists affiliated to CNDP have worked mainly through the Bangalore Platform against Nuclear Weaponisation (BPANW) which came into being soon after Pokharan-II and mobilised members of the women's movement, trade unions, college students and intellectuals, writes *Sanjay Biswas*. It has regularly held debates in schools and colleges too.

In response to the violence in Gujarat, BPANW, the women's movement Vimochana, and other organisations, jointly set up the Bangalore Initiative for Peace (BIP). BIP has continuously drawn more and more people and organisations under its banner. Amongst its activities is a peace festival in schools and colleges. The peace festival of 2002 drew a large number of children and ended with football and cricket matches for peace and recitals of Sufi songs and poetry.

BIP has been active in sending student volunteers to Gujarat to help traumatised children. In opposition to the war in Iraq, a large demonstration was held on the February 27. The

campaign persisted throughout the month-long war, and citizens demonstrated practically every day. On April 12, BIP organised a march in solidarity with the people of Iraq, ending in a rally to mark the beginning of a campaign to boycott British and American goods.

Chennai

CNDP in Chennai has been active through its affiliates, Movement Against Nuclear Weapons (MANW), and Journalists against Nuclear Weapons (JANW), writes *R Gopalakrishnan*. The anti-Iraq war movement in brought together for the first time thousands of people from various walks of life, hitherto untouched by peace activism. The first anti-Iraq war protest was organised on February 15—the day designated by the global peace movement—in Park Town by MANW, jointly with the Movement for People's Unity (MPU), fighting against communal fascism, and Citizens for Peace.

Then followed protests, meetings, candlelight vigils on the Marina Beach, and rallies by a wide range of organisations including the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Communist Party of India - Marxist-Leninist (Liberation), the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnatra Kazhagam (TMMK), Tamil Nadu Science Forum, Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers' Association, All India Democratic Women's Association, Bank Employees' Federation and Women's Struggle Committee. One of the biggest hall meetings in the past two months, and later a huge cultural rally on the sands of the Marina, were organised by the Anti-War Struggle Committee headed by N.Ram, Editor of

"Frontline". A common demand was that the Indian government firmly oppose the war.

The perspective of some sections of the Chennai media on nuclear weapons/WMD, especially in the context of Iraq, has acquired greater clarity thanks to a Meet-the-Press programme organised on February 8, by the Chennai Press Club with Achin Vanaik, and an interactive session with Praful Bidwai organised on March 13.

Important initiatives of the MANW in the past year included: public distribution of "Frequently Asked Questions on Nuclear Weapons" in Tamil and English, holding the slide show "Hiroshima Can Happen Here" in schools during August 6-12, 2002, and a feature film show, "Threads" (BBC Worldwide) on May 13. JANW operates an email box for activists (peacenewsbulletin@yahoo.co.in, password: shanthi) containing despatches from the global peace movement.

Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh held a full-fledged state-level CNDP convention in 2002. CNDP activities, writes *Ilina*



Sen, began that year with preparations for the Central India regional conference which was to have been held in March-April 2002, but had to be called off because of

the Gujarat crisis. The networking activities undertaken at the time resulted in the holding of the May 11-12 Chhattisgarh Peace Conference. This was built around the slogan, "Pokharan se Gujarat tak.. fascivad ka ek hi chehra" (the face of fascism is the same from Pokharan to Gujarat).

The conference was organised under the banner of CNDP, but 33 other organisations, including affiliates, cultural groups and trade unions, lent their names to the effort. About 250 delegates participated. The Ravi Shankar University hosted the event. Ilina Sen, Lalit Surjan and Praful Bidwai participated from the NCC. Since then, CNDP has organised poster exhibitions in schools in Raipur, Bilaspur, Dhamtari, Mahasamund and Bhillai, and children's debates and drawing events in 45 schools all over the state. On Hiroshima Day, 2002, a citizen's peace dharna was organised and messages and signatures were collected over 30 metres of cloth. A large number of school and college students took part in these events.

CNDP entered another extended phase of activity as the war clouds gathered over Iraq in early 2003. A number of peace meetings, rallies and silent marches were organised at different places between January and March. On March 8, International Women's Day, a peace rally and candlelight vigil, celebrating "Women for Peace", was held at Raipur under CNDP's banner. At 6:30 a.m. on March 20, as the ultimatum to Iraq ran out, peace activists burned Bush's effigy and took out a "Prabhat Pheri" for peace in Raipur. Since then, there have been meetings, demonstrations and human chain formation on April 18. Blood donation for Iraq war victims was organised along with the Red Cross.

Delhi

CNDP's activists in Delhi joined other peace groups in January 2003 in mobilising public opinion against the impending US attack on Iraq, writes *Qamar Agha*. Several meetings were held on the campuses of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and Jamia Millia, into which students and teachers were drawn.

The first major public action in Delhi was a demonstration on February 11 near the US Information Agency in Kasturba Gandhi Marg, organised by the Committee against War on Iraq, a broad-based coalition composed of the Left parties, trade unions, women's groups and progressive civil society organisations, of which CNDP is a constituent. This was attended by 7,000 to 10,000 people, with a remarkably high proportion of college students. There were several other smaller meetings and vigils, especially on February 15, a major international peace event day. CNDP-Delhi members also took part in anti-war activities in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, along with like-minded groups. On March 15, the Committee against War on Iraq organised a long human chain near Modern School, Barakhamba Road, in central Delhi, where hundreds of people joined hands to condemn US plans of aggression on Iraq.

Upon the war's outbreak, a significant and spirited demonstration, with 10,000 people, took place on March 22 at Teen Murti Marg, near the American Embassy. The crowd denounced the US aggression. Prominent speakers included Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Arundhati Roy, D Raja, I.K. Gujral and Nirmala Deshpande. Although the police erected barricades and prevented a march to the US Embassy, five activists managed to dodge them and chained themselves to the gates of the Embassy building. On March 30, there was a rally from the Red Fort to Ramlila Maidan in Old Delhi to demand an

end to the war. This culminated in a meeting where US and British goods were set on fire. About 10,000 participated.

Mumbai

In Mumbai, there was a spate of demonstrations, vigils and meetings against the war on Iraq well before it began, says *Varsha Rajan Berry*. CNDP activists were involved in these, both individually and through MIND, Focus on the Global South, Yuva, and other organisations. Three such demonstrations, with broad-based participation, were especially noteworthy: A large demonstration on January 27 at Hutatma Chowk (Flora Fountain), with a large number of young people and students; A vigil on February 15, organised jointly with Insaaniyat, Akshara, etc., to coincide with the global peace action; A demonstration on April 4 at Churchgate by 1,000 activists, eventually merging into a rally at Azad Maidan, attended by an estimated 30-40,000 people, most of them mobilised by political parties.

Among other highlights was a broad-based meeting at K.C. College on March 26, with 1,000 participants, addressed by Javed Akhtar, Gulzar and N. Ram, etc., and a public meeting at Dhuru Hall, Dadar, on April 5 addressed by Admiral L. Ramdas and Praful Bidwai. In addition, CNDP constituent. Focus on the Global South. Organised numerous regular meetings at colleges from Bandra to Vasai devoted to nuclear disarmament and peace. Focus has been campaigning among Dalit youth on disarmament, militarism, communalism, and livelihood issues. Focus has also launched a mobile exhibition of photographs on the horrors of war.

Nagpur

Ever since the Pokharan blasts, Nagpur has witnessed anti-nuclear demonstrations, writes *Arvind Ghosh*. Its peace activists hosted the

two main preparatory meetings that preceded the National Convention of November 2000. Immediately after 9/11, CNDP activists brought out two leaflets condemning the killing of innocent civilians, as well as American warmongering. The past year's most significant development is the formation of Secular Citizens' Forum (Dharma Nirapeksha Nagarik Manch), set up in the aftermath of Godhra. Nagpur witnessed the first impressive anti-communal rally on March 9, 2002, held in a largely RSS-dominated part of the city. A large number of women participated in the rally.

On the eve of the American attack on Iraq, CNDP activists joined hands with all other anti-war forces to form a Citizens' Forum against War, and organised a protest rally on March 8 in downtown Sitabuldi. CNDP had its own banner and placards at this.

A bigger rally was organised on April 1, under the banner of Citizens' Forum against War, in Chitnis Park—Itwari. A large number of Bohra Muslims participated, along with hundreds of schoolchildren and women.

Uttar Pradesh

CNDP activists have been working on issues of peace, communalism (especially around Ayodhya) and militarism over the past year all over Uttar Pradesh, writes *Sandeep Pandey*. In Lucknow, on February 17, they organised a peace march on Iraq from Aminabad to Hazratganj, which included artists, writers, school and university students and teachers. After the march, a meeting was held, addressed among others by Roop Rekha Verma, Shakeel Siddiqui, Ramesh Dixit. About 200 people participated.

Anti-US demonstrations were held in small towns too: Pratapgarh on March 26, Jaunpur-Macchlishahar on March 31, Bharawan (Dist. Hardoi) on April 11, Kaithi (Dist. Varanasi) on April 14, in Dharsauna (Dist. Azamgarh), Gorakhpur on April 13, and

Badlapur (Dist. Jaunpur) on April 17. Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola were targetted as the worst symbols of US imperialism and bottles were emptied into drains in some of these protests.

Anti- Communal Highlight: NCC member and Magsaysay Award winner Sandeep Pandey, with Badal Achari and Rangesh Achari, sat on what was planned as a seven-day fast in Ayodhya to protest the US aggression on Iraq, temple-mosque politics in Ayodhya, and globalisation. The fast started on March 15, but the participants were arrested and jailed for a week. "While we were jailed, Suko Guchi,

a Buddhist monk from Japan, decided to fast at the Tulsi Chaura Mandir in solidarity with us for the remaining six days. He has been living in Ayodhya for the past year to pray for peace. His guru had met Gandhiji."

In Allahabad, CNDP affiliate "Saajha Manch" (since renamed "Muheem") has been especially active for the past year, says *Anshu Malaviya*. It held a meeting entitled "From Pokharan to Gujarat" on March 24, 2002 and on "Militarism and Nuclear Disarmament" on November 10, addressed by Lal Bahadur Varma, Vibhuti N Rai and Praful Bidwai. The city witnessed a

series of demonstrations, vigils, poster exhibitions and street-corner plays on February 15, March 15, March 30, and April 7, and a women's march on March 26. There was a hall meeting on the Iraq war and the emerging world situation on April 13. Allahabad's biggest event was a 20,000-strong rally on March 23, the day commemorating Bhagat Singh's martyrdom. There were anti-war activities in virtually every single tehsil town in Allahabad and nearby districts. The Azaadi Bachao Andolan has also been holding meetings calling for a boycott of foreign goods almost every day.

Understanding Iraq War Jargon

Self-Defence: When America invades a country (such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cuba) without UN approval

Act of Aggression: When Saddam invades a country (such as Kuwait) without UN approval

Freedom of Media: When 'embedded' TV reporters film Iraqi prisoners of war on CNN

Violation of Geneva Conventions: When American prisoners are shown on al-Jazeera

Illegal Enemy Combatants with No Legal Rights: Hundreds of Taliban soldiers in Guantanamo Bay

Prisoners of War under Geneva Convention: Handful of American soldiers held in Iraq

America under Attack: When foreigners kill Americans (CNN's slug for its 9/11 stories)

'Strike on Iraq'/'War in Iraq': When Americans kill foreigners (CNN's slugs for its 3/20 onwards stories)

Our Brave Men and Women in Uniform: American soldiers in 20-mile long mechanised cavalry formations and pilots dropping bombs on Baghdad

Dead-Enders: Rumsfeld's colourful phrase for describing poorly armed Iraqis holding out till the end Umm Qsar and Basra

Shock and Awe: When America attacks cities (such as Baghdad and Basra) with bombs and missiles.

Terrorism: When Osama bin Laden attacks cities (such as New York and Washington) with aircraft

Freedom of Media: When captured Taliban John Walker Lindh is interrogated by CNN reporters.

Violation of Geneva Convention: When captured Americans are interrogated by al-Jazeera reporters.

Minimum Deterrent: Nuclear chemical & biological weapons held by America and her allies (such as Britain and Israel).

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Nuclear chemical & biological weapons held by everybody else

Allies in the 'Coalition for Freedom': Muslim dictatorships such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt and Kuwait) on America's side.

Allies of Terror: Muslim dictatorships (such as Syria and Iran) that oppose America.

Politically Incorrect: All Mullahs who ask Muslims to wage jihad in the name of Islam on the infidels.

Politically Correct: CNN's Tumi Makgabo described the US soldier who killed a fellow soldier as having "some kind of Arabic or Muslim name".

Northern India Regional Convention

Nov-Dec 2002

CNDP held its **Northern India Regional Convention** in New Delhi from November 29 to December 1, 2002. This focused on communalism, militarisation, nuclear weapons and India-Pakistan reconciliation. There were 320 delegate-participants from Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Delhi.

In the Opening Plenary, *Praful Bidwai* spoke of CNDP's evolution as a network and stressed the need to link the nuclear issue with broader questions of secular democracy, human rights and social justice.

B.M. Kutty from Pakistan reported on the peace movement in his country. "Peace activists on both sides are up against communal ultra-nationalists," he said. Recollecting the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Rieko Asato* demanded global abolition of nuclear weapons. *Aruna Roy* said the struggle against nuclear weapons would succeed only when the masses see links between various forms of violence in their lives, including "denial of dignity, livelihood and control over resources..."

Sandeep Pandey said even the production of nuclear bombs is dangerous. Radiation damages the health of the very people whose security Bombs are supposed to ensure! *Ghanshyam Biruli* exposed the horrors visited by radiation upon the Adivasis around Jadugoda's uranium mines. *Anil Chaudhury* placed communalism, militarisation and nuclearisation in their socio-economic and political contexts.

Sixteen parallel workshops followed the Plenary, devoted to a range of issues: ethics of mass destruction, physical effects of nuclear weapons, militarisation and chauvinism, terrorism, and Islamophobia and the Sangh Parivar.

This was followed by Prof Rajaraman's talk on the physics of nuclear weapons and their effects.

On the last day, consolidated workshop reports were presented along the four main themes: communalism (Khurshid Anwar), militarism (Sonia Jabbar), nuclearism (Praful Bidwai) and Indo-Pak relations (Anshu Malviya).

These were followed by a discussion on CNDP's future strategies, which voiced the need to take the nuclear issue in all its dimensions to villages, mohallas, schools and colleges. Delegates then selected representatives for the Northern Regional Coordination Committee, which met.

I. Communalism It is important to link militarisation and nuclearisation with communalisation. The Sangh Brigade strikes at the very roots of our pluralist common heritage and basic democratic values. Its ideologues want people to prove their "Indianness" by being anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan.

The Sangh has also tried to exploit the backlash against globalisation and turn it against the minorities. Hindu communalism should be seen essentially as Indian fascism. The state-sponsored Gujarat genocide is its worst manifestation.

II. Militarism isn't simply about the threat of war or armies amassed at borders. One must see its connections with globalisation, nationalism and patriarchy. The government says globalisation is vital for economic revival. As dollars come in, factories are shut down, thousands of workers laid off. And the dollars go to arms-sellers.

India set aside Rs 40,000 crores for arms purchases last year. The poor are then doubly burdened by cuts in social spending. Pakistan is drilled into our heads as a huge, monstrous threat,

justifying the drain of the people's wealth. Under militarised nationalism, anyone who questions strident nuclear postures or excessive military spending is branded anti-national. Democratic space shrinks with increased policing of thought. Repressive laws like POTA are passed.

III. Nuclearism— which places an almost mystical faith in nuclear weapons and their ability to deliver "security"—gives aggressive nationalism a particularly destructive edge. Nuclear weapons become symbols of "prestige" and "scientific achievement".

Making nuclear weapons is no "achievement". If a country or private agency has access to plutonium or enriched uranium, it can make nuclear bombs even in a garage. India did it by buying, borrowing or stealing materials and technology from various countries: the US, Britain, USSR, France, China, Norway and Russia. Nuclear technology is extensively traded globally.

In 1998, the government reversed India's nuclear policy. RSS chief K.S.Sudarshan revealed that the Sangh took the decision—to build a strong "Hindu India".

IV. India-Pakistan Relations are linked to domestic politics. Hindu fascists first gained public space during the anti-Emergency mobilisation. They came to power riding on the crest of the "Mandir-Masjid" dispute. The victory of fundamentalists in the Pakistani elections was a reaction to the destruction wrought on Afghanistan. Opposition to improving Indo-Pak relations is essential to both Hindu and Muslim fundamentalisms. The onus for peace lies squarely on the people. They must build strong movements to pressure their governments.

"We must make clear to the Germans that the wrong for which their fallen leaders are on trial is not that they lost the war, but that they started it. And we must not allow ourselves to be drawn into a trial of the causes of the war, for our position is that no grievances or policies will justify resort to aggressive war. It is utterly renounced and condemned as an instrument of policy."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert L. Jackson, Chief U.S. Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Tribunals

Alternative Voices from Elsewhere

Road to War was Paved with Lies

Raymond Whitaker

The case for invading Iraq to remove its weapons of mass destruction was based on selective use of intelligence, exaggeration, use of sources known to be discredited and outright fabrication.

[I]ntelligence agencies on both sides of the Atlantic were furious that briefings they gave political leaders were distorted in the rush to war with Iraq. "They ignored intelligence assessments which said Iraq was not a threat," the source said, quoting an editorial in a Middle East newspaper which said, "Washington has to prove its case. If it does not, the world will forever believe that it paved the road to war with lies".

UN inspectors who left Iraq just before the war started were searching for four categories of weapons: nuclear, chemical, biological and missiles capable of flying beyond a range of 93 miles. They found ample evidence that Iraq was not co-operating, but none to support British and American assertions that Saddam Hussein's regime posed an imminent threat....

On nuclear weapons, the British Government claimed that the former regime sought uranium feed material from the government of Niger. This was based on letters later described by the International Atomic Energy Agency as crude forgeries. On chemical weapons, a CIA report on the likelihood that Saddam would use weapons of mass destruction was partially declassified. The parts released were those which made it appear that the danger was high. [But the report has concluded] that the

chances of Iraq using chemical weapons were "very low" for the "foreseeable future".

On biological weapons, Colin Powell told the Security Council in February that the former regime had up to 18 mobile laboratories. He attributed the information to "defectors" from Iraq, without saying that their claims repeatedly been disproved by UN weapons inspectors. On missiles, Iraq accepted UN demands to destroy its al-Samoud weapons. No banned Scud missiles were found...

Some American officials have all but conceded that the WMD campaign was simply a means to an end - a "global show of American power and democracy". "We were not lying," it was told by one official. "But it was just a matter of emphasis." American and British teams claim they are scouring Iraq in search of definitive evidence but none has so far been found.

Robin Cook, who as Foreign Secretary would have received high-level security briefings, said last week that "it was difficult to believe that Saddam had the capacity to hit us".

One report released last autumn by Tony Blair said that Iraq could deploy chemical and biological weapons within 45 minutes, but last week [UK Minister Geoff] Hoon said that such weapons might have escaped detection because they had been dismantled and buried.

A later "intelligence" dossier was shown to have been largely plagiarised from three articles in academic publications. "You cannot just cherry-pick evidence that suits your case and ignore the rest. It is a cardinal rule of intelligence," said one aggrieved officer. Another said: "What we have is a few strands of



Liberating Iraq

highly circumstantial evidence, and to justify an attack on Iraq it is being presented as a cast-iron case...."

Glen Rangwala, the Cambridge University analyst who first pointed out Downing Street's plagiarism, said ministers had claimed before the war to have information which could not be disclosed because agents in Iraq would be endangered. "That doesn't apply any more, but they haven't come up with the evidence," he said. "They lack credibility." Rangwala said much of the information on WMD had come from Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (INC), which received Pentagon money...

[S]enior members of both the US and British governments are suggesting that so-called WMD were destroyed after the departure of UN inspectors... This in itself, however, appears to be an example of what... Hans Blix called "shaky intelligence".

Other explanations for the failure to find WMDs include the possibility that they might have been smuggled to Syria, or so well hidden that they could take months, even years, to find. But last week it emerged that two of four American mobile teams in Iraq had been switched from looking for WMD to other tasks....

Adapted from 'The Independent on Sunday' London, 27 April 2003

We are glad to note that two anti-nuclear activists, M.V. Ramana and C. Rammanohar Reddy, have just released a book they have jointly edited: *Prisoners of the Nuclear Dream* (Orient Longman, New Delhi 2003, hardback, pp. 502, Rs. 575.)

Both Ramana and Reddy are associated with CNDP. The book contains a number of essays by Indian, Pakistani and Chinese scholars, and is a valuable contribution to our peace literature.

Not Liberation, but Colonial Oppression

Robert Fisk,

It's going wrong, faster than anyone could have imagined. The army of "liberation" has already turned into the army of occupation... Even the US Marines in Baghdad are talking of the insults being flung at them. "Go away! Get out of my face!" an American soldier screamed at an Iraqi trying to push towards the wire surrounding an infantry unit. I watched the man's face suffuse with rage. "God is Great! God is Great!" the Iraqi retorted. "Fuck you!"

The Americans have now issued a "Message to the Citizens of Baghdad", a document as colonial in spirit as it is insensitive in tone "Please avoid leaving your homes during the night hours after evening prayers and before the call to morning prayers... During this time, terrorist forces associated with the former regime of Saddam Hussein... are known to move through the area ..."

So now - with neither electricity nor running water - the millions of Iraqis here are ordered to stay in their homes from dusk to dawn. Lockdown. It's a form of imprisonment. In their own country. "If I was an Iraqi and I read that," an Arab woman shouted at me, "I would become a suicide bomber." And all across Baghdad you hear the same thing, from Shia Muslim clerics to Sunni businessmen...

Everywhere are the signs of collapse. And everywhere the signs that America's promises of "freedom" and "democracy" are not to be honoured. Why, Iraqis are asking, did the United States allow the entire Iraqi cabinet to escape? And they're right. Not just the Beast of Baghdad and his two sons, Qusay and Uday, but [many others].

Take the vast security apparatus with which Saddam surrounded himself, the torture chambers and the huge bureaucracy that was its foundation. President Bush promised that America was campaigning for human rights in Iraq, that the guilty... would be brought to trial. The 60 secret police headquarters in Baghdad are empty.

I have been to many of them. But there is no evidence even that a single British or US forensic officer has visited the sites... Take the Qasimiyeh security station. It's a pleasant villa - once owned by an Iranian-born Iraqi... [At] first you don't notice the three big hooks in the ceiling of each room... But across the floors, in the garden, on the roof, are the files of this place of suffering. They show, for example, that the head of the torture centre was Hashem al-Tikrit, that his deputy was called Rashid al-Nababy.

Mohammed Aish Jassem, an ex-prisoner, showed me how he was suspended from the ceiling by Captain Amar al-Isawi... "They put my hands behind my back like this and tied them and then pulled me into the air by my tied wrists," he told me... The hooks in the ceiling are just in front of Captain Isawi's desk... There wasn't a separate torture chamber and office for documentation. The torture chamber was the office. While the man or woman shrieked in agony above him, Captain Isawi would sign papers, take telephone calls and ... smoke many cigarettes...

Were they monsters, these men? Yes. Are they sought by the Americans? No. Are they now working for the Americans? Yes, quite possibly... And the men who suffered under Saddam? What did they have to say? "We committed no sin," one of them said to me, a 40-year-old whose prison duties had included the cleaning of the hangman's trap of blood and faeces after each execution. "We are not guilty of anything... America, yes, it got rid of

Saddam. But Iraq belongs to us. Our oil belongs to us... It will stay Iraq. The Americans must go."

The official US line on all this is that the looting is revenge - an explanation that is growing very thin - and that the fires are started by "remnants of Saddam's regime", the same "criminal elements"... But people in Baghdad don't believe Saddam's former supporters are starting these fires. And neither do the looters make money from their rampages but the arsonists have to be paid... As I said, something is going terribly wrong in Baghdad and something is going on which demands that serious questions be asked of the United States government... At the end of the Second World War, German-speaking British and US intelligence officers hoovered up every document in the thousands of Gestapo and Abwehr bureaux... The Russians did the same in their zone. In Iraq, however, the British and Americans have simply ignored the evidence.

Iraqis are right to ask why the Americans don't search for this information... Why do they still have no electricity and no water? In whose interest is it for Iraq to be deconstructed, divided, burnt, de-historied, destroyed?... And it's not just the people of Baghdad, but the Shias of the city of Najaf and of Nasiriyah - where 20,000 protested at America's first attempt to put together a puppet government... - who are asking these questions...

It's easy for a reporter to predict doom, especially after a brutal war... But catastrophe usually waits for optimists in the Middle East, especially for false optimists who invade oil-rich nations with ideological excuses and high-flown moral claims... So I'll make an awful prediction. That America's war of "liberation" is over. Iraq's war of liberation from the Americans is about to begin. In other words, the real and frightening story starts now.

Adapted from 'The Independent', London

The World's Most Sold Country

Naomi Klein

On April 6, deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz spelled it out: there will

be no role for the UN in setting up an interim government in Iraq. [B]y the time the Iraqi people have a say in choosing a government, the key economic decisions about their country's future will have been made by their occupiers. "There has to be an effective administration from day one," Wolfowitz said. "And that's coalition responsibility."

The process of how they will get all this infrastructure to work is usually called "reconstruction". But rather than rebuilding, the country is being treated as a blank slate on which the most ideological Washington neo-liberals can design their dream economy: fully privatised, foreign-owned and open for business.

The \$4.8m management contract for the port in Umm Qasr has already gone to a US company, and there are similar deals for airport administration... The US Agency for International Development has invited US multinationals to bid on everything from rebuilding roads and bridges to distributing textbooks. How long before they meld into long-term contracts for water services, transit systems, roads, schools and phones? When does reconstruction turn into privatisation...

Republican congressman Darrel Issa has introduced a bill that would require the defence department to build a CDMA cellphone system in postwar Iraq in order to benefit "US patent holders". CDMA is the system used in the US, not in Europe, and was developed by Qualcomm, one of Issa's most generous donors.

Then there's oil. The Bush administration knows it can't talk openly about selling Iraq's oil resources to ExxonMobil and Shell. It leaves that to people like Fadhil Chalabi, a former Iraqi oil minister: "We need to have a huge amount of money coming into the country. The only way is to partially privatise the industry." He is part of a group of exiles advising the US on how to [obscure the fact that the privatisation drive comes] from America.

Some argue that it's too simplistic to say this war is about oil. They're right. It's about oil, water, roads, trains, phones, ports and drugs. And if this process isn't halted, "free Iraq" will be the most sold country on earth.

It's no surprise that so many multinationals are lunging for Iraq's untapped market. It's not just that the reconstruction will be worth \$100bn; it's also that "free trade" by less violent means hasn't been going that well lately. More and more developing countries are rejecting privatisation, while the Free Trade Area of the Americas, Bush's top trade priority, is wildly unpopular across Latin America...

So what is a recessionary, growth-addicted superpower to do? After all, negotiations with sovereign countries can be hard. Far easier to just tear up the country, occupy it, then rebuild it the way you want. Investors are openly predicting that once privatisation takes root in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will all be forced to compete by privatising their oil. "In Iran, it would just catch like wildfire," [says] S Rob Sobhani, an energy consultant. Pretty soon, the US may have bombed its way into a whole new free trade zone.

So far, the press debate over the reconstruction of Iraq has focused on fair play: it is "exceptionally maladroit", in

the words of the European Union's commissioner for external relations, Chris Patten, for the US to keep all the juicy contracts for itself. It has to learn to share: Exxon should invite France's TotalFinaElf to the most lucrative oil fields; Bechtel should give Britain's Thames Water a shot...

But [this is] beside the point. What does it matter if the privatising is done unilaterally by the US, or multilaterally by the US, Europe, Russia and China? Entirely absent from this debate are the Iraqi people, who might - who knows? want to hold on to a few of their assets. Iraq will be owed massive reparations after the bombing stops, but what is being planned is not reparations, reconstruction or rehabilitation. It is robbery: mass theft disguised as charity; privatisation without representation.

A people, starved and sickened by sanctions, then pulverised by war, is going to emerge from this trauma to find that their country had been sold out from under them. They will also discover that their new-found "freedom" comes pre-shackled by irreversible economic decisions made in boardrooms while the bombs were still falling. They will then be told to vote... and welcomed to the wonderful world of democracy.

Adapted from 'The Nation', New York

We Stand Passively Mute

Robert Byrd

To contemplate war is to think about the most horrible of human experiences. On this February day, as this nation stands at the brink of battle, every American on some level must be contemplating the horrors of war. Yet, this Chamber is, for the most part, silent—ominously, dreadfully silent. There is no debate, no discussion...

We stand passively mute in the United States Senate, paralysed by our own uncertainty, seemingly stunned by the sheer turmoil of events... And this is no small conflagration we contemplate... This coming battle, if it materialises, represents a turning point in U.S. foreign policy and possibly a turning point in the recent history of the world.

This nation is about to embark upon the first test of a revolutionary doctrine applied in an extraordinary way at an unfortunate time. The doctrine of preemption—the idea that the US or any other nation can legitimately attack a nation that is not imminently threatening... It appears to be in contravention of international law and the UN Charter. And it is being tested at a time of world-wide terrorism, making many countries around the globe wonder if they will soon be on our — or some other nation's—hit list.

What could be more destabilizing and unwise than this type of uncertainty? There are huge cracks emerging in our time-honored alliances, and U.S. intentions are suddenly subject to damaging worldwide speculation. Anti-Americanism based on mistrust, misinformation, suspicion, and alarming rhetoric from U.S. leaders is

fracturing the once solid alliance against global terrorism which existed after September 11. ...The mood of the nation is grim. The economy is stumbling. Fuel prices are rising and may soon spike higher.

This Administration, now in power for a little over two years, must be judged on its record. I believe that that record is dismal. [T]his Administration has squandered a large projected surplus of some \$5.6 trillion... [Its] domestic policy has put many of our states in dire financial condition, underfunding scores of essential programs for our people. This Administration has ignored urgent matters such as the crisis in health care for our elderly.

[T]his Administration has split traditional alliances, possibly crippling, for all time, the United Nations and NATO. [It] has turned the patient art of diplomacy into threats, labelling, and name calling of the sort

that reflects quite poorly on the intelligence and sensitivity of our leaders... Calling heads of state pygmies, labelling whole countries as evil, denigrating powerful European allies as irrelevant—these types of crude insensitivities can do... no good... cannot fight a global war on terrorism alone. We need... our time-honoured allies...

The war in Afghanistan has cost us \$37 billion so far, yet there is evidence that terrorism may already be starting to gain its hold in that region... This Administration has not finished the first war against terrorism and yet it is eager to embark on another conflict...

Is our attention-span that short? Have we not learned that after winning

the war one must always secure the peace? And yet we hear little about the aftermath of war in Iraq... Will our war inflame the Muslim world resulting in devastating attacks on Israel? Will Israel retaliate with its own nuclear arsenal? Could a disruption of the world's oil supply lead to a world-wide recession? Has our senselessly bellicose language and our disregard of... other nations increased the race to join the nuclear club...

[T]his reckless and arrogant Administration has initiated policies which may reap disastrous consequences for years. One can understand the anger and shock of any President after... September 11. One can appreciate the frustration... But to

turn one's frustration and anger into the kind of extremely destabilising and dangerous foreign policy debacle that the world is currently witnessing is inexcusable...

Frankly, many of the pronouncements made by this Administration are outrageous... We are truly "sleepwalking through history." In my heart of hearts I pray that this great nation and its good and trusting citizens are not in for a rudest of awakenings...

Our mistake was to put ourselves in a corner so quickly. Our challenge is to now find a graceful way out of a box of our own making...

Excerpts from US Senate Floor Speech, February 12, 2003

Special Articles

Iraq's Invasion and After

Sukla Sen

In the course of his January 28 "State of the Union" address to the joint session of the American Congress, President Bush, so to say, issued twin notices. One, to Iraq's President Saddam Hussein: "Your time has run out! Never mind whatever you do, or not do!" The other one, to the venerable institution called the United Nations: "Your time is running out! Unless of course you're ready to convert yourself into an extension counter of the American State Department."

Seven weeks later, in a televised address, Bush asserted that time had run out. On January 28, he had thundered: "We will consult [the UN Security Council], but let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm [as determined by us, no matter what the inspectors or the Security Council contend], for the safety of our people, and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him [by discarding the UN into

the dustbin—in its final resting place]".

On March 17, he finally pronounced: "The UN Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities [by refusing to endorse our invasion], so we will rise to ours." The hypocrisy underlying the invocation of the WMD threat to rationalise the invasion of Iraq was perhaps best captured by Robin Cook: "Ironically, it is only because Iraq's military forces are so weak that we can even contemplate its invasion". Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix has in a recent interview in the same vein

asserted that "the invasion of Iraq was planned well in advance, and ... the US and Britain are not primarily concerned with finding any banned weapons of mass destruction." The import of the American invasion and occupation of Iraq however goes far beyond the issue of cogency of the formal arguments put forward by the proponents of "intervention" in various international forums.

Away from public gaze, the high priests of American neo-conservatism are far more uninhibited. Take the highly interesting and enlightening website of the



'Project for the New American Century' <http://www.newamericancentury.org>. Its "Statement of Principles" (SOP), dated June 3, 1997, has 25 signatories. Many of them now occupy the topmost slots in the Bush administration. PNAC-SOP quite categorically and emphatically lays down that America in the 21st century must be ready to establish its global pre-eminence—for which a real opportunity exists—and pay the necessary price. A highly perceptive commentator, David North, in his 'The War against Iraq and America's Drive for World Domination' (<<http://www.wsws.org/articles/02/oct02/iraq-04.shtml>>, of October 4, 2002), has observed: "On Sep-tember 17, 2002 the Bush administration published its 'National Security Strategy of the United States of America.'

The document asserts as the guiding policy of the US the right to use military force anywhere in the world, at any time it chooses, against any country it believes to be, or it believes may at some point become, a threat to American interestsNot even Nazi Germany at the height of Hitler's madness, has asserted such a sweeping claim to global hegemony". What, however, is most noteworthy is that "US threats are directed, in the short term, against so-called 'failed states' ... But larger competitors of the United States ... are by no means out

of the gun sights ... The wars against small and defenceless states that the US is now preparing ... will prove to be the preparation for military onslaughts against more formidable targets."

The convergence of two contingent factors, the "catastrophic and catalysing event" of September 11, 2001, preceded by the assumption of power by a Republican President, has contributed a great deal to the development of the present predicament. The most crucial factor underlying the current process is again delineated by North with great perspicacity: "The demise of the USSR, they declared, created for the US the opportunity to establish an unchallengeable global hegemony."

The task of the United States was to exploit (this) "unipolar moment"... The United States, argued conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer (in 1991), "should not hesitate to use military power ... The Europeans and Japanese should be treated with contempt, and compelled to recognise that they had to approach the US as supplicants. While it might be politically advisable for US leaders to pay lip service to multilateralism, that policy was, in reality, dead."

The cruel attack unleashed on the people of Iraq is a predatory war to establish the unchallenged hegemony of the US ruling elite over Planet Earth. It is spearheaded by the most

right-wing, corrupt and hawkish Republicans, who want to control its energy resources and naked display of military prowess. Consequently it is also meant to be the epitaph for the world which had emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War and was shaped through the confabulations of the victors at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam. The UN, Nato and the Warsaw Pact together were both the products and keepers of the "new" world order. So the war has spelled doom for these, and other multilateral institutions as well. Even if the edifices survive, they cannot but suffer radical transmutation.

In the coming days it is not only the evolving "coalition of the unwilling"—presently constituted of France, Russia, Germany (and China?)—who will try to contest the global conquest campaign of the New Imperial Power, albeit with uncertain levels of determination. There will be many other players, with very diverse motivations, as well—including the Non-Aligned Movement, radical Islam, the organised labour movements, the World Social Forum, itself a key component of the current wave of global anti-war protests, and others.

It is the complex interplay of such forces, not excluding the American masses, that will determine the outcome of the coming turbulence.

Infinite Waffle: India's Iraq Policy

Sukumar Muralidharan

Silence was not an option amid the deafening crescendo of war. The Indian government chose the next best option: endless waffle. After weeks when it managed, rather implausibly, to win the appreciation of both Iraq and the US for its supportive stance, official India woke up to the war of destruction that has irreversibly changed the climate of world politics, just as invading forces were reaching the outskirts of Baghdad.

Torn between what was right and what was expedient, the government chose linguistic camouflage. To

condemn the war would have been an accurate reflection of popular sentiment in the country and elsewhere. But the aggressor countries—the US in particular—had held out ample warning that they were inclined to view other nations' attitude to the war as a loyalty test, with a crucial bearing on future relations.

New Delhi steered an artful course by drafting a resolution in Hindi for passage through both houses of Parliament. The word (ninda) chosen lent itself to two constructions. Before global audiences, India played the relatively mild construction, "deplore". And for the domestic audience, it played up the stronger interpretation, "condemn". Though the Parliament debate reflected the depth of public sentiment against the war, the final resolution was designed to be of token

significance. Alternative formulations were suppressed by the tactical ploy of having the Chair move the resolution in both Houses of Parliament. By artificially investing the resolution with the authority of the Chair, the government managed to cast every demand for a stronger formulation as a breach of parliamentary propriety.

Finally, though, it had to yield some ground. After acrimony and opposition walkouts, the government had to demand the immediate cessation of hostilities in the resolution. Expectedly, few took notice of India's agonised rhetorical choices. Hours after the Lok Sabha adopted the Iraq resolution, US invading forces staged th televised spectacle of toppling a Saddam Hussein statue at Baghdad's Firdos Square. Having receded briefly to the background, apologists for the

US surged back with the argument that India's interests are best served through a vassal status within the emerging imperium. All principle forgotten, the government lapsed into its habit of sniping at Pakistan, naming it as the right target for "pre-emptive war".

Till its belated awakening to the human costs and implications of war, the government was anxious to hijack the principle of an immoral war to serve its narrow agenda. The principle of "pre-emptive war" has been unequivocally condemned as illegal by the Nuremberg Tribunal set up after World War II. Its resurrection today by the US does not in any manner endow it with legitimacy. India's distinguished contribution to the ongoing process of redefining the global security paradigm has been to uphold "pre-emptive war", and to gripe endlessly that it has been misapplied in the practical dimension. Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha struck the first notes of this discordant chorus, even as bombs and missiles began to fly over Iraq. Pakistan, he said, was a fit case for a pre-emptive strike. In his response to the debate in the Rajya Sabha, he spelt out his reasoning in explicit terms. If the possession of weapons of mass destruction, lack of democratic political structures, and sponsorship of overseas acts of

terrorism were the *casus belli* in Iraq, then Pakistan clearly was a far greater offender, requiring sterner action.

Defence Minister George Fernandes took up that refrain. Sinha had chosen not to question the grounds on which the war was being waged. But Fernandes did. This was little else than a difference of nuance, since both ministers retained an obsessive focus on bringing Pakistan to account through a military strike. For its part, the Pakistan government responded with the warning that the disparities in military capability between India and Pakistan were not quite the same as between the Gulf combatants. And in the furious competition for the attention of the sole imperial power, Pakistan seemed to make the greater headway. India won little endorsement for its case for a pre-emptive strike. But Pakistan seemed to gain favour for its pleas for military restraint. Indeed, top foreign policy officials in the US and the UK are believed to have warned India against any precipitate action, holding out the assurance that the dispute with Pakistan will enjoy greater attention once the mission in Iraq is completed.

Perhaps it was the uneasy realisation that western mediation is unlikely to be an unmixed blessing that compelled Prime Minister Vajpayee to undertake his mid-April visit to

Srinagar and extend a "hand of friendship" to Pakistan. The gesture was so totally at variance with recent official rhetoric that it caused a minor seismic event across the border. The next day, Vajpayee came closer in line with the official catechism: talks could take place only if Pakistan were to cease all acts of cross-border terrorism, he said. But then, rather ominously, he added that the events in Iraq should be a warning for all the developing countries that had failed to address endemic problems of poverty and social strife. Is this the first glimmer of "clarity" in official thinking to emerge from the fog of war? That remains uncertain. But Sinha was not chastened.

Defending the policy of infinite waffle, days after Vajpayee's intervention, Sinha deprecated the tendency to take a "knee-jerk" anti-US stand out of "compulsive hostility" to America. The point seemed to elude him that the interests of the imperial powers can be congruent with those of a developing country only by sheer accident. India's interests would have been best served by standing up for international law and multilateralism, not twisting the distorted principle of pre-emptive war to its narrow ends. But incoherence is part of the price to be paid for wooing the world's sole Superpower as a "strategic partner".

Fighting the Menace of Landmines

Kavita Srivastava

Of all the conventional instruments of modern warfare, landmines are commonly used, yet are among the most destructive. Long after conflicts end landmines continue to be a terrible menace, often making it impossible for refugees and internally displaced people to return. For individual and community alike, the impact of landmines is not simply physical, it is also psychological, social and economic. After 10 months of confrontation with Pakistan, the Indian army went back to its barracks in November 2002. Large numbers of people living close to the border lost

their standing crops and in some places their homes to the army occupation. But the most dangerous aspect of the occupation was the planting of (according to the 'Hindustan Times') over 15 lakh landmines along the entire border from Kashmir to Kutch. Of them, more than eight lakh landmines were planted along the 1,040 km border in Rajasthan, running through Sri Ganganagar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Barmer districts. Except for Sri Ganganagar, these are desert districts and witnessed heavy fighting in the past two wars. They were mined during the 1965 and 1971 wars too.

In Rajasthan, the mines led to the loss of life, limb and livelihoods. They also impeded children's education. According to an HT study, more than 1,000 people (civilians and army personnel) and several thousands of

livestock were killed and many injured. India has not signed the international treaty banning landmines. According to the HT study, it takes only \$3 to plant a landmine, but \$30 to de-mine. Even in the best scenario, like Serbia, where advanced technology was used, only 70% of the mines could be removed. Those left will always threaten people.

In Ganganagar, a month-long farmers' dharna was organised by the Left parties to demand compensation for the 25,000 hectares occupied by the army. When "Operation Parakram" was called off, de-mining was initiated. According to one report, 70% of the mines have been removed. But what about the rest?

Former MP Than Singh Jatav, who was a sub-divisional magistrate in the late 1970s, says: "The landmines of the

1965 and 1971 wars were never completely cleared. They would frequently explode injuring people and cattle. At my behest, the Rajasthan government wrote several times to the Defence Ministry to intervene, but there was no response."

Partition broke up families on the two sides of the border. Militarisation followed, making the desert the

favourite area for army exercises-and later, nuclear tests. The unquestioned assumption was that the area was a wasteland, of no use to anybody, hence ideal for destructive experiments! But several studies have shown that this area supports a variety of life-forms and an economy of its own. For the people of the great Thar Desert, landmines mean dispossession,

displacement, loss of land and other resources

Other border states, especially Jammu and Kashmir, too have witnessed landmine havoc. Awareness of the impact of landmines is increasing across the world. But it is yet to register effectively in South Asia. A movement against landmines must be urgently built here.

Deterrence still remains delusory

Praful Bidwai

Does the Iraq war validate the strategic doctrine of deterrence, which holds that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) can reliably prevent or deter an adversary from attacking a country? Does WMD-based deterrence offer the best route to security through a mutual "balance of terror"? Many governments and hawkish analysts have drawn that conclusion, upholding the main premise that ruled strategic thinking during the nightmarish Cold War with all its frightening insecurities.

Their proposition runs thus: if Iraq really had powerful WMD, the US wouldn't have risked attacking it. However evil, WMD can be instruments of national defence against Empire. Nuclear weapons alone guarantee that India or Pakistan won't be targeted next by the US. We must keep and upgrade our nukes. Doesn't North Korea, which has "successfully" defied the US with "nuclear hardball" tactics, prove that nuclear deterrence actually works?

The North Korean government has certainly drawn that conclusion. On April 19, it said: "The Iraqi war teaches a lesson-that in order to prevent a war and defend the security of a country and the sovereignty of a nation, it is necessary to have a powerful physical deterrent force..." That is why it is "reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods" from a nuclear reactor to extract plutonium, which can be used to make nuclear bombs.

Abdul Qadir Khan, the "Father of the Pakistani Bomb", was even more explicit. In an interview to *The News on Sunday* (Pakistan), Khan boasted that without its nuclear bombs,

Pakistan "would have become another Palestine or Bosnia or Kashmir." Many Indian "experts" have underscored the same "lesson" from Iraq. However, they are seriously mistaken. Their conclusion is a non sequitur, and doesn't logically follow from the Iraq war. There is no clinching, convincing evidence that Iraq has or had WMD. The Anglo-American troops have found none of the chemical or biological weapons which their governments had accused Iraq of having hidden.

As for suspected nuclear weapons, which need large-sized, complex and therefore hard-to-hide facilities, the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly certified that Iraq has none. Its rudimentary nuclear weapons programme was destroyed following sanctions and inspections in the 1990s. In the absence of weighty evidence that Iraq had WMD, it becomes impossible to support the deterrence argument. But there's an even stronger reason to

doubt its validity. The argument, based on speculative "what-if" logic, is wrong on five counts.

First, there is huge military asymmetry between states. Given the hierarchy of capabilities, the weaker states cannot really deter their Superpower-class adversaries even with their WMD, especially chemical or biological weapons—often called "the poor man's nuclear weapons" because they are far less lethal and kill scores, not lakhs. Thus, even if Iraq had crude chemical or biological arms, they wouldn't have reliably deterred the US. For deterrence to work, an adversary must know with certainty that you can inflict "unacceptable damage" upon him. In practice, damage to enemy soldiers from primitive chemical or biological weapons—which have poor stability and destructive power can be contained by special suits and masks.

Secondly, weapons, however important, don't primarily determine



whether or not states go to war. Thus, the US's nuclear weapons didn't prevent China from entering the Korean War. Non-nuclear Vietnam gave nuclear China a bloody nose in 1979. And Argentina wasn't deterred from fighting nuclear Britain in the 1980s. War outcomes are often settled by factors other than weapons — witness Suez, Vietnam, Afghanistan.

Thirdly, mere WMD possession cannot deter anyone. A state must have the capability to deliver them to targets in the adversary's territory. Iraq certainly lacked this. Much of its air force was destroyed before this war. It didn't even control its own airspace after the US imposed "no-fly zones" in the 1990s. Iraq had 100-120 Al-Samoud-II missiles, 70 of which were destroyed before the war. These are primitive rockets without a guidance system. With a range of 150-180 km, they could scarcely hit Iraq's neighbourhood, leave alone the US.

India and Pakistan admittedly possess mass-annihilation-capable nuclear weapons, but they belong to the same league as Iraq in respect of

delivering them to the US. Even China has barely a dozen missiles that can reach continental America—never mind their accuracy. This doesn't add up to an assured deterrent second-strike capability.

Fourthly, North Korea isn't quite "playing nuclear hardball". There's no evidence, only boasts, that it has nuclear weapons, although it has nuclear spent fuel. It's threatening to restart a reactor closed under a 1994 agreement with the US—in a reckless attempt to drive an economic-political bargain. Despite brinkmanship, it's probably months away from a first-generation nuclear weapon. It is Pyongyang's conventional weapons that worry the US: they can strike 30,000-plus American troops in the region. They can also target lakhs of civilians of key ally-states Japan and South Korea. Washington is engaging Pyongyang in talks. And Pyongyang says it'll give up its entire nuclear programme if a deal comes through. Yet, it's not hard to imagine a scenario where Washington coercively "takes out" N. Korea's suspected WMD. The

US has "contingency plans" to bomb its sole nuclear reactor. This disclosure was carried in "The Australian" newspaper and confirmed by foreign minister Alexander Downer.

Finally, even when adversaries have proven WMD "deterrents", that doesn't necessarily create security. Deterrence is a profoundly flawed doctrine. It assumes symmetrical responses from asymmetrical adversaries; rational, cool-headed behaviour in panic-causing situations; and total absence of misperception, misunderstanding or accidents—not 90 percent, but 100 percent of the time. This can't happen in real life.

Thus, during the Cold War, so-called "deterrence" between the US and the USSR broke down hundreds of times while nuclear weapons were on hair-trigger alert. In the India-Pakistan case, it's even more Ram-bharose and suicidally unreliable. WMD deterrence is a flimsy, unsound doctrine on which to base security. The US must be fought politically, not militarily. Real security can come only when WMD are fully abolished worldwide.

Building the Peace Movement Post-Iraq

Achin Vanaik

The central purpose behind the illegal and immoral invasion of Iraq which has killed and injured thousands is to help the US establish an informal world empire and control oil-rich and strategically vital West Asia. Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran and Lebanon have been put on alert. Palestinians will soon be pressured to accept a farce of a "peace settlement" ensuring Israel's permanent domination over a nominally 'independent' Palestine.

In Iraq, there will first be a US-administered occupation regime and then a puppet Iraqi one. An aggressive, unilateralist and arrogant bully has put the world on notice: "Watch out! If you are not with us you are against us!" For the Indian and global peace movements, the stakes are clear. *The long-term struggle for a peaceful and just world order is now inseparable from the struggle against US empire-building.*

Soon after CNDP was formed, it realised that the struggle against nuclearisation/ militarisation in India and Pakistan could not be separated from trying to improve India-Pakistan relations generally, which in turn required combating the scourge of Hindu and Muslim communalisms and national chauvinisms. Now we must add a fourth strategic front to CNDP activities—against US imperialism.

By pretending to disarm Iraq of WMD, the US has declared that it reserves the right to take whatever steps it deems necessary against other potential powers possessing WMD. One kind of message is being sent to Iran and North Korea, another to India and Pakistan—keep your nukes but don't get too big for your nuclear boots and behave as we tell you to.

The idea that nuclear weapons would make India and Pakistan more powerful vis-à-vis other nuclear powers, notably the US, has been exposed for what it always was, a fantasy. The wrong lesson to draw is that Iraq shows that countries need nukes to confront the US. This only makes them targets for the US. Even

on the absurd 'logic' of seeking security through nuclear deterrence, it is not possible for any country to 'match' the US's nuclear might or sustain a 'credible second-strike capacity' against it. The US must be confronted *politically*, not militarily.

The US is in an even stronger position to continue manipulating India and Pakistan to suit its interests while Islamabad and New Delhi engage in competitive servility with a view to outflanking each other. CNDP must constantly highlight the folly of such an approach as well as the urgency of the struggle for South Asia's de-nuclearisation, given the particular danger of military clashes and possible nuclear escalation.

CNDP must now oppose all efforts to obtain legitimacy for the US's occupation regime or for its eventual puppet successor. The US will also manipulate the UN. According to international law, all costs of humanitarian aid and reconstruction must be borne by the illegal occupiers and not paid from the sale of Iraqi oil. We know the US will not allow any truly independent international body to

govern Iraq temporarily before genuinely free elections are held. We must repeatedly expose and condemn US deceit in this regard. CNDP must, therefore, strongly oppose any weakness on the part of the Indian government, which in the name of so-called national interest might want to 'make up' with the US in Iraq.

In the long run, many forces in Eurasia, Africa and Latin America will mobilise popular anger against the US. Some forces will be led by Muslim fundamentalists, giving succour to Hindu communalists. We must stress mobilisation along secular lines.

Finally, we must recognise that the single greatest political weak spot in the US attempt to build an empire is

Palestine, where there exists the world's most courageous and powerful popular-nationalist movement, one which has immensely frustrated Israel and the US despite their enormous military strength.

There will never be peace in West Asia without a just settlement of the Palestine issue, which would represent a decisive and historic political defeat for Israel and the US. Palestine is testimony to a fundamental truth of political struggle. This is not primarily a contest of arms or economic strength but of wills. The side with immense moral strength can, by refusing to ever give in, resist its adversary. Such fortitude is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for ultimate

victory—witness de-colonisation, the collapse of Soviet dominance in East Europe, Vietnam, the defeat of apartheid, etc.

In this lies a lesson for the peace movement everywhere. We must build the widest possible solidarity network for Palestine. We must forge links internationally between different peace movements. We must never stop resisting the US effort to obtain consent for its imperialism. Never before has there been such a worldwide upsurge of public opinion against the US. This precious, indeed, invaluable asset will not disappear in the years to come, but grow stronger with the US occupation of Iraq. We must build on this.

The Impact of War on Women

Vineeta Bal

Fighting wars is typically a male preserve, although small numbers of women now also participate in combat. War has a variety of adverse consequences for both men and women, combatants and non-combatants. However, the suffering of women, particularly non-combatants, during and after wars has special dimensions. In patriarchal societies, women have secondary status. Further, men in power use women as tools to subordinate, subjugate and insult other men. In non-war situations of conflict and communal tension too, women fall prey to both sexual and non-sexual violence. This has been documented by the voices of women from Bangladesh, Rwanda, Bosnia, Congo, Algeria, and elsewhere. Women in Gujarat have faced terrorising and brutalising experiences as part of communal conflict.

In the context of Iraq's recent invasion, early reports from Baghdad mention that the International Committee of the Red Cross has come across instances of violence against women. It may be too early for such reports to document the real scale of the violence, but unfortunately, there is no reason to assume that women in Iraq will be free from it. Women face sexual violence and brutality in two

very different situations—one well-documented and associated directly with the theatre of war; and the other less direct domestic violence arising out of war situations. In the first type of violence, women as combatants or civilians are brutalised: they are raped, tortured, injured, degraded, intimidated and punished for actual or alleged deeds attributed to them or their families. Rape is also used as a form of "ethnic cleansing".

The Geneva Conventions provide for the protection for women as civilians and as captured or wounded combatants. In reality, such protection is rarely available. But in recent years, the Conventions have been usefully invoked after wars have ended. Some clauses of the Geneva Conventions can be applied to situations of communal violence such as those suffered by Muslim women in Gujarat. Under the

aegis of the International Initiative for Justice (IIJ), the international women's and human rights community has taken preliminary steps to seek justice for Gujarat's women.

Thus, whether in civil war, ethnic war, or in communal clashes, women are used as convenient public targets in themselves, and/or for the subjugation of other men.

The second type of violence can be described as domestic violence against women in conditions of war and economic crisis. War and/or financial crisis are a source of frustration and failure for men. The resultant stress can trigger domestic violence. Women as wives, mothers, sisters or friends of men report the beginning or aggravation of violence as a consequence of war. The situations which provoke such violence are variously described as: watching the



return of soldiers on TV, a let-down after hyped-up nationalistic propaganda, an impending refugee status, etc. Because this stress-related violence takes place in the domestic sphere rather than under public gaze, it is easy to miss its character as war-associated violence. However, it is a clear consequence of the patriarchal system.

Iraqi women probably face both kinds of violence today. There is an urgent need for more comprehensive definitions of sexual violence against women in the context of war, genocide and other situations of conflict. This is one of the mandates of the IJJ. The IJJ also hopes to examine existing legal frameworks and precedents on sexual violence to recommend changes and ways to make them more effective. Owing to the economic prosperity of Iraq in the 70's and 80's, women made significant progress despite Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime. Their

health and educational status improved, as did their work participation and presence in public life. Iraqi women were possibly the most emancipated in the Arab world, despite the absence of any organised feminist movement among them. After the Gulf war of 1991, United Nations-imposed economic sanctions changed the face of Iraq over the next decade and more.

The worsening economic situation forced many more women out of jobs than men. Islam was invoked as one source of Iraqi nationalism, and there were increasing restrictions on women, including religious conservatism, and wearing of the hijab. There was a rise in the number of "honour killings" of women. Because of a demographic imbalance between men and women, polygamy became more acceptable and common even in urban Iraq. Growing numbers of single women, widows and poor women were forced into

prostitution. A direct consequence of the sanctions was widespread undernutrition and malnutrition (an increase in the undernourished populace from 4.5 percent in 1990 to 23.4 percent in 1994). The maternal mortality rate worsened from 117 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 310 in 1994) During this period of undeclared war against Iraq, women faced more domestic violence possibly owing to two factors. Firstly, a general sense of frustration and desperation amongst men. Secondly, women's self-esteem was undermined due to unemployment and increasing religio-cultural restrictions

Following the recent invasion, the Red Cross has begun to encounter instances of violence against Iraqi women. This violence will certainly aggravate an already bad situation. It is therefore imperative for groups such as IJJ to take cognisance of the pain of Iraqi women.

Life, or American Way of Life?

Lal Bahadur Verma

Let us not contest their declared intentions. Let us concede that the attack on Iraq was intended to liberate it and demolish the spectre of terrorism, thus freeing America of perpetual fear. The attack was successful, claimed America and Britain. Then, it must have liberated Iraq and relieved America of fear. Did this really happen? Let us ignore the 'propaganda' that the US intention was to grab and monopolise resources, especially petroleum, and protect America's debt-ridden, deteriorating economy by keeping the oil trade revolving around the dollar. Let us also not see the attack as signalling American hegemony. We will not even reiterate the words of famous American economist John Kenneth Galbraith, that it is imperative for the biggest industry of the US, the 'war industry', that be it any region, be it any reason, war should keep taking place. Let us concede that all this is 'false propaganda' against the US—the guardian and protector of global human rights.

But we have the right to ask whether the real goal of American history has been achieved after the investment of billions of dollars and hundreds of 'valuable' American lives. Is this the way to liberation? Till date, we do not have a theory of liberation which is universally acceptable. Can imposed or exported liberation mean anything in the true sense? The Anglo-Saxon tradition has a unique way of liberating others. We Indians remained liberated for centuries until 1947.

War! Howsoever you decorate it with well-meaning adjectives, the essence of war is destruction. Even the Mahabharata's "Dharmayuddh" (war for a noble cause) crossed all limits of destruction. In the 21st century, even players of war-games cannot imagine or estimate the destruction they can cause. All this despite the peace agreements running from the 17th century Europe through the League of Nations, the Geneva Protocols, and the UN Charter, to recent disarmament treaties. In a world where we talk of science, scientific temper, democracy and human rights, war should be illegal. After the unprecedented devastation caused by the First World War, efforts were made to abolish war as an instrument of state policy. But that was not to be. America dropped

nuclear bombs on Japan even though Second World War was almost over. Compared to today, those bombs could be termed as babies. Since then, America has gone to war more frequently than any other nation. Now, it does so in the name of prevention.

In his famous 'Man of Destiny', George Bernard Shaw makes Napoleon come up with a sarcastic comment: "There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find Englishmen doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles, and cuts off his king's head on republican principles."

America is Britain's heir-apparent. It has now turned its attention towards the Middle East. It may now liberate Syria, then Iran, and then...The simple truth is the American system is in danger. The threat comes from all over the globe, from the deprived and working masses, including the workers of America. The reason lies within the American political system. This conflict is between Life and the American Way of Life. Americans are

being engineered into self-admiring, self-satisfied, contended and fat human beings. (The fastest-growing disease in America is obesity.) If Saddam is projected as a friend, Americans take him as a friend. The next day he is declared an enemy. Americans readily denounce him. They are dished out the logic of the 'End of History' or 'Clash of Civilisations'. And they agree-without understanding.

To keep the American Way of Life intact, capital must break the barriers of nation-states. To achieve this, the US army also breaks those barriers. Ashwamedh today has been

transformed into Rashtramedh. But then there is no dearth of Luv and Kush today. The World Trade Organisation is hard put to find a place to hold its meetings. Latin America, considered to be the US' backyard, is giving sleepless nights to Washington as well as the region's oppressive regimes. Be it Mexico or Brazil, there is a wave of awakening among the toiling people. World public opinion is now the Second Superpower.

India is no different. It's fast generating alternative opinion, placing it is within the people's reach. We need to push this process and give it further

momentum. We should take up programmes that help people stand tall in the face of American hegemony. Fascist forces are growing in India. The pseudo-democrats have already shown their true colours. There is an urgent need for a dialogue among all forces committed to democracy and socialism. Joint action cannot be delayed. This will range from the immediate to the long-term. It has to be creative in nature and defiant in essence. We must extend the frontiers of our own battle for our rights, for justice and humane values to the whole world.

Gulf War Syndrome: The Gory Sequel

Steven Rosenfeld

Soldiers now fighting in Iraq are being exposed to battlefield hazards that have been associated with the Gulf War Syndrome that afflicts a quarter-million veterans of the 1991 war. Part of the threat today includes greater exposure to battlefield byproducts of depleted uranium munitions.

Complicating efforts to understand any potential health impacts is the Pentagon's failure to follow a 1997 law requiring baseline medical screening of troops before and after deployment. "People are sick over there already," said Dr. Doug Rokke, former director of the Army's depleted uranium (DU) project. "It's not just uranium. You've got all the complex organics and inorganics released in those fires and detonations.

In 1991, Desert Storm Commander Norman Schwarzkopf asked Rokke to oversee the environmental clean-up and medical care of soldiers injured in friendly fire incidents involving DU weapons. Rokke later wrote the DU safety rules adopted by the Army, but was relieved of subsequent duties after he criticised commanders.

Rokke said today's troops have been fighting on land polluted with chemical, biological and radioactive weapon residue from the first Gulf War. In this setting, troops have been exposed not only to sandstorms, which degrade the

lungs, but to oil fires and waste created by the use of uranium in tanks, aircraft, machine guns and missiles. "That's why people started getting sick right away, when they started going in months ago with respiratory, diarrhea and rashes," Rokke said.

DU, or Uranium-238, is a byproduct of making nuclear reactor fuel. It is denser and more penetrating than lead, burns as it flies, and breaks up and vaporises on impact-which makes it very deadly. Each round fired by a tank shoots one 10-pound uranium dart that, in addition to destroying targets, scatters into burning fragments and creates a cloud of uranium particles as small as one micron. Particles that small can enter lung tissue and remain embedded. These illnesses have left 221,000 veterans on medical disability and another 51,000 seeking that status as of May 2002.

"Yeah, I do fear that," said Denise Nichols, a retired Air Force Major and nurse, who served in Desert Storm. "We're sitting here watching it happen again..."

Nichols' lobbying sparked Congress to pass a 1997 law requiring the Pentagon to take blood samples of all soldiers before and after deployment.

Both Rokke and Nichols says health problems associated with DU exposure are

likely to be more widespread in the current war than in 1991. That's because the military relies more heavily on DU munitions today.

When Rokke sees images of soldiers and civilians driving past burning Iraqi trucks that have been destroyed by tank fire, or soldiers or civilians inspecting buildings destroyed by missiles, and these people are not wearing respirators, he says they all risk radiation poisoning, which can have lifelong consequences.

When asked why the DU rules he wrote for the Army aren't being followed, Rokke said the military doesn't want to lose the use of DU weapons. He said as early as 1991 the military issued memos saying DU ammo could become "politically unacceptable and thus be deleted" if health and environmental impacts were emphasised.

Meanwhile, the White House has dismissed DU issues.



Bringing War Criminals to Book What the Peace Movement Can Do

The Anglo-American invasion and occupation of Iraq is illegal and violates the United Nations Charter. But can those responsible for it, led by George W Bush and Tony Blair, be tried for war crimes, like the Nazis were?

The answer is, yes. In 1946, the Nuremberg Tribunal pronounced that “to initiate a war of aggression is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime [which] contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole”.

Besides the “supreme” crime, Bush and Blair and their generals are guilty under Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which defines war crimes as: “wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including...extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully...”

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court holds “attacking or bombarding, by whatever means, towns, villages, dwellings or buildings which are undefended and which are not military objectives” to be a crime.

Their guilt is compounded by their failure to prevent large-scale looting, including 170,000 treasures from the National Museum. Under the Geneva Conventions, occupying armies have a duty to protect property under their control. The Geneva Convention is reinforced by The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954.

The global peace movement has launched a number of initiatives to bring the war criminals to book. Their efforts will be greatly helped if the UN General Assembly (where there is



no veto) passes a resolution deploring the invasion of Iraq. There is a precedent for this in “Uniting for Peace” special UN sessions.

CNDP members must initiate, support and join such efforts. There are a number of sign-on petitions in circulation, which can be the basis for a *specifically Indian* signature campaign.

We reproduce below excerpts from a letter drafted by Focus on the Global South, Bangkok.

“We **demand** an immediate end to the illegal occupation of Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom and the immediate withdrawal... of all foreign troops, military advisers..., military equipment and armaments.

We **insist** that:

The Iraqi people have absolute and sovereign right to determine their own future...

Any administrative authority or interim government established by the occupying forces...[is illegal]. Therefore, [their] decisions are not binding on the Iraqi people.

The UN-held escrow Iraqi oil account must not be used to foot the bill for [Iraq’s] reconstruction...

The UN and its agencies... should not serve as a cover to legitimise, or profit from, the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. Humanitarian aid must not be used to support or promote... military, political and economic objectives...

The Iraqi people have sovereignty over all natural resources... The invading and occupying forces... have no right to make any decisions about who controls... [these].

The full costs of all reconstruction, compensation and reparations for the [multiple forms of] destruction caused by the... invasion of Iraq must be borne by the aggressors.

We **call** for

A People’s War Tribunal based on the Geneva Conventions and Nuremberg principles... to prosecute... amongst others, George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Tommy Franks, Tony Blair, Jack Straw, and John Howard.”

Membership Form

Annual Membership Fee: Students Rs. 20,
Individuals Rs. 100, Organisations Rs. 500

Name:

Organisation:

Address:

Phone:

e-mail:

Please mail your Draft/Cheque, drawn in favour
of “PEACE-CNDP”, payable at New Delhi, to

CNDP

A-124/6, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi 110 016

CNDP

The Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP) is India’s national network of over 200 organisations, including grassroots groups, mass movements and advocacy organisations, as well as individuals. Formed in November 2000, CNDP demands that India and Pakistan roll back their nuclear weapons programmes. Our emphasis:

Not to further nuclear testing

Not to induction and deployment of nuclear weapons

Yes to global and regional nuclear disarmament

CNDP works to raise mass awareness through schools and colleges programmes, publications, audio and visual materials, and campaigning and lobbying at various levels.

CNDP membership is open to both individuals and organisations. So if you believe nuclear weapons are evil and peace is important, fill in the Membership Form!

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