

Where is the U.N. now?

by Marie-France LeBlanc

DID SOVIET democracy die in the streets of Vilnius under a hail of Soviet Army bullets?

This depends on whether or not President Gorbachev ordered the tanks to roll in the early hours of January 13.

The bloody crackdown on Lithuania's freely elected government goes against everything Gorbachev has expounded over the last six years. Moreover, it jeopardizes much what he has established since he reached power. If he did issue the order, it indicates he has lost faith in the process of democratization which he himself initiated.

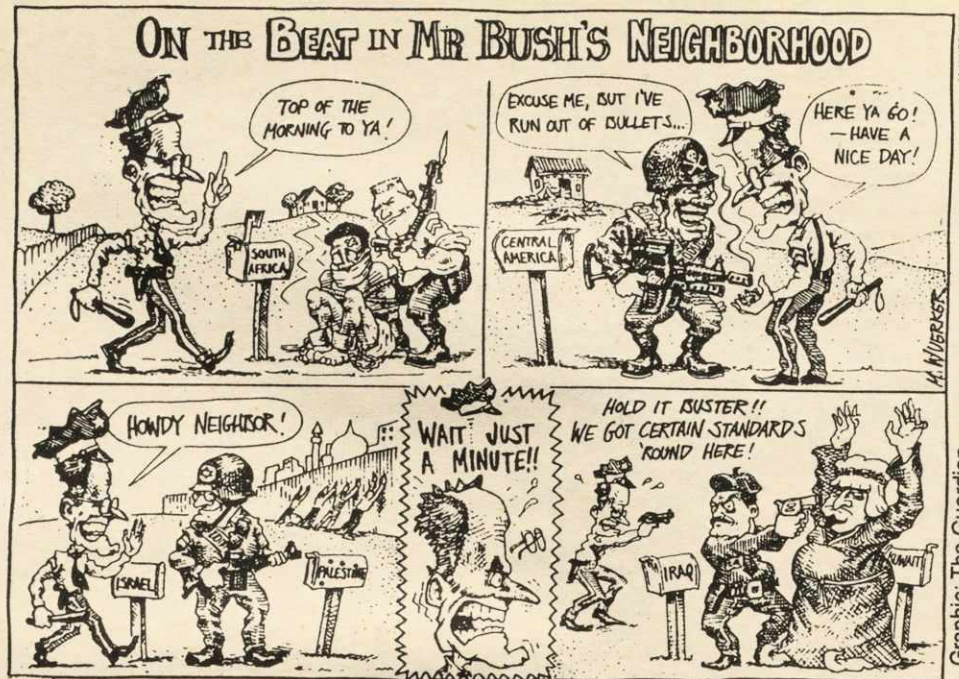
The issue is somewhat confused as a result of Gorbachev's actions just prior to the fateful Sunday morning.

Under pressure from the Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, Gorbachev had agreed to send a delegation to investigate the situation. But before the commission arrived, the Soviet

military stormed the republic's media center, killing at least 13 people and wounding more. Similarly, conflict broke out in the past week in Latvia, whose residents are also seeking independence from Russian rule.

"It is generally very difficult to lay blame on any one person in Moscow," says Professor Florian Bail of the Dalhousie Political Science Department.

He says the events in both Vilnius and Riga are uncertain, and it would seem unlikely, based upon his previous actions, that Gorbachev would have ordered an attack. "Moscow is a coalition of convenience, composed of reactionary factions whose common reflex is to go to force in order to resolve a conflict". This, Professor Bail says, would more likely be the cause of the military intervention.



Graphic: The Guardian

Americans knew of invasion

by Isaac Saney

ON JULY 25, a little over a week before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, held a meeting with Saddam Hussein.

In this meeting Glaspie informed Hussein that 1) she was acting direct instructions received from the U.S. government and 2) Washington had no position on the Iraq-Kuwait dispute, and Iraq's threatened escalation on this matter.

In the January issue of *Harpers'* magazine Glaspie is quoted as telling Hussein, "We have no position on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait."

Hussein had told Glaspie in the opening remarks of the meeting Iraq would and could not "accept death" in response

to Kuwait's "economic war and military action against us."

The Jan. 13 issue of the *Manchester Guardian* says throughout the meeting Hussein often stressed Iraq's commitment to end Kuwait's "economic war" against Iraq. According to the *Guardian* Glaspie's response was to emphasize that 1) she was directly instructed by the U.S. President "to seek better relations with Iraq." 2) Washington had "no opinion" on the Iraq-Kuwait dispute, and 3) she was returning to Washington on July 30 to meet with U.S. President George Bush.

On July 31, two days before the Iraqi invasion, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, John Kelly, was asked by the U.S. Congress whether there was a "U.S. commitment to come to Kuwait's defence if it was attacked." Kelly's direct response,

as quoted in the *New York Times*, was "we have no defense treaty relationship with any Gulf country."

On July 29, four days before the invasion (as revealed by the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, SIC) the CIA had informed the SIC that an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was expected on August 2.

It now seems quite clear that Washington knew well in advance of Hussein's designs. Indeed as Kelly was informing the U.S. Congress that there existed

no defense obligations to Kuwait, over 100,000 Iraqi troops had already been amassed on the Kuwaiti border and the CIA had already predicted the date of the invasion.

Most importantly, the U.S. knew of Hussein's plans and not only did nothing but actually encouraged him. As one U.S. Congress member put it, the manner in which Hussein was handled "encouraged him [to invade Kuwait] and there's no escaping that responsibility."



What is a jihad?

by Paul Webster

OVER THE LAST weeks there have been repeated references to something called *jihad* in the news coverage of the Persian Gulf war.

Saddam Hussein is reported to have called upon Moslems to wage *jihad* against the American-led enemy. In doing so, we are led to believe, Saddam apparently intends to rouse the Islamic world to unmitigated violence against the West, against Christians and especially Americans.

A closer look at the meaning of *jihad* to Moslems indicates that not only is its equation with violence misleading, it may also be racist.

According to Saint Mary's University professor Gamal Badawi *jihad* has three major meanings for Moslems. These involve personal struggle against evil within oneself, struggling "against evil in society, for what is fair and decent and for the betterment of society" and struggling "on the battlefield against aggression or tyranny and oppression, provided that all peaceful means have been exhausted".

In the context of the current war, Badawi argues that Saddam's political and military strategies are inappropriate to the concepts of *jihad*, and that his attempt to call Moslems into battle in the name of *jihad* is false to the meanings of the word.

"Saddam's call for holy war is quite suspect in its motives.

It may mislead those who confuse their legitimate sympathy for the suffering of the people of Iraq and the opposition to American and Western intervention in their affairs with support for Saddam," Badawi says.

The handling of the Saddam's call for *jihad* in Western news media has not been sensitive to the meaning of the word, which has more to do with peace and personal salvation than war.

The contradiction of using *jihad* to serve the interests not of Allah, but of Saddam has not been discussed. Instead, the call for *jihad* has been interpreted as evidence of the bloodthirsty nature of the "Arab masses" and the necessity for using extreme violence against them. The racism of such a misrepresentation of the meaning of *jihad* is explicit.

King Hussein of Jordan once explained that getting out of bed at dawn to pray is *jihad*. The Qur'an calls for charity to prisoners of war in the name of *jihad*. Fourteen centuries before the Geneva Convention Moslems called for the sparing of non-combatants during war in the name of *jihad*.

Despite Saddam's misuse of the world, and the xenophobic assumptions of those who equate it with racist beliefs about Arab militarism and violence, we have much more to learn from the ideas embodied in *jihad* than we have to fear from them.

excess of \$30 billion will be lost to these impoverished regions.

The effects of this loss are multiplied by the doubling in oil prices. In the industrial world oil stockpiles reduce the risk of similar economic repercussions, says Tharamangalan.

Maureen O'Neil from the North-South Institute says, "many countries face devastat-

ing losses in revenue from two million workers [principally Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, and Yemenis] displaced from the gulf."

Oxfam's O'Neil foresees the retaliation by the multinational forces as having drastically exacerbated the economic impact on the people of the world most consistently victimized.

Canada inconsistent

by Joey Goodings

IN 1975, INDONESIA invaded East Timor, and it considers East Timor an integral part of Indonesia to this day.

At the time of the invasion, the United Nations overwhelmingly passed resolution General Assembly 3485 XXX calling for the withdrawal of Indonesia's armed forces and affirming the right to self-determination for the people of East Timor.

Canada consistently votes against any resolutions which demand the Indonesian military withdraw from East Timor. Moreover, Canada wants the issue of the invasion removed from all UN agendas, including the Human Rights Commission. Its position on the invasion is, although the occupation is unfortunate, it is a "fait accompli".

According to Amnesty International, the death-toll to date is at least 200,000, which is one-third of the East Timorese population.

In an article in the October issue

of *Canadian Dimension*, Elaine Briere and Dan Devaney state that Canada is one of the top five foreign investors in Indonesia, "...which includes 300 Canadians companies looking for cheap labour without the problems of unions - banned in Indonesia."

A pamphlet published by the East Timor Alert Network describes Canada's role in military assistance to Indonesia. "Canada's military sales to Indonesia since 1975 include ammunition, military vehicles, transport planes and Pratt & Whitney engines for Bell helicopters being assembled in Indonesia. In the fall of 1984, External Affairs hosted an arms bazaar in Jakarta to promote the wares of 10 major Canadian weapons manufacturers."

In 1989, the Timorese Catholic bishop, Ximenes Belo, smuggled a letter out of East Timor to the Secretary-General of the UN asking the UN to hold a referendum in East Timor.

"We continue to die as a people and as a nation. For our part, we

the people of East Timor, think that we must be consulted on the future of our land," wrote the bishop.

Canada's relationship with East Timor challenges the government's position of supporting the Persian Gulf War because of its commitment to the UN and its condemnation of military aggression.

democratization. Furthermore, Bail insists that whatever "signals the conflict in the Baltics elicits may be catastrophic but not terminal". This outlook is optimistic, but whatever the prediction, the future looks to be a struggle for the Soviet Union. Economically, the road to reform is harsh. The outbreak of violence has resulted in Canadian imposed sanctions and the World Bank has ceased payment on loans and transfer payments. As well, the United States is reconsidering its promise of aid. Politically, Gorbachev must mobilize his government in order to avoid more moves towards actions reminiscent of earlier days. The Soviet Union, to continue enjoying Western support, cannot experience another violent uproar caused by the military.

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