

Peace Now!



Volume 2 : Issue I , 2004

The Bulletin of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament & Peace

EDITORIAL

Things never stop happening. Even then the days following the last issue turned out to be quite eventful.

At the top of the list, as far as we are concerned, was of course the World Social Forum (WSF) 2004 held in Mumbai from 16th to 19th January. Not the least because the CNDP was an active and important participant. Elsewhere in the issue we have presented an overview of the WSF 2004 along with some details of CNDP participation. Here it would suffice to note that it was a historic event that the WSF, for the first time in its four year long life, came out of Latin America as a vital step forward in the direction of truly globalising the struggle against imperialist and predatory globalisation and engulfing the whole world with its signature dream : “Another World Is Possible”. In the event, the WSF 2004 turned out to be a boundless melting pot melding the spirit of upsurge and festivity, offering an enormous “space” for interaction, enlightenment, strategising and networking. The

General Assembly of the Anti-War Movement convened on the concluding day of the WSF, which was arguably the single most crucial component of the four day event, adopted a Resolution endorsed by about one hundred and ten organisations from all over the world calling for further intensification of the worldwide struggles to make US imperialism terminate its year-long illegal occupation of Iraq with protest demonstrations on 20th March all over the globe as the immediate focus.

The other set of events, extremely crucial from our point of view, was the renewed peace parleys between India and Pakistan, after a gap of about two and a half years. The intervening period had seen Atal Bihari Vajpayee desperately urge the Bush administration to crush the “fountainhead of terrorism” - a byname for Pakistan, almost as an instantaneous and automated response to the tragic events of 9/11. This signified a crude and hasty burial of the lingering goodwill of Agra - notwithstanding its formal collapse, which had happened just less than two months back. Quick came the

terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament building. This was immediately followed by “Operation Parakram” (Show of Might) from the Indian side - the largest ever peacetime armed mobilisation along the Indo-Pakistan border, as a grandiose act of “coercive diplomacy”. During this period, the two neighbours, on more than one occasion, came dangerously close to a sub-continental nuclear holocaust. The international community, and the US in particular, got actively involved. Tony Blair rushed to the sub-continent soon after the launch of the “Operation”. The formal decision to fold up the “Operation” was, however, taken only in mid-October without achieving any of the stated objectives, after a sterile and yet extremely dangerous and costly stand off for long ten months, even though a stalemate had already been reached by May/June. In early January this year, after a lot of fretting and fuming, the Indian PM eventually attended the 12th SAARC meeting in Islamabad. And, on the 6th of January - at the end of the summit, India and Pakistan, after a series of nail biting uncer-

■ **World Social Forum 2004, Mumbai:**
Lalit Surjan and Others

■ **Special articles:**
by John Hallam, Praful Bidwai, S. P. Udayakumar, Robert Dreyfuss

■ **CNDP Actions**

■ **Report:** 6th Joint Convention of P.I.P.F.P.D. at Karachi

■ **20th March:** In India

tainties, came out with a joint statement announcing the relaunch of the derailed “peace process”. In the process India quietly set aside its routine objection that the SAARC platform cannot be allowed to be used for discussing bilateral issues. Quite significantly, the “joint” statement was issued separately from two press conferences - one addressed by the President of Pakistan, and the other by the Indian External Affairs Minister, and not the Prime Minister. In any case, despite some minor hiccups, the “process” is moving ahead amidst heightened expectations on both sides of the border. The enormous reserve of goodwill that obtains at the popular levels - on the Pakistani side in particular, as is being exhibited through various modes of ‘people to people’ contacts, needs to be imaginatively harnessed by the peace movements to take the process forward. Left to itself, its pace and direction would remain contingent on the uncertain outcomes of the forthcoming US, and Indian, elections and mood swings of the rulers. The “process”, however, did not do anything to deter either India from going ahead with its mega-shopping spree of lethal and extremely high-valued armaments from Israel, Russia and the UK, or for that matter Pakistan from test firing its nuclear capable solid fuelled missile, Shaheen II, which can be launched from a mobile platform having an effective range of 2500 - 3000 km. - thereby bringing the whole of India well within its striking range. During this period, a sensational disclosure regarding Pakistan’s ‘Father of the Bomb’, Dr A Q Khan, as the head of an international black marketing

network of nuclear armaments took place. The deep embarrassment caused to the Pakistani establishment could not but visibly gladden its Indian counterpart - the peace process notwithstanding. But belying keen Indian anticipation, as in the wake of 9/11, Pakistan was in a way rewarded, and not punished, by the global hyperpower being designated as a Major Non-Nato Ally (MNNA). The consequent heightened presence of the US in the region, in the coming days, has evidently an ominous implication. In this issue we have carried an analytical article specifically dealing with the A Q Khan issue from the sub-continent’s peace activists perspective. We have carried another giving a detailed update on the global nuclear scene, with special focus on the issue of ‘proliferation’.

The illegal occupation of Iraq by the US continues as an integral part of the unfolding Project for the New American Century (PNAC), authored by its incumbent neo-con rulers, amidst violent acts of resistance by various sections of the Iraqi people, undeterred by the capture of the dethroned dictator Saddam Hussein. We have carried a fairly detailed analytical piece on the Iraq issue x-raying US motivations. Here, in passing, we would just note that through the testimonies of no other than Colin Powell himself, before the Commission investigating the 9/11 attack, it has now come to light that on 15th September, 2001 itself, just four days after 9/11, Wolfowitz - the Deputy Secretary of Defence and a leading neo-con figure, had pressed for launching an immediate attack on Iraq using 9/11 as a convenient pretext.

The Indian parliament has been prematurely dissolved and the 14th Lok Sabha elections will be shortly held. None of the major, and perhaps even minor, players, quite unfortunately, have placed nuclear disarmament on their agenda. Rather the opposition Congress has further hardened its stand and, in tune with the ruling BJP, now talks of maintaining “minimum (nuclear) deterrent”, completely overlooking the fact that Chagai, Kargil and now Shaheen II are the direct pernicious consequences of Pokhran II. The peace movements in India must take note of this disturbing development and strive to work out an appropriate response.

In this issue we have carried a piece by a well-known academic-activist on the fearsome prospects of privatising nuclear power projects.

Before we end, we express our profound regret at the untimely passing away of Krishna Raj, the venerable editor and nurturer of the unique journal Economic and Political Weekly, or EPW - as it is popularly known. Raj breathed his last on 17th January in the early morning. We take this opportunity to place on record our deepest appreciation of his immense contribution to the cause of progressive transformation of the Indian society, and also peace and nuclear disarmament. We salute his memory. We also pay our homage to Paul Marlor Sweezy, the legendary non-conformist Marxist scholar - a valiant fighter against the tyranny of capital and the war-mongering US imperialism, the co-founder and the co-editor of the famed journal Monthly Review, who passed away on 28th February.

Notes on Nuclear Weapons

Weapons of Mass Destruction : A Global Update

John Hallam

Summary

Nuclear Weapons can still destroy the world. And the Bush administration no longer pays even lip service to its clear legal obligation laid down in Article VI of the NPT to achieve their total and unequivocal elimination, preferring instead to plan new nuclear weapons and even to contemplate new nuclear testing, and the proliferation problem, not too unexpectedly, has raised itself in a new and frightening form.

Can Nuclear Weapons Still Destroy the world?

Yes they can. When in the 1980s, the theory of Nuclear Winter was being discussed, it was suggested that roughly 500 warheads of approximately megaton size would be sufficient, if used for 'city busting', to create firestorms whose smoke would turn day to night and drop temperatures below freezing.

A nuclear winter of the sort created by the mammoth US and Soviet arsenals in the 1980s would have created an impact similar to that of a largish asteroid hitting the planet - the kind of event that wiped out the dinosaurs.

Warhead Numbers - Who has What?

Current US and Russian nuclear arsenals still contain some 30,000 warheads, out of which some 5-7,000 are in 'launch-on-warning' status. France has about 400 warheads, which are submarine-based and

not in LoW status. China has about the same number but only 20 of these are actually mounted on long-range ICBMs and these are not kept currently in LoW status, though this may soon change.

Of the roughly 32,000 nuclear warheads worldwide, the US has somewhere between 8 and 12,000, and Russia up to 22,000 warheads. Of these, as of 1995, the US had 2,500 in LoW status on land-based ICBMs, and Russia has 3,500 on land-based ICBMs in LoW status.

Of Russia's 22,000 warheads, a large number are either in stockpiles or non-operational, with some in very bad condition. Security is a problem for many Russian weapons sites. Under the US/Russia Nunn-Lugar plan, many Russian weapons are being turned into uranium or plutonium, and security at many sites is being upgraded. So bad has security been at some weapons sites however that there has been doubt as to the whereabouts of some 100 'suitcase nukes', giving rise to apprehension, in the wake of 9/11, that Al Qaeda might have actually managed to smuggle one into New York. Fortunately, however, there is, so far, no corroborating evidence.

As of now Russia and the US alone, between them, have the capability to end civilisation worldwide and to render the world uninhabitable for months to centuries for most land-based life forms. Nobody else has this dubious ability.

The current US-Russia warhead count is significantly

below what it was in the 1980s. In 1983, Russia alone had some 15,000 land-based ICBM-mounted warheads (thirty times the number needed to create a nuclear winter), not 3,500.

According to the Moscow Treaty, by 2012, each is supposed to have just 1,500 warheads (still three times the number required to create a nuclear winter), in 'operational' status. However, there are a few catches that render this almost a joke. 'Operational' status is completely undefined. US or Russian defence authorities could simply unplug power cords from missiles and declare them 'non-operational.' The treaty does not have to be fulfilled till midnight Dec 31 2012, and the treaty itself vanishes on Jan 1 2013. It is in other words, all but worthless.

Meanwhile, recent statements in the US Nuclear Posture Review reemphasises US reliance on nuclear deterrence and the possible use of nuclear weapons, as well as the development of new, 'useable' nuclear weapons - mini-nukes. The most recent US nuclear weapons budget, reportedly, contains an overall 5% increase in funding, with new expenditure largely on development of new types of nuclear weapons.

But that about everyone else?

Apart from the US and Russia, the 'official' nuclear powers include the UK, France, and China. The 'unofficial' ones include India, Pakistan, Israel, and the DPRK, while there has been talk of Iran and now Nigeria

(!?? yes), joining that once select club.

The UK has between 150 and 250 warheads, now exclusively based in trident submarines. Opposition to Trident is rightly fierce, but it must be noted that the UK no longer keeps its missiles in LoW status. France, with roughly 400 warheads, also keeps these warheads largely submarine-based, and has scrapped the missiles it once had on the Plateau d'Albion. The justification for France to keep 400 warheads has more to do with national prestige than with any rational consideration, as is the case with the UK. France also reportedly does not maintain its nuclear forces in LoW status.

China also has roughly 400 warheads, of which most are mounted on aircrafts and short-medium range missiles. Of these, a mere 20 are mounted on long-range ICBMs able to reach the USA, and these are not currently kept in LoW status. However, the Chinese have stated that in response to the unilateral abrogation of the ABM treaty by the US, they may both modernise their long-range ICBM force and increase its numbers to 200. China is widely believed to have given an early, uranium-based bomb design to Pakistan, who, in turn, might have passed it on to the DPRK in return for missile technology, and also to Libya.

This brings us to the 'unofficial' nuclear powers : India, Pakistan, Israel, and the DPRK.

ISRAEL

Of these, Israel, with between 200 and 400 warheads, is easily the most dangerous. Israel has never officially admitted its nuclear status, and has been protected by the US in that status,

in striking contrast to the incredible pressure applied to the DPRK over its entirely real but tiny arsenal, and of course, the completely nonexistent Iraqi warheads.

The lack of US tension over Indian and Pakistani arsenals in spite of those countries having actually been on the brink of a nuclear war in 2002 is also remarkable.

Israel's warheads are derived from fissile material from the Dimona reactor in Negev, and what we know about Dimona comes largely from Mordechai Vanunu, due to be released from jail soon.

Israel's delivery system is the Jerico missile, with a range between 500 and 1500 km. Israel is said to be fitting at least one submarine with a nuclear delivery system.

INDIA

India first obtained plutonium from the unsafeguarded CIRUS reactor at BARC, and used it in the 'peaceful nuclear explosion' at Pokhran in 1974. India was slow to weaponise its undoubted capability partly out of deliberate policy. Since the Pokhran-II tests of May 1998, estimates of the number of Indian warheads have varied between 70 and 150, with some recent estimates indicating as low as 40 warheads, which could be fewer than those with Pakistan. India's delivery systems include Su-29 and Mirage aircrafts, and the Agni missile. While India's longest range missiles seem to have greater range than anything Pakistan has, Pakistan does seem to be better endowed with short-medium range, truck-mounted missiles, with Soviet/DPRK style trans-

porter/erector/launch tubes (TEL).

India, like Pakistan, is in the process of installing more and more automated and sophisticated C³I (Communication Command, Control, Intelligence) systems for nuclear command and control. There has been talk in the Indian media of the construction of bunkers under the South Block in Delhi. However, unless these bunkers are literally hundreds of metres deep they will be of no use whatsoever. The paradox is that with missile travel times between Delhi and Pakistani launch points being in the order of minutes, Indian (and Pakistani) commanders will not have half an hour, to decide whether a blip on a radar screen is an incoming missile, a technical glitch, a flock of birds, or a meteor, before deciding whether or not to launch a subcontinental apocalypse that could kill up to 150 million.

In 2002, India and Pakistan moved their nuclear missiles close to the line of control, over which they were conducting intense, world war-II style artillery duels.

Both Musharraf and Vajpayee, months later, admitted that the two countries had come much too close to a nuclear exchange for comfort.

PAKISTAN

The proliferative activities of Mr A.Q. Khan and in all probability the Pakistani government itself, need no comment here save that :

—uranium enrichment technology, most probably from URENCO, has been vital to the Pakistani effort.

—also vital have been one or

more Chinese, uranium-based, nuclear weapons designs. Some of these designs have been passed on to others such as Libya and possibly Saudi Arabia, either directly for large sums of money or simply because both Libya and Saudi Arabia have in fact bankrolled the Pakistani effort to a high degree. Pakistan has also used Chinese missiles, and reverse-engineered those missiles.

—also vital to the Pakistani delivery system has been the DPRK's Nodong and Taepo-Dong missile, with the Ghauri, the main nuclear delivery system, being a clone of the Nodong. The fact that the Pakistanis have been able to fit uranium-based warheads originally of Chinese design on to the Nodong and that a close relationship clearly existed for some time between the DPRK and Pakistan with AQ Khan making some 16 trips to Pyongyang, means that claims that Pyongyang lacks a delivery system or has not been able to fit warheads onto missiles lack credibility - especially in the light of Pyongyang's

previous claims that it has had an enriched uranium program, and Pakistani claims that a technology swap did in fact take place. Missile components were transported from Pyongyang by US-Supplied C-130 aircraft as late as 2002.

Estimates of Pakistani warhead numbers vary from 24-48, according to Washington-based NRDC, to 35-70. Pakistan as previously noted, seems to be better endowed with multi-wheel TEL vehicles, able to easily transport missiles to the line of control.

DPRK

North Korea/DPRK is, as per the CIA, having just 1-2 warheads, but this is surely a dated estimate, and surely was always unrealistically low. The CIA estimate applies only to the DPRK's plutonium based effort, and not to any uranium-based program, and does not take into account the 8000 fuel rods recently reprocessed from Yongbyon, which would give at least another 4-6 warheads. Lee Wha Rhang, writing sometime about 1997, had estimated about 10-12 plutonium-based warheads. I had tentatively suggested elsewhere that the DPRK may possibly have 6-12 war-

heads of both plutonium and uranium design, mounted on Nodong and Taepo-Dong missiles.

The DPRK's current denials of its uranium-based program contradict its earlier affirmation that it had such a program, while the DPRK uranium-based program fits into the broader picture of a Pak/DPRK technology swap.

The nodong missile has ample range to strike Seoul (which requires only artillery to strike it), Tokyo, and Beijing. The Taepo-Dong-II has a theoretical but untested range sufficient to strike well beyond the US west coast. While a wobbly Taepo-Dong might not be the most accurate or reliable delivery system, the possibility that the DPRK may have the capability to turn downtown LA or San Francisco into a 'sea of fire' must be taken seriously. To dismiss it as a bluff, as certain members of the Bush administration are wont to do, and then follow up with the Pentagon on military options and/or regime change is, frankly, just insane. Even thinking loudly about such options - and the Bush administration has a way of thinking very loudly - places the west coast US cities as well as Tokyo in extreme danger and positively ensures that the goal of the nuclear weapons free Korean Peninsula recedes further and further.

Warhead Tally :

USA	8-12,000 of which 2,500 on LoW.
Russia	22,000 (approx.) of which 3,500 on LoW
UK	150-250
France	400 (approx.)
China	400 (approx.) of which 20 on long-range ICBMs
Israel	200-400
India	70-150 (some estimate even 40). Delivery through Agni, Su-29, Mirage
Pakistan	24-48 (as per NRDC) to 35-70. Delivery through Ghauri(Nodong), Shaheen
DPRK	maybe 6-12 warheads. Delivery through Nodong, Taepo-Dong

Days Ahead : Unchecked Proliferation?

The proliferative potential of the current situation is extremely high - and just how extreme, is illustrated by recent reports that Nigeria (!!!) is doing deals with Pakistan and the DPRK for an unspecified nuclear capability.

The AQ Khan/Pak government proliferation machine, with the spread of nuclear technology built into its very growth plan, raised the prospect of Libyan nuclear weapons. This prospect seems now to have receded. Last year, reports surfaced that the Saudi government had considered acquiring a packaged, turnkey, nuclear deterrent from Pakistan. This would, in all likelihood, have come not as a nuclear weapons production capability, but as a number of TEL trucks with missiles and warheads. The possibility that nations might sell a complete warhead/missile package has emanated also from the DPRK.

Live proliferation concerns remain regarding Saudi

Arabia, Iran, and now, even Nigeria. The significance of Nigeria is that there may be other nations as well who are not currently on the proliferation map.

The entirely predictable failure of the current round of talks with the DPRK also raises the prospect of proliferation in north east asia. If the DPRK maintains and augments a real and credible nuclear weapon system with delivery capability, as I believe it will, then there could obtain the cascading effect of South Korea, Taiwan and Japan going nuclear.

All this is a direct threat to the NPT regime. The next NPT review conference will be in 2005, and the preceding prepcom will be during April 26-May 7, 2004.

The other issue that directly affects the prepcom, and to which our attention has been drawn by Mohammed El Baradei is, of course, the refusal of the nuclear weapons powers - not only the US and Russia, but with a bit more subtlety,

France, the UK, and China - to realistically and credibly address their Article VI NPT obligations to achieve the total and unequivocal elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The current Bush administration is the first in US history to refuse to admit that the NPT says what it says and commits the US to eliminate its nuclear arsenal.

The hypocrisy and futility of the basic assumptions underlying the current non-proliferation regime has been captured most succinctly by none other than the incumbent head of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency - the watchdog organisation to guard the NPT regime) Mohammed El Baradei himself : "We must abandon the unworkable notion that it is morally reprehensible for some countries to pursue weapons of mass destruction (and) yet (it is) morally acceptable for others to rely on them for security - and indeed to continue to refine their capacities and postulate plans for their use."

How Not to Curb Nuclear Proliferation

Praful Bidwai

President George Bush's proposed curbs on the spread of nuclear weapons, outlined at his National Defense University address on Wednesday, and the continuing disclosures about clandestine nuclear transfers from Pakistan to North Korea, Libya and Iran, occasion a good hard look at the murky goings-on in the nuclear world. At the heart of

Bush's proposals lies monumental hypocrisy. He wants to limit the number of nations which are allowed to produce and keep fissile materials, and to tighten the inspections regime. This is meant to stop "horizontal proliferation." But he is prepared to do nothing about "vertical proliferation" (multiplication or refinement of existing weapons) or to ful-

fil the United States' own obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Nor is he willing to roll back his dangerous plans for Ballistic Missile Defence and nuclear "bunker-buster" bombs.

Implicit in Bush's scheme is a distinction between "responsible" and "irresponsible" nuclear weapons-states (NWSs). Thus, the US - and

presumably the other four NWSs recognised under the NPT – are “responsible” states, whereas North Korea, Iraq and other “Axis of Evil” states are “irresponsible.” Even his distinction is applied inconsistently. Thus, Pakistan, whose chief nuclear expert has confessed to having transferred nuclear components and designs for making nuclear weapons, is not “irresponsible” – simply because of its temporary importance for the US as an ally against Al-Qaeda. However, Saddam’s Iraq, which was merely suspected to have mass-destruction weapons (which did not exist), attracts that appellation.

But let this pass. It is in the first place utterly illogical to divide the NWSs into supposedly “responsible” and “irresponsible” states. Possessing weapons of mass destruction and drawing up plans to use them is itself a grave act of irresponsibility. Every single NWS has the criminal intention to kill millions of non-combatant civilians with these weapons. Besides, some NWSs have taken new initiatives in making the world a more dangerous place. For instance, the US will militarise outer space through Ballistic Missile Defence. It is also planning to develop battlefield nuclear weapons, which will further raise the global nuclear danger.

The NWSs have been as deeply involved as the non-nuclear states in nuclear proliferation in direct or indirect ways – as recipients or providers of materials and technology or in condoning transfers. They are all irresponsible in different ways and to different degrees. In the early years of the Cold

War, the USSR and China collaborated on nuclear weapons technology, as did the United States and the United Kingdom. In the 1960s and 1970s, France is believed to have helped Israel acquire a nuclear capability. Israel and apartheid South Africa too collaborated on the Bomb. Nuclear collaboration between China and Pakistan was reportedly close. India too borrowed, or procured by dubious means, vital ingredients of its nuclear weapons program from the US and Canada, while using materials from sources as diverse as the UK, US, USSR/Russia, Norway, France, China and Canada. Similarly, the US has been indulgent towards the nuclear pursuits of its allies Israel and Pakistan. And India is now keen to collaborate with the US and Israel on nuclear weapons in general and Ballistic Missile Defence in particular.

Pakistan’s is only the latest case in this long sordid story of nuclear proliferation. What Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan and his team did is of course condemnable. But so is the charade staged by Pakistan and the United States to pretend that the Pakistan-based nuclear smuggling ring was the work of “individual scientists” driven by “personal greed.” Consider the following.

The information that has come to light shows that Khan and his KRL (Khan Research Laboratories) colleagues ran a huge global network – the world’s most complex, elaborate and purposive effort ever at beating national and international non-proliferation controls. The ramifications of the network cut across continents, with a factory making centri-

fuge components in Malaysia, with middlemen from Germany, Sri Lanka, and Holland, with meetings in Turkey and Morocco, and hardware shipments routed through Dubai. Lubricating this network was monumental corruption.

The evidence is so damaging that the clemency granted to Khan doesn’t make sense. Khan was complicit in serious offences, including creating the potential for crimes against humanity. And yet, he has been allowed to keep his ill-gotten wealth.

Ever since last year’s leaks suggesting Pakistan had swapped uranium enrichment centrifuges for ballistic missiles from N. Korea, the US has bought Gen Musharraf’s line that the illicit commerce was the work of “individual scientists.” But after Iran’s and Libya’s recent disclosures to the International Atomic Energy Agency, it’s hard to believe that the secret transfers suddenly stopped when Musharraf took power – despite his reported “four hundred percent assurance.”

It’s impossible for clandestine nuclear transfers to have occurred out of Pakistan’s Kahuta enrichment plant without the consent of the government, in particular, the army-controlled security apparatus. As Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy, a physicist and nuclear affairs expert from Islamabad’s Quaid-e-Azam University, says: “Since its inception, Pakistan’s nuclear program has been squarely under army supervision. A multi-tiered security system was headed by a lieutenant general (now, two) with all nuclear installations and personnel kept

under the tightest possible surveillance.”

Some years ago, the French ambassador to Pakistan was roughed up when he strayed into an area “several miles from the enrichment facility” – diplomatic immunity notwithstanding. Even Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif couldn’t get permission to visit Kahuta.

Pakistan has always consciously traded in nuclear components and technology. Ever since it decided to counter India’s nuclear weapons status, announced through the 1974 Pokharan-I explosion, it tried to make up for its technological backwardness by procuring nuclear designs by whatever means. The critical break came in the late 1970s when Khan managed to steal designs for high-speed uranium centrifuges from a Dutch plant. The metallurgist had huge government resources and total freedom from public scrutiny. He bought restricted materials from Western Europe and the US and built the Kahuta enrichment plant. By the late 1980s, Kahuta had produced significant quantities of highly enriched uranium. As Pakistan’s nuclear capability grew, so did Khan’s personal wealth. Three different considerations seem to have inspired the sale of Pakistan’s nuclear secrets. The rationale for transferring centrifuge designs to Iran reportedly between 1987 and 1991 was probably money. It’s hard to believe that helping Shiite Iran was ideologically compatible with the Pakistani Establishment’s Sunni ideology. The N. Korean deals were downright commercial. By the

late 1980s, Pakistan had a nuclear capability, but no missiles. It bought the “Nodong” from N. Korea, and renamed it “Ghauri.” The probable rationale in the Libyan case was personal corruption.

The Pakistani nuclear transfers are “the tip” of a global iceberg, says IAEA director-general Mohamed El Baradei: “It’s obvious that the international export controls have completely failed in recent years. A nuclear blackmarket has emerged, driven by fantastic cleverness. Designs are drawn in one country, centrifuges are produced in another, they are then shipped via a third country and there is no clarity about the end user ... Libya and Iran made extensive use of this network.” This operation represents a serious danger of nuclear proliferation.

The danger is not confined to the global blackmarket. Huge quantities of weapons-grade fissile material routinely pass through civilian nuclear facilities the world over. Plutonium, only 5 to 8 kilos of which is enough to make a Nagasaki-type bomb, is annually traded in amounts such as tonnes between Japan and Europe. There are large quantities of MUF (material unaccounted for) in the world’s reprocessing facilities. One leaked IAEA report for the 1980s notes MUF enough for more than 20 bombs in one year alone! Then there are the states of the former Soviet Union, which have hundreds of unemployed nuclear technologists and unscrupulous businessmen willing to trade in forbidden material.

Clearly, IAEA inspections

cannot take care of all of these sources of leaks. And yet they constitute the sole system of physical controls available on movements of nuclear materials. IAEA safeguards don’t even apply to all countries. Therefore, the proliferation danger will remain so long as nuclear weapons and power programs exist. There is no leakproof method of eliminating it – short of global nuclear disarmament and shift to non-hazardous technologies of power generation.

Pakistan’s nuclear pursuit cannot be separated from India’s. Pakistan’s nuclear program has been largely reactive to India’s. India too has bought, borrowed and procured by dubious means nuclear materials and technologies from sources as diverse as the UK, US, USSR/ Russia, Norway, France, China and Canada.

The source of the plutonium used in India’s 1974 test was spent fuel from CIRUS, a “research” reactor of Canadian design, to which the US donated heavy water. India reneged on its promise to use CIRUS solely for “peaceful” purposes. To escape legal censure, it hypocritically called the 1974 test a “peaceful nuclear explosion.” This was a form of cheating too.

Yet, the US today coddles India, just as it coddled Pakistan in the 1980s when it was a “frontline” state against the USSR. According to a BBC documentary, Bush took the CIA off surveillance on KRL. The same myopia is at work again – with one difference. Bush is compounding the original blunder through “vertical proliferation” on the US’s part.

WSF : An Overview

FOR A BETTER WORLD

Lalit Surjan

It's not an easy task to write about the WSF 2004, Mumbai in a limited space. One can only talk cursorily about an event, which attracted more than 100,000 delegates from 130 countries. Where almost 1500 small and big sessions were organised in four days besides the inaugural and closing ceremonies. And where rallies and processions were being taken out and street theatre and songs and dances were being performed almost non-stop from morning to evening. If one is to compile the full report of each and every event that took place in Mumbai, it will perhaps run into a weighty book of at least 20,000 pages.

The WSF was organised in Porto Alegre, Brazil for the last three years. This was the fourth year and the decision to hold it in Mumbai was taken with an eye on involving Asian countries, particularly India, in the WSF process in a much more effective manner. It is now almost decided that WSF 2006 will be held in Cairo - the capital of Egypt to ensure greater involvement of the neighbouring African countries. In the meanwhile, in the last two years, regional forums such as the Asian Social Forum, European Social Forum etc. have already been held in different venues. World Social Forum can be seen as a rainbow, which starts at centre-liberal politics and goes almost to the extreme end of left politics. Though Communist and Socialist par-

ties don't participate directly in WSF, many organisations and outfits owing allegiance to Green Peace, Socialist International and Communist Parties are quite active in the process. The entire spectrum of WSF involves a large number of groups- trade unions, people's movements, NGOs, religious and other charities, associations working for issues like world peace and nuclear disarmament to aboriginal rights, gender issues, common property rights, and environmental issues etc.

WSF, embracing these myriad groups, avers that it is nothing but a space, an informal forum in the global village. Let people come together to this place to share and exchange their views and experiences. Let them develop mutual understanding and try to work together to the extent possible. It has no formal structure. The ideologues who initiated the process deem it undesirable, as it may lead to rigid hierarchy and stratification. Yet, some kind of undefined hierarchy was visible in the Mumbai process as the weeklong programme was greatly influenced, rather overwhelmed by those who were better equipped in terms of networking and resources. Whatever one may say, a forum in the global village is a complex entity, and analogy with a traditional village forum can not be taken too far. Hence, the question whether a loose structure like this can effec-

tively and successfully take on a mighty and ruthless foe like The World Economic Forum Amongst 100,000 delegates assembled in Mumbai, more than seventy percent were from India. Most of them were men and women who are fighting at local level on multiple issues of social equality and justice, and in the process have joined some trade union, NGO or movement to re-enforce their fighting spirit and give power to their lone voice. These delegates were seen mainly attending events either organised by their respective associations or were directed by the group leaders to attend particular events. Most of them could barely speak any other language than the mother tongue like Oriya, Tamil or Assamese, and therefore felt secure in staying with the group. Thus, whenever 300-400 delegates guided by a group leader came to attend one or another session, it looked like as if the village priest had brought them to take a dip in the holy waters. But I must add that this was not the whole truth.

Every day, about 450 working sessions - each of three-hour duration - were held in this giant convention. Many delegates hopped from one meeting to another. They could also join a rally or procession or watch a street-play or simply roam around the vast campus. Whereas they could share thoughts and make friends in the formal meetings, there were also ample opportunities to

meet with people from India and abroad in informal settings. Besides, there were more than a thousand journalists criss-crossing their way in the crowd always eager to find interesting, off-beat stories. They provided an excellent opportunity even to the most shy delegates to tell their tales. It should therefore be said that WSF Mumbai was a unique occasion for political education for 100,000 delegates who had come from different geographical regions and varied action arenas.

Those fighting for equal rights for Dalits or untouchables registered the most impressive presence amongst the Indian delegates. The Dalit delegates, struggling to attain human dignity and self-esteem, came to participate with the same high degree of enthusiasm and vigour as they had come to ASF Hyderabad in January 2003. One could see that the Mumbai process had helped in enhancing their self-confidence, sharpening of their tools, and relating their struggle with the wider struggle for creation of a just society. The formidable Dalit presence in Mumbai, on the other hand, also gave a welcome opportunity to other delegates to understand the Dalit issue and to

show solidarity with them in a long struggle.

Dalit human Dignity was one of the core issues of the Mumbai process. Besides, there were other issues such as American hegemony, nuclear arms race, WTO and New World economic order, deprivation and marginalisation of tribal and other groups, and unequal status of woman in the society, etc. One such issue, which came in to sharp focus, was about society's relationship with water. On this single theme, more than twenty meetings were convened. Delegates from all over the world took active part in the proceedings, and this underlined the fact that people are worried about privatisation and profiteering of this most precious natural gift.

There were many more topics taken up for discussion in working sessions. In one meeting the subject of discussion was 'transport in the twenty-first century'. It endorsed bi-cycle and rickshaw as the most people-friendly and environment-friendly mode of transport. In another meeting the focus was on 'architecture in a democratic society'. In yet another session participants talked about 'abuse of monuments'. This particular session

ended with the view that monuments should be dedicated to victims rather than to victors. One session discussed 'ethics in engineering profession'. However, most of the discussions were focused on issues of major concern like education, health, self governance, non-violence, media, labour, right to food, decentralisation, environment and Gandhi etc. There were also some talks about literature, culture, art forms, etc., but they were less than sufficient.

All told, WSF Mumbai has proved to be a unique and historic event for India. On the downside, it has perhaps offered opportunities, in a limited way, to ambitious individuals of this country to catapult themselves on the world stage. But, what is far more important, it has given a valuable opportunity to social activists in general to understand the complexities of current day problems faced by the world. Now, we need to give a serious thought on how to proceed further from this point.

This mega-event will serve its real purpose if only right-thinking people of India show the will to work together and forge a joint front to combat the powers of globalisation and neo-imperialism.

CNDP in Action

CNDP in WSF 2004

The CNDP hosted/co-hosted a number of important events/programmes. A brief description, in chronological order, is presented below :

1. Testimonies of the Global Hibakusha, 17th Jan.

The main organiser of this session was Japan Gensuikyo (Japan Council against A&H

Bombs). CNDP was a co-organiser. The session was moderated by Ilina Sen from CNDP and chaired by one of the Executive Committee members of the Ja-

pan Gensuikyo. The theme was the sharing of the experiences of radiation victims from different situations and different continents. The Hibakushas, i.e. radiation victims, who testified included Konishi San from Hiroshima, Takamitsu Nakayama from Nagasaki, Kwak Kifun, Korean A bomb survivor from Hiroshima, Ghanshyam Biruli from India and Faisal Baloch from Pakistan. Joseph Gerson from the American Friends Service Committee delivered the concluding speech. Translations were provided by Yayoi Tsuchida and Reiko Asato

2. *Building peace and security in Asia and the World, 17th Jan. This was organised by Admiral Ramdas on behalf of the CNDP and the Centre de la Paix, France was a co-organiser.*

3. *The conference on US occupation of Iraq and the problems of Palestine and Afghanistan, 18th Jan.*

The Conference on Central Asia, West Asia and US Imperialism was one of the biggest self-organised events at the WSF. Here the CNDP was the main organiser. The other supporting organisations included the Focus on the Global South, Alternatives and the Anti-War Assembly. It was attended by over 3000 and quite a few from the floor actively participated in the open discussions.

The panel of distinguished speakers, who came from various parts of the globe, comprised the following :

1. Jeremy Corbyn (Britain); Member of Parliament
2. Hanna Rishmawi (Palestine National Initiative)

3. Imannullah Dileru (Afghanistan)
4. Joseph Gerson (USA); United for Justice and Peace
5. Mike Marqusee (US/UK)
6. Michael Warshawsky (Israel); Director, Alternative Information Centre
7. Pierre Beaudet (Quebec); Director, Alternatives
8. Rania Masri (Lebanon/US); United for Justice and Peace
9. Amir Rekaby (Iraqi National Democratic Alliance)
10. Achin Vanaik (India); Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace.

Corbyn chaired the first session and Rania the second and concluding one.

Corbyn spoke in general about US imperialism, the role of UK and the struggles in Iraq and Palestine. Rishmawi spoke about Palestine as did Warshawsky who also spoke about Israel and the fraud of the Geneva Accords.

Dileru spoke about the continuing tragic plight of Afghans under US occupation and its puppet regime. Gerson spoke about US imperialism. Marqusee spoke about the protest movements in the UK and US, especially the former and the practical tasks that lie ahead to further popularise the anti-war/occupation position.

Beaudet spoke on the economic significance of the US war and its Keynesian implications. Masri and Rekaby spoke about Iraq and the attempts of US to

install a puppet government.

Vanaik spoke about the demonisation of the Islam, Muslims and Arabs. Rania Masri in the end issued a call for the Global Action Day against the war/occupation on March 20th.

4. *The Threat of Nuclear War: the campaign to abolish Nuclear Weapons, 18th Jan.*

This was a seminar organised by the World Peace Council and Abolition 2000. The CNDP was a co-organiser. The campaign initiated by the Mayors for Peace, focusing as a first step on the (Nuclear) Non-Proliferation Treaty preparatory conference, constituted a major point of the discussion. Speakers included Takamitsu Nakayama (Nihon Hidyanko), Tara Dorabji (Tri Vallry Cares), Iilina Sen (CNDP), Thanassis Pafilis (World Peace Council), Thadaomi Saito (Mayors for Peace), Alyn Ware (Parliamentarians' Network for Nuclear Disarmament), Lalit Surjan (AIPSO), and Michael Coffey (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation).

5. *Testimonies of A Bom Radiation Victims, 19th Jan.*

The event was co-sponsored by Japan Gensuikyo, Japan Gensuikin, and several other organisations including the CNDP. This followed the same structure as the testimonials on Jan 17. A few additional speakers were there e.g. Hilda Linee from the Pacific Islands Hibakusha group and Meiko Ginbayashi from Japan.

6. *The General Assembly of the Global Anti-War Movement, 19th Jan.*

The Assembly called on the world to fill the streets on March 20 to demand an end to the imperialist occupation of Iraq.

Meeting for the whole day,

the Assembly began with an assessment of the current political situation, followed by reports from various activists involved in various anti-war movements around the world. Reports were also made by many anti-war campaigns such as the World Tribunal on Iraq, the "Close the US bases" campaign, the Campaign for Disarmament, the Occupation Watch Center, the Caravans to Iraq and the Civil Missions to Palestine. It ended with a session dedicated to strategizing on ways forward and common campaigns to be supported.

Envisioned to be the biggest and most representative meeting of the anti-war movement since the invasion, the Assembly was a collective effort by anti-war coalitions spanning all continents of the globe.

The Assembly had participants and endorsers from the largest anti-war coalitions around the world including the European Coalitions which organised the massive marches on February 15th last year, Stop the War Coalition in the UK, United For Peace and Justice and AN-SWER in the US, the Anti-War Coalition in South Africa and the Asian Peace Alliance, as well as various social movements, trade unions and farmer and peasant groups such as the CUT in Brasil, the Social Movements Network and Via Campesina.

Competing with the lively drumming of nearby cultural performers, the dust and noise from the constant flow of passing demonstrations and the general chaos of the WSF, the Assembly discussed, debated and strategised on the ways forward to globalising the resistance and ending the occupation of Iraq.

The Assembly ended with the call for an International Day of Action on March 20, the anniversary of the attack on Iraq. It calls for all movements in all continents to organise mass protests on that day to demand the end of the occupation of Iraq. Different countries will organise protests of different scales and forms; the important point is to mark the anniversary across the world.

Resistance in Iraq and around the world is growing daily and March 20 will be the day when the global resistance tells not only Bush but all the occupation troops and warmongers that the movement will not rest until the occupation of Iraq and Palestine and the "war against terror" is ended.

The General Assembly of the Global Anti-War Movement was endorsed by one hundred and ten organisations from all over the world.

Hibakusha Tour following WSF 2004

CNDP hosted a tour programme by an A (i.e. atom) bomb survivor from Hiroshima, Mr Yasuhiko Taketa. He was 12 years old at the time of the bombing. Taketa San came to the WSF where he was to have spoken at a session on the testimonies of radiation victims. However, he reached late, because of flight delays, and missed the session. Nevertheless he participated in a peace sit-in at the WSF. The visit of Taketa San, and his interpreter, Iwakawa, was sponsored by the Gensuikin organisation of Japan.

The first leg of the tour was to Wardha, where on 23rd January Taketa San spoke at a meeting hosted by the Gandhi Vichar

Manch. The same day he visited the Sewagram Ashram as well. On the next day, he came back to Nagpur, where he had flown in from Mumbai en route to Wardha, and addressed several meetings over the next two days. There was a meeting of the peace activists, a visit to a municipal school, and a session with the students of the local Ambedkar College. There was an interaction session with the press, and a public meeting on the 24th, apart from a visit to Deekshabhumi.

The next part of the tour was in Chhattisgarh. Here Taketa San addressed a public meeting on the evening of the 25th. This programme was extremely well attended by a large cross section of society. On the 26th, he took part in a schoolchildren's rally for the Republic Day - spoke on his experiences as a Hibakusha and a peace activist. In the afternoon he visited Sirpur, the ancient Buddhist capital of Chhattisgarh. On the 27th, he and Iwakawa travelled about 100 kms to meet members of the indigenous Gond community and a very interesting session took place in which Taketa San's narration of Japan's war time experiences and imperialism was enriched with community interventions on the current phase in history when the natural resources preserved by the indigenous communities are being plundered for greed and profit. The last programme in Chhattisgarh was a talk to high school students on the morning of the 28th before he and Iwakawa flew to Orissa.

In Bhubaneshwar, Orissa, there was a talk arranged at the Utkal University's Centre for Women's Studies on the 29th. There was also an interac-

tion with the media, and a visit to Dhauli, the site of the legendary emperor Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism.

The last part of the tour was in Kolkata, where there were three major programmes. On the 30th, there was an interaction with students and teachers at

Chandannagar, a city - a former French enclave, not too far from Kolkata. On the 31st, there was a public meeting at the Kolkata Book Fair, and on the 1st of Feb an interaction at a city school. In terms of media coverage, the Kolkata visit was excellent, and televised interviews with Taketa

San were broadcast on the Tara Bangla channel and the ETV. Following this, Taketa and Iwakawa flew back to Mumbai on the 2nd, and returned to Japan the next day.

(Report filed by Iлина Sen.)

Nuclear Power

Privatising Nuclear Power Is Deadly

S. P. Udayakumar

The Central government's proposed plan to privatise nuclear power production (albeit in small scale) is not in the best interest of the Indian economy, polity and the physical safety of Indian citizens. Besides being very much money-guzzling and wasteful, India's nuclear establishment has been anti-democratic with little transparency and accountability in its functioning. Acting almost like a state within a state, the nuclear establishment has been shunning public opinion with scorn.

The Indian nuclear establishment has set an ambitious target of producing 20,000 MW nuclear power by the year 2020 and for that they need Rs. 80,000 crore. Since the government may not be able to throw in this large sum of money, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission welcomed private sector participation in nuclear power generation in April 1999. Now they have decided to set up a separate company for construction and operation of 500 MW prototype fast breeder reactors (PFBR). In this new nuclear power venture, the Indian Government would

contribute 75 percent of the equity, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) would contribute five percent and public bonds would raise the remaining 20 percent. Although the NPCIL plays a minor role financially, they would manage the proposed nuclear power company.

In the wake of this privatisation move, it is important to consider the track record of the NPCIL and the overall Indian nuclear establishment. The NPCIL was incorporated in 1987 and it presented a maiden dividend cheque of Rs. 50.44 crore to the Prime Minister on December 1, 1999. According to NPCIL's five years' balance sheet (1994-95 to 1998-99), Rs. 92,425.78 millions (almost Rs. 9,243 crore) had been used up by the corporation. The Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was set up in August 1948 to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Nobody knows the amount of money, time, energy, human and other resources that have gone into these institutions and their activities.

Even if we ignore all the

expenses that the country has incurred on behalf of the Indian nukedom from 1948 till 1994, and accept Rs. 9,243 crore as the total cost for installing 1,840 MW power generating capacity, it means that for one MW power, we spent Rs. 5.03 crore. Consider the 47 hydro or thermal power projects that had technological clearance from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) as of December 1998 and compare their capacity and cost. Every one of these 47 projects cost much less than nuclear energy. This should be enough proof that the nuclear power projects are way too expensive and inefficient.

As of June 2000, the Indian nuclear establishment claims, their energy output has increased to 2,240 MW. It is hardly 2.5 percent even if we keep the total national energy output at the 1999 level of 90,000 MW. Put all these facts and figures together and we can get the picture of the nuclear establishment's wastefulness and inefficiency.

Besides being costly in terms of money, the Indian nuclear establishment is politically

overbearing also. The department that has always been pampered by the successive governments in Delhi came to be really spoiled when the BJP-led coalition assumed power. The Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project, for instance, has not conducted any legally-mandated public hearing and nor has it prepared any Environmental Impact Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. The project claims to have obtained a backdoor clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests to set up two 1000 MW nuclear reactors. But it is quite intriguing how the nuclear establishment keeps on adding more reactors to be set up in Koodankulam. It is really not clear who makes these decisions and how these decisions are made.

On July 27, 2001 a public hearing was held at the Kanchipuram District Collector's office to let the public decide if they wanted the PFBR at Kalpakkam. Except the first speaker who also turned against the proposed project later, everybody opposed the project vociferously. But now in the true "democratic" spirit, the central government has sanctioned Rs. 3,600 crore for the same project. It is also equally disturbing that our political parties and politicians, who make a big fuss about every government decision, project and plan, keep mum about the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) plans and activities.

The threat of a serious nuclear accident at Indian nuclear power plants is also quite real. The Chairman of the safety-monitoring agency, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), himself said this most categorically in his 'Safety Issues Report'

in 1995. In December 1999, the Indian government also acknowledged that 21 issues relating to nuclear safety raised by the AERB as far back as 1996 had not yet been addressed. In June 2000, however, New Delhi took away the authority of the AERB to oversee the safety of a large number of critical nuclear installations meant for the weapons programme in the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). This move seriously undermined the AERB's responsibility for unbiased and independent safety regulations.

A highly populated country like ours does have an increasing need for energy. But that energy has to be economical, sustainable and environment-friendly for the very same reason of over- and dense- population. We need to spend less on energy because we have other pressing needs such as health, education, housing, transportation and so forth. We cannot afford the "use and discard" strategy as in nuclear power projects for obvious reasons of limited land availability, future generation's needs and so forth. Our energy projects have to be environmentally-friendly because even a small incident can harm, hurt or kill a huge number of people.

When all is said and done, privatising nuclear power industry would make a deadly combination of secrecy-oriented State, career-minded nuclear scientists, and money-minded entrepreneurs.

Document

The following is the text of the joint resolution read out at the protest rally in Delhi on 20th March :

Oppose US Imperialism, Oppose Occupation

One year ago (March 20, 2003) the US and allies, despite opposition from most of the world's governments and peoples, brutally invaded Iraq. This was immoral, illegal and unjustifiable. US excuses about weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq and a Saddam Hussein-Al Qaeda tie-up are now exposed as lies. The US remains entrenched in Afghanistan and supports Israel's repression of Palestinians. We, the Citizens Against War and Occupation, demand the immediate end to the occupation of Iraq, and also that of Afghanistan and Palestine.

US Lies Exposed

- No WMDs were discovered in Iraq. It is the WMDs of the eight nuclear weapons states, particularly of Israel and the US, that represent the gravest threat to the world.
- Even before the invasion, British intelligence, the FBI, CIA and Israel's Mossad reported no meaningful links between Al Qaeda and the Saddam Hussein regime.
- The US did not invade to establish democracy. It has supported numerous repressive regimes everywhere including (for over a decade) that of Saddam Hussein. In the conduct of US foreign policy it is the interests of US business, commercial and political elites that are paramount. It

is for Iraqis, not for anyone else, to overthrow their own tyrant.

- US troops were not welcomed as liberators. Resistance by Iraqis has been growing irrespective of Hussein's capture. Far more US soldiers have been killed during the occupation than in the war of invasion. Of the 500 plus dead, over 450 died during the occupation. The ratio of injured to deaths is approximately eight to one.

The Suffering in Iraq

- The 12 year long (1991-2003) sanctions regime imposed through the UN by US and UK caused the deaths of around 1.5 million Iraqis including over 500,000 children. One third of all children born in Iraq are underweight and malnourished.
- In the 1991 and 2003 wars, around 2500 tonnes of Depleted Uranium munitions (which emit radiation) were used resulting in much higher than average rates of birth deformities and of certain cancers. Today, some sites have background radiation levels 2000 times above the normal.
- Around 30,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed in this latest war. Over 8000 civilians have died and over 20,000 injured so far, including unarmed demonstrators for which no US

soldier has been punished.

- There is mass unemployment. Agriculture is in deep crisis. Public services like electricity, water, telephones, health and education systems are all in a shambles. The public food distribution system on which 60% of the population depend for survival, is being dismantled.

The US Occupation

Military:

- There are currently 150,000 US and 20,000 allied troops in Iraq.
- Through Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2003) the UN unfortunately endorsed the occupation. Nor has the UN imposed any timetable for withdrawal or for holding elections.
- The US is establishing three major military bases. A future Iraqi government is to authorise their permanent presence and accept that US troops will stand above both Iraqi and international law.

Economy:

The US has violated the 1949 Geneva Convention whereby an occupying force cannot auction a country's assets.

- Except for the oil industry, the US is preparing for massive across-the-board privatisation of some 200 public sector enterprises (including 6 banks) to

foreigners. Current oil revenues are completely controlled by the US.

- The G-8 countries led by the US, has arbitrarily fixed Iraq's national debt at \$120 billion or \$360 billion if full compensation to Kuwait is included. Since this is a regime debt, the fall of Saddam Hussein means this debt should be completely cancelled. The US opposes this so as to manipulate future Iraqi governments.
- Halliburton, Bechtel and other American companies, financed by US taxpayers' money and by an Iraqi puppet government, are being favoured with billions of dollars worth of contracts, for "reconstruction". First the US blames Iraq for the destruction it causes and then expects Iraqis to be grateful for the "reconstruction" that it will most profit from
- 50% of the Iraqi workforce or 7 to 8 million are unemployed/underemployed. Most workers get \$60 or less than Rs. 3000 a month. Unions and strikes are banned in the public sector. The occupying forces have carried out arbitrary arrests of leaders of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions.

Culture and Society:

The US has violated the 1954 Hague Convention on the responsibility of occupiers to

protect artistic treasures. Despite pre-invasion warnings to the Pentagon by international scholars, US troops on capturing Baghdad protected only the oil and interior ministries, allowing looting of the National Museum of Antiquities and burning of the National Library, promoting the destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage.

□ 80% of 170,000 artefacts were looted or destroyed, including materials from the oldest known Mesopotamian civilisations. Tens of thousands of books, manuscripts and newspapers from the Ottoman Empire were burnt.

□ Al Jazeera, the only independent Arab television network, has had its offices in Kabul and Baghdad bombed, journalists killed and faces continuous harassment from the US and the puppet Iraqi government.

□ Close to 500 university teachers have been dismissed on suspicion of being opponents of the occupation.

· A progressive 1959 Family Code protecting women's rights in matters of divorce, maintenance, guardianship, etc., (preserved by the Saddam Hussein regime) has been abrogated to allow control by religious bodies in such family matters.

□ The US is promoting social and religious divisions: Shia versus Sunni, Kurds versus other Iraqis. Encouraging such fractures enables the US to play the

permanent referee: the old story of divide and rule.

Polity:

□ The US has set up a Coalition Provisional Authority as the supreme governing body headed by the Civilian Administrator, Paul Bremer.

□ There is also a 25 member Inter-Governmental Council (IGC) that provides the necessary front for US control. The IGC also

provides the model for the US's future plans, being deliberately organized along separate ethnic, religious and political lines to prevent any kind of internal nationalist consolidation.

□ The US has pushed through an Interim Constitution so it can set up an interim administration to do its bidding over the next year thereby irreversibly remodelling Iraq's economy and polity. The US does not want elections before late 2005.

America's Larger Goals in Central and West Asia

□ The Afghan occupation is meant to serve two main purposes — geopolitical domination of Central Asia and control over the

The Way Forward

Iraq is today the crucible of world politics. America's political defeat there will mark the first phase in the unravelling of its attempt to establish an informal global empire. This would also enormously strengthen resistance everywhere. We, the Citizens Against War and Occupation, declare our solidarity with the struggling peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. We demand and declare the following :

***US AND OTHER OCCUPIERS GET OUT OF IRAQ
AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE OCCUPATIONS OF
IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND PALESTINE***

NEITHER THEIR WAR NOR THEIR PEACE

***HOLD FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN IRAQ
AFTER IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF
OCCUPYING FORCES AND UNDER GENUINELY
IMPARTIAL INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION.***

***NO CONSTITUTION OR GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM
SET UP UNDER OCCUPATION TO BE
CONSIDERED VALID. THE IRAQI PEOPLE MUST
FREELY AND DEMOCRATICALLY DECIDE THEIR
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FUTURE***

***AN INDEPENDENT WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR
IRAQ***

CANCEL IRAQ'S DEBT

***REVOKE ALL CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO BY
THE OCCUPYING POWERS AND THEIR PUPPETS
IN IRAQ***

***FULL REPARATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF
AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ AND PALESTINE***

***NO TO MILITARY COLLABORATION BY INDIA
WITH THE US AND ISRAEL***

region's oil and gas reserves. To achieve this, the US can ignore the needs of reconstruction in Afghanistan and leave the countryside to the warlords. It can concentrate on controlling a puppet government in Kabul, determine the oil and gas contracts and pipeline routes, and expand and maintain permanent military bases.

- To dominate West Asia geopolitically and economically, the US must destroy resistance in Iraq; help Israel impose a Bantustan settlement on the Palestinians that ensures its permanent domination or simply

allow Israel to continue its brutal repression. Israel is building a Wall in the West Bank to further imprison the Palestinians, take away more land and force people to leave.

- The US (supported by Israel) is trying to reshape the region by setting up frightened or puppet regimes throughout West Asia.

The Deceits of the Indian Government

- This Indian government desperately wants to become America's strategic ally. It came close to sending troops to Iraq but

backed off because of strong domestic opposition.

- This government wants a share of the contracts for "reconstruction" that the US is promising. It is like a jackal waiting for its pickings after the jungle cats (Europe and Russia) are allowed their larger share.
- This government is committed to consolidating its alliance with the US and Israel and to deepening its military connections with them. Apart from lip service it cares nothing for the people of Iraq.

Telling Truth

The Thirty-Year Itch *

Three decades ago, in the throes of the energy crisis, Washington's hawks conceived of a strategy for US control of the Persian Gulf's oil. Now, with the same strategists firmly in control of the White House, the Bush administration is playing out their script for global dominance.

By Robert Dreyfuss#

If you were to spin the globe and look for real estate critical to building an American empire, your first stop would have to be the Persian Gulf. The desert sands of this region hold two of every three barrels of oil in the world — Iraq's reserves alone are equal, by some estimates, to those of Russia, the United States, China, and Mexico combined. For the past 30 years, the Gulf has been in the crosshairs of an influential group of Washington foreign-policy strategists, who believe that in order to ensure its global

dominance, the United States must seize control of the region and its oil. Born during the energy crisis of the 1970s and refined since then by a generation of policymakers, this approach is finding its boldest expression yet in the Bush administration — which, with its plan to invade Iraq and install a regime beholden to Washington, has moved closer than any of its predecessors to transforming the Gulf into an American protectorate.

In the geopolitical vision driving current U.S. policy to-

ward Iraq, the key to national security is global hegemony — dominance over any and all potential rivals. To that end, the United States must not only be able to project its military forces anywhere, at any time. It must also control key resources, chief among them oil — and especially Gulf oil. To the hawks who now set the tone at the White House and the Pentagon, the region is crucial not simply for its share of the U.S. oil supply (other sources have become more important over the years), but be-

cause it would allow the United States to maintain a lock on the world's energy lifeline and potentially deny access to its global competitors. The administration "believes you have to control resources in order to have access to them," says Chas Freeman, who served as U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia under the first President Bush. "They are taken with the idea that the end of the Cold War left the United States able to impose its will globally — and that those who have the ability to shape events with power have the duty to do so. It's ideology."

Iraq, in this view, is a strategic prize of unparalleled importance. Unlike the oil beneath Alaska's frozen tundra, locked away in the steppes of central Asia, or buried under stormy seas, Iraq's crude is readily accessible and, at less than \$1.50 a barrel, some of the cheapest in the world to produce.

"Controlling Iraq is about oil as power, rather than oil as fuel," says Michael Klare, professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College and author of *Resource Wars*. "Control over the Persian Gulf translates into control over Europe, Japan, and China. It's having our hand on the spigot."

Ever since the oil shocks of the 1970s, the United States has steadily been accumulating military muscle in the Gulf by building bases, selling weaponry, and forging military partnerships. Now, it is poised to consolidate its might in a place that will be a fulcrum of the world's balance of power for decades to come. At a stroke, by taking control of Iraq, the Bush administration can solidify a long-running strategic design. "It's the Kissinger plan,"

says James Akins, a former U.S. diplomat. "I thought it had been killed, but it's back."

In 1975, while Akins was ambassador in Saudi Arabia, an article headlined "Seizing Arab Oil" appeared in *Harper's*. The author, who used the pseudonym Miles Ignotus, was identified as "a Washington-based professor and defence consultant with intimate links to high-level U.S. policymakers." The article outlined, as Akins puts it, "how we could solve all our economic and political problems by taking over the Arab oil fields [and] bringing in Texans and Oklahomans to operate them." Simultaneously, a rash of similar stories appeared in other magazines and newspapers. "I knew that it had to have been the result of a deep background briefing," Akins says. "You don't have eight people coming up with the same screwy idea at the same time, independently."

"Then I made a fatal mistake," Akins continues. "I said on television that anyone who would propose that is either a madman, a criminal, or an agent of the Soviet Union." Soon afterward, he says, he learned that the background briefing had been conducted by his boss, then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Akins was fired later that year.

In the 1970s, America's military presence in the Gulf was virtually nil, so the idea of seizing control of its oil was a pipe dream. Still, starting with the Miles Ignotus article, and a parallel one by conservative strategist and Johns Hopkins University professor Robert W. Tucker in *Commentary*, the idea began to gain favour among a feisty group of hardline, pro-Israeli

thinkers, especially the hawkish circle aligned with Democratic senators Henry Jackson of Washington and Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York.

Eventually, this amalgam of strategists came to be known as "neoconservatives," and they played important roles in President Reagan's Defence Department and at think tanks and academic policy centres in the 1980s. Led by Richard Perle, chairman of the Pentagon's influential Defence Policy Board, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, they now occupy several dozen key posts in the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department. At the top, they are closest to Vice President Cheney and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who have been closely aligned since both men served in the White House under President Ford in the mid-1970s. They also clustered around Cheney when he served as secretary of defence during the Gulf War in 1991.

Throughout those years, and especially after the Gulf War, U.S. forces have steadily encroached on the Gulf and the surrounding region, from the Horn of Africa to Central Asia. In preparing for an invasion and occupation of Iraq, the administration has been building on the steps taken by military and policy planners over the past quarter century.

Step one: The Rapid Deployment Force

In 1973 and '74, and again in 1979, political upheavals in the Middle East led to huge spikes in oil prices, which rose fifteenfold over the decade and focused new attention on the Persian Gulf. In January 1980,

President Carter effectively declared the Gulf a zone of U.S. influence, especially against encroachment from the Soviet Union. “Let our position be absolutely clear,” he said, announcing what came to be known as the Carter Doctrine. “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.” To back up this doctrine, Carter created the Rapid Deployment Force, an “over-the-horizon” military unit capable of rushing several thousand U.S. troops to the Gulf in a crisis.

Step two: The Central Command

In the 1980s, under President Reagan, the United States began pressing countries in the Gulf for access to bases and support facilities. The Rapid Deployment Force was transformed into the Central Command, a new U.S. military command authority with responsibility for the Gulf and the surrounding region from eastern Africa to Afghanistan. Reagan tried to organize a “strategic consensus” of anti-Soviet allies, including Turkey, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. The United States sold billions of dollars’ worth of arms to the Saudis in the early ’80s, from AWACS surveillance aircraft to F-15 fighters. And in 1987, at the height of the war between Iraq and Iran, the U.S. Navy created the Joint Task Force-Middle East to protect oil tankers plying the waters of the Gulf, thus expanding a U.S. naval presence of just three or four warships into a flotilla of 40-plus aircraft carriers,

battleships, and cruisers.

Step three: The Gulf War

Until 1991, the United States was unable to persuade the Arab Gulf states to allow a permanent American presence on their soil. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, while maintaining its close relationship with the United States, began to diversify its commercial and military ties; by the time U.S. Ambassador Chas Freeman arrived there in the late 1980s, the United States had fallen to fourth place among arms suppliers to the kingdom. “The United States was being supplanted even in commercial terms by the British, the French, even the Chinese,” Freeman notes.

All that changed with the Gulf War. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states no longer opposed a direct U.S. military presence, and American troops, construction squads, arms salesmen, and military assistance teams rushed in. “The Gulf War put Saudi Arabia back on the map and revived a relationship that had been severely attrited,” says Freeman.

In the decade after the war, the United States sold more than \$43 billion worth of weapons, equipment, and military construction projects to Saudi Arabia, and \$16 billion more to Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, according to data compiled by the Federation of American Scientists. Before Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. military enjoyed the right to stockpile, or “pre-position,” military supplies only in the comparatively remote Gulf state of Oman on the Indian Ocean. After the war, nearly every country in the region began conduct-

ing joint military exercises, hosting U.S. naval units and Air Force squadrons, and granting the United States pre-positioning rights. “Our military presence in the Middle East has increased dramatically,” then-Defence Secretary William Cohen boasted in 1995.

Another boost to the U.S. presence was the unilateral imposition, in 1991, of no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, enforced mostly by U.S. aircraft from bases in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Step four: Afghanistan

The war in Afghanistan — and the open-ended war on terrorism, which has led to U.S. strikes in Yemen, Pakistan, and elsewhere — further boosted America’s strength in the region.

U.S. forces have established themselves in an area that had long been in Russia’s sphere of influence. Oil-rich in its own right, and strategically vital, central Asia is now the eastern link in a nearly continuous chain of U.S. bases, facilities, and allies stretching from the Mediterranean and the Red Sea far into the Asian hinterland.

Step five: Iraq

Removing Saddam Hussein could be the final piece of the puzzle, cementing an American imperial presence. It is “highly possible” that the United States will maintain military bases in Iraq, Robert Kagan, a leading neoconservative strategist, recently told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. “We will probably need a major concentration of forces in the Middle East over a long period of time,” he said. “When we have eco-

conomic problems, it's been caused by disruptions in our oil supply. If we have a force in Iraq, there will be no disruption in oil supplies."

Kagan, along with William Kristol of the Weekly Standard, is a founder of the think tank Project for the New American Century, an assembly of foreign-policy hawks whose supporters include the Pentagon's Perle, New Republic publisher Martin Peretz, and former Central Intelligence Agency director James Woolsey. Among the group's affiliates in the Bush administration are Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz; I. Lewis Libby, the vice president's chief of staff; Elliott Abrams, the Middle East director at the National Security Council; and Zalmay Khalilzad, the White House liaison to the Iraqi opposition groups. Kagan's group, tied to a web of similar neoconservative, pro-Israeli organizations, represents the constellation of thinkers whose ideological affinity was forged in the Nixon and Ford administrations.

To Akins, who has just returned from Saudi Arabia, it's a team that looks all too familiar, seeking to implement the plan first outlined back in 1975. "It'll be easier once we have Iraq," he says. "Kuwait, we already have. Qatar and Bahrain, too. So it's only Saudi Arabia we're talking about, and the United Arab Emirates falls into place."

Last summer, Perle provided a brief glimpse into his circle's thinking when he invited RAND Corporation strategist Laurent Murawiec to make a presentation to his Defense Policy Board, a committee of former senior officials and generals that advises the Pentagon on big-picture policy ideas.

Murawiec's closed-door briefing provoked a storm of criticism when it was leaked to the media; he described Saudi Arabia as the "kernel of evil," suggested that the Saudi royal family should be replaced or overthrown, and raised the idea of a U.S. occupation of Saudi oil fields. He ultimately lost his job when RAND decided he was too controversial.

Murawiec is part of a Washington school of thought that views virtually all of the nations in the Gulf as unstable "failed states" and maintains that only the United States has the power to forcibly reorganise and rebuild them. In this view, the arms systems and bases that were put in place to defend the region also provide a ready-made infrastructure for taking over countries and their oil fields in the event of a crisis.

As vital as the Persian Gulf is now, its strategic importance is likely to grow exponentially in the next 20 years. Nearly one out of every three barrels of oil reserves in the world lie under just two countries: Saudi Arabia (with 259 billion barrels of proven reserves) and Iraq (112 billion). Those figures may understate Iraq's largely unexplored reserves, which according to U.S. government estimates may hold as many as 432 billion barrels.

With supplies in many other regions, especially the United States and the North Sea, nearly exhausted, oil from Saudi Arabia and Iraq is becoming ever more critical — a fact duly noted in the administration's National Energy Policy, released in 2001 by a White House task force. By 2020, the Gulf will supply between 54 percent and 67 percent of the world's crude, the docu-

ment said, making the region "vital to U.S. interests."

U.S. strategists are not worried primarily about America's own oil supplies; for decades, the United States has worked to diversify its sources of oil, with Venezuela, Nigeria, Mexico, and other countries growing in importance. But for Western Europe and Japan, as well as the developing industrial powers of eastern Asia, the Gulf is all-important. Whoever controls it will maintain crucial global leverage for decades to come.

David Long, who served as a U.S. diplomat in Saudi Arabia and as chief of the Near East division in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research during the Reagan administration, likens the Bush administration's approach to the philosophy of Admiral Mahan, the 19th-century military strategist who advocated the use of naval power to create a global American empire. "They want to be the world's enforcer," he says. "It's a worldview, a geopolitical position. They say, 'We need hegemony in the region.'"

Until the 1970s, the face of American power in the Gulf was the U.S. oil industry, led by Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, and Gulf, all of whom competed fiercely with Britain's BP and Anglo-Dutch Shell. But in the early '70s, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states nationalised their oil industries, setting up state-run companies to run wells, pipelines, and production facilities. Not only did that enhance the power of OPEC, enabling that organisation to force a series of sharp price increases, but it alarmed U.S. policymakers.

Today, a growing number

of Washington strategists are advocating a direct U.S. challenge to state-owned petroleum industries in oil-producing countries, especially the Persian Gulf. The Bush administration itself has been careful not to say much about what might happen to Iraq's oil. But State Department officials have had preliminary talks about the oil industry with Iraqi exiles, and there have been reports that the U.S. military wants to use at least part of the country's oil revenue to pay for the cost of military occupation.

"One of the major problems with the Persian Gulf is that the means of production are in the hands of the state," Rob Sobhani, an oil-industry consultant, told an American Enterprise Institute conference last fall in Washington. Already, he noted, several U.S. oil companies are studying the possibility of privatization in the Gulf. Dismantling government-owned oil companies, Sobhani argued, could also force political changes in the region. "The beginning of liberal

democracy can be achieved if you take the means of production out of the hands of the state," he said, acknowledging that Arabs would resist that idea. "It's going to take a lot of selling, a lot of marketing," he concluded.

Just which companies would get to claim Iraq's oil has been a subject of much debate. After a war, the contracts that Iraq's state-owned oil company has signed with European, Russian, and Chinese oil firms might well be abrogated, leaving the field to U.S. oil companies. "What they have in mind is denationalisation, and then parceling Iraqi oil out to American oil companies," says Akins. "The American oil companies are going to be the main beneficiaries of this war."

But the companies are also anxious about the consequences of war, according to many experts, oil-company executives, and former State Department officials. "The oil companies are caught in the middle," says Bailey. Executives fear that war

could create havoc in the region, turning Arab states against the United States and Western oil companies. On the other hand, should a U.S. invasion of Iraq be successful, they want to be there when the oil is divvied up. Says David Long, the former U.S. diplomat, "It's greed versus fear."

Anne Joyce, an editor at the Washington-based Middle East Policy Council who has spoken privately to top Exxon officials, says it's clear that most oil-industry executives "are afraid" of what a war in the Persian Gulf could mean in the long term — especially if tensions in the region spiral out of control. "They see it as much too risky, and they are risk averse," she says. "They think it has 'fiasco' written all over it."

** Abridged version of the original article published in Mother Jones, March/April 2003.*

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Report of 6th joint convention of P.I.P.F.P.D. at Karachi

The 6th Joint convention of Pak-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy held between 12-14 December 2003 at Karachi. After 5th convention at Bangalore in April 2000, the joint convention could not take place due to strained relation between these nuclear countries. Probably because of this, there was tremendous enthusiasm between the participants of two countries. Whether it is at Border or at Lahore Station or in

Karachi, whole hearted welcome was given by people of Pakistan and at every level only one feeling was felt that friendship of people should grow.

The convention began with inspiring speech of Dr. Mubashir Hasan and it was followed by very detailed and studious key note address of Dr. Nirmal K. Chandra on Globalization.

Second day of the convention opened with paper presented

by Tapan Bose on Global war on Terrorism and its effects on Democratic Rights. Similarly Nighat Khan of Pakistan also gave good presentation on state and citizenship. Thereafter in order to facilitate group discussions on various topics like Demilitarization -Nuclearisation, Intolerance, Globalization and Kashmir, Speakers presented their theme papers. Amongst them Pervez Hoodbhoy in detail spoke a about Nuclear

weaponisation in South Asia and its effect on people of India and Pakistan. In group discussion on Militarisation & Nuclearisation, the participants felt that both countries should immediately take steps for reduction of nuclear weapons and also demanded that present ceasefire on border should be made permanent and also gave suggestions for intensifying the movement in both countries for demilitarisation and Denuclearisation. The

convention ended with Karachi Declaration which appealed to people to make bond between the two countries strong by trade and economic cooperation. Similarly demanded that Kashmir issue should be resolved by respecting aspirations of Kashmiri People. The convention also decided to form Joint Committee on Peace to prepare short term plan for confidence building and normalcy in region.

During the convention

number of cultural, literary programme were presented by students, women groups on the theme of peace and problems faced by people due to increasing religions fundamentalist tendencies of both countries. Lastly the entire contingent of Indian delegates were amazed by warmth and friendship accorded to them on every nook and corner of Pakistan by common people.

Prakash Meghe

20th March : In India

New Delhi

About 3000 people marched in a demonstration against the continuing occupation in Iraq by the US and its allies. They marched from Mandi House to the American Centre on Kasturba Gandhi Road, New Delhi shouting slogans in Hindi and English. The organisations represented included the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) -Liberation, the Forward Bloc, Revolutionary Socialist Party; various trade union federations like the All India Trades Union Congress, the Congress of Indian Trade Unions, United Trades Union Congress, All India Central Council of Trade Unions; student bodies like the All India Students Association, the Student's Federation of India, the All India Student's Front; women's associations like the National Federation of Indian Women, All India Progressive Women's Front, the All India Democratic Women's Association, Saheli and Jagori. An in-

ternational delegation of 200 women from over 15 countries also participated. The All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation (AIPSO), the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) which played a major role in organising the demo were also out in force as were other groups involved in the peace and anti-war movement.

These various organisations and prominent intellectuals and citizens from all walks of life all marched together under the unified banner of the Citizens Against War and Occupation (CAWO). Though the events in Iraq were clearly the main focus, strong opposition was also expressed towards the continuing occupations of Afghanistan and of Palestine. A statement on behalf of CAWO was read out as well as distributed in Hindi and English to the public, detailing the suffering of the Iraqi people and demanding the immediate withdrawal of US and allied troops, the holding of free and fair elec-

tions, the renunciation of all economic and political schemes of rebuilding Iraq under the occupation since these are aimed at profiting foreign, especially US, multinationals and at setting up a subordinate regime leaving the US in overall charge behind the scenes. There was also a call for a war crimes tribunal and for full reparations to the peoples of Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. The Indian government came in for its share of criticism for its ongoing military collaboration with Israel and the US. Apart from the declarations, the distribution of various leaflets in Hindi and English to inform the public, and the colourful banners, there were also street skits with actors using inflated masks of Bush and Blair and impromptu collective singing of peace and anti-war songs.

Chennai

A signature campaign was launched in Chennai on March 20 to ask the Government of India to articulate in the world fo-

runs the staunch and strong opposition of the people of India to the aggressive Bush-Blair war on, and occupation of, Iraq.

The memorandum, to which thousands of signatures are to be appended, was addressed to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The memorandum also urged New Delhi not to recognize any proxy or puppet government that may be imposed on the people of Iraq. It called upon the government to take the clear stand that any verdict and sentence upon former Iraqi President Saddam Hussain must be left entirely to the people of Iraq.

The Prime Minister was asked to place and press before the international community the demand for trial by an international tribunal of US President George Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair as “war criminals” for the offensive they unleashed on Iraq in flagrant violation of international law and all norms of civilised international conduct.

The campaign was launched in a public meeting organised by the Anti-War Front, formed at the initiative of the Movement for People’s Unity (MPU) and the Movement Against Nuclear Weapons (MANW) - a constituent of the CNDP. Speaking at the meeting, prominent journalist and TV personality Malan lambasted the claims of ‘liberation’ made by the George Bush regime of the USA that, with its allies, had launched the aggressive war and was continuing its illegal and unjust occupation of Iraq.

As an illustration of the hollowness and hypocrisy of

the claims, he pointed to a resolution adopted by the aggressor-propped ‘interim administration’ of Iraq that, with a stroke of pen, had done away with a whole range of rights enjoyed by the women of the country even under the “despotic rule” of Saddam Hussain.

Stressing that India, too, had vital stakes in opposing the war on Iraq, Malan said the government in New Delhi had failed to oppose it because it had no faith in “secular values”.

MPU and MANW convenor, and leading CNDP activist, J. Sri Raman questioned the claim that the war would have been justified if weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) had been found in Iraq. It was an absurd claim, coming as it did from a hyperpower sitting atop a mountain of WMDs. He recalled the recent revelation about an 11-year-old document of the neo-con Project for the New American Century, which anticipated the aggression on Iraq, as part of an imperialist strategy in the Middle East.

Senior journalist and senior CNDP activist, R. Gopalakrishnan, speaking for the MPU, recounted the historical background to the war. Rebutting the claim that the offensive and the occupation were part of a global war on terror, he recalled the role played by colonialism and imperialism in creating and perpetuating terrorism and stifling democracy in West Asia.

Veteran trade union leader T. S. R. Mani talked of the depredations of the hyperpower USA in the unipolar world resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Chandrasekhar of the All-India Anti-Imperialist Forum

asserted that imperialism and its aggression and oppression, on the one hand, and its victims with all their shortcomings, on the other, could never be equated.

Shanbagam Subbu of the Tamilnadu Construction Workers’ Union said that the workers who built the society would struggle to defeat the designs of warmongers out to destroy the world.

Two short, but eloquently anti-war plays were staged by the Forum for Women’s Research and Development (FORWARD).

The meeting ended with slogans including ‘We will never forget March 20;’. ‘March 20 struggle – people’s anti-war struggle’, ‘India’s people are Iraq’s friends’, and government of India, support Iraq’s struggle’.

Earlier in the day, people from several mass organisations joined a procession, organised by the Tamilnadu chapter of the World Social Forum. Participants raised slogans like “America, quit Iraq”.

Mumbai

On 20th March, in the afternoon, hundreds of activists gathered at the Hutatma Chowk, in downtown Mumbai to voice their protests against the illegal occupation of Iraq by US imperialism and its allied forces. It was a lively demonstration displaying a myriad of colourful banners and posters and raising full-throated slogans against US occupation of Iraq. A large number of youth and women participated. Fliers in various languages were distributed among the general public who gathered around.

The demonstration was organised under the banner of

Forum against War and Terrorism, a coordinating body of a number of Trade Unions, political parties, NGOs, activist organisations and individuals.

The CNDP members remained at the forefront of the well-organised protest. A large police force had been mobilised to scuttle the event as there is a prohibitory order in force in the area and the demonstrators were arrested in batches for defying the ban order. But even police highhandedness could not dampen the spirit, rather it further electrified the whole event. The demonstration went on till evening.

The event was well covered by the local print and electronic media.

Raipur

Thousands of women gathered in the afternoon at the city centre to stage a militant protest. Banners and placards were displayed. Slogans were raised. Effigies were burnt.

In the evening again another candle light rally was organised in memory the martyrs of Iraq.

The CNDP played a leading role in both the events.

Nagpur

A large procession was taken out in the late afternoon from the Gandhi statue at the city centre. Banners and placards were displayed and slogans were raised. The passersby greeted the protesters with great enthusiasm.

The CNDP members took active part.

Other Cities

March 20th, demonstrations were held in various other cities of the country as well - including Bangalore, Lucknow, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Nagercoil and Trivandrum.



Membership Form

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

Name:

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

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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:

- No to further nuclear testing
- No 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!

For Private Circulation Only

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

Editor of this Issue: **Sukla Sen**