

Gulf war imperils new world order

by Faisal Kutty

"This will not be another Vietnam." These are the words repeated over and over by the U.S. administration with reference to the Persian Gulf war.

Although it is hard to believe anything from the Pentagon, we can pretty much take their word on the preceding quote. The consequences of this war will be far greater than anything that arose from the American intervention in Vietnam.

Gradually, the world is seeing the real goals of this war being exposed as each new peace initiative is "shot down" by the U.S. Over the weeks, the stated objectives of "liberating" Kuwait and maintaining "international law and order," are increasingly appearing to be a cover for the destruction of the military, economic, and industrial infrastructure of Iraq.

In short, the "coalition" is punishing Iraq for ignoring orders from its former paymasters in Washington. It is also a stark warning to the developing world to never challenge the West in this era of a "new world order."

Many armchair scholars who understand the "in depth" analysis that appears daily in the *Toronto Sun* and media of its calibre would swear that this was a fight to remove "evil." They would also agree that destroying Hussein's power will solve all the problems in the area and strengthen the United Nations.

Not surprisingly, these are the same people who tend to forget the U.S. attacks on Panama, Grenada, Libya and intervention in Central America (the list can go on and on.) Furthermore, their memory fails to function when you mention the Israeli violation of countless U.N. resolutions with regards to the occupation of Arab territories.

These people are so busy waving flags and cheering for the troops, they do not realize that Uncle Sam and not the U.N. is calling the shots. How was George Bush able to reject the Soviet peace proposal without consulting the U.N.? Could it be that Uncle De Cuellar is no longer necessary to legitimize this "naked aggression" against Iraq?

Fortunately, there are also those who go beyond such "in depth" analysis and know for a fact that Bush and his buddies, cannot be trusted. More and more people are becoming part of this group as the daily bombardment of Iraqi cities continues. These people are taking to the streets and protesting this unjust war and their voices are becoming louder, especially in the Muslim and Arab world (including most "coalition" states). They are asking if it is necessary to destroy a country and its 18 million people for the sake of preserving the colonial legacy of Kuwait where 75 per cent of the residents did not enjoy full rights?

Before the ground war began, the air war was seen in the Muslim and Arab world as a cowardly attack on Iraq — instead of fighting Iraqi troops, the allies were bombing cities and towns.

Many people wonder the same thing as former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark wondered after his recent visit to Iraq. What is the military significance of destroying the civilian water supply, the power plants, the markets, or the hospitals? Perhaps, it is to ensure contracts and massive profits for Western multinationals who would be invited in to rebuild the countries as soon as puppet governments were established in Iraq and Kuwait.

The bombardment of innocent men, women and children who had no say on the policies of their government is bringing them closer to Hussein. The Muslim and Arab World is also coming around Hussein as they see their "leaders" literally selling out to the West — namely King Fahd of Saudi Arabia (more aptly named



A WWII flyer implicating U.S. big business

“ . . . ensure contracts and massive profits for Western multinationals who would be invited in to rebuild the countries . . . ”

Saudia America), Hafez Assad of Syria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

The vast majority of Muslims and Arabs condemned Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. They have also not forgotten the gassing of the Kurds nor the unprovoked attack on Iran — an attack for which Hussein was given the "wink and the nod" from the White House as a former American official put it. Neither have they forgotten that America, nor any other country for that matter, raised a whimper when the Kurds or Iranians were gassed, although the allies now find it useful as an excuse to destroy Iraq.

Hussein like any other leader of the developing world was fine as long as he was taking orders from the West. As an American official said, "Saddam Hussein may be a son of a bitch, but at least he is our son of a bitch."

Very few people, if any, liked Hussein in the initial stages of the crisis, but the moment American troops landed he became a hero for what many perceive as his attempt to fend off Western control from the Middle East.

Many in the Muslim and Arab world now wrongfully see Hussein as a new Salahuddin — the legendary Sultan who routed the invading Crusaders from Jerusalem in 1192. The autocratic Hussein is

the wrong person to elevate to the level of the great Sultan, but unfortunately this is the result of American miscalculation.

The voices in defence of Iraq are becoming harder to ignore from nations as diverse as the Maghreb (North African) states to the Soviet Muslim Republics. A protester is quoted as saying "We like Kuwait, but now because the allies have made something small worse, we don't care about it [Kuwait], If God wills it, Saddam will be strong and win."

The irony of the situation is that the greatest opposition to the war for "democracy" is coming from the Arab nations closest to democracy. In most of these nations, as gauged from editorials, this war is seen as an attempt to humiliate and subjugate Arabs — make them "submit to the will of America and the West rather than God" like most of the Gulf states.

Many in the West proudly point to the 13 Muslim states involved in the "coalition" to suggest that the war is accepted by Muslims and Arabs.

Nothing could be farther from the truth as virtually all of them are taking part against the wishes of their populaces. It is merely a logical and wise decision, particularly when the West is busy waging war with one hand and using the other hand to bribe them by writing off debts, giving aid,

and seducing them with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

- * Pro-west Turkey is actively aiding the "coalition," even though about 90 percent of its citizens oppose it — is there a better way to realize its goal of one day gaining admission into the European Economic Community? The chief-of-staff of the armed forces has resigned in protest and there have been a number of attacks on allied interests in the country.
- * Massive anti-American demonstrations are a regular occurrence in Pakistan. Its 20,000 troops in the Gulf have not been authorized to take offensive action. The chief-of-staff of the armed forces openly backs Iraq. There have also been reports in the Pakistani press of alleged shootouts between Pakistani and American troops, further increasing anti-American feelings.
- * Morocco which is also part of the "coalition" is becoming increasingly pro-Iraqi, as the recent demonstration of more than 300,000 clearly illustrated.
- * Egypt and Syria are facing trouble for their support of the "coalition." Opposition to the war is put down violently. In Egypt, universities are closed and mosques are being monitored. Mubarak may have to move to Washington to run the country.

Perhaps, once they are finished with Iraq, the U.S. and the U.N. can invade and "liberate" the people in these nations whose "leaders" took them to war without their consent.

Thirty-six hours of "surgical strikes" against Panama resulted in 7000 civilian deaths — only God knows how many have died in the thousands of sorties against Iraq. To most Arabs and Muslims, the "collateral damage" that the allies refer to are their brethren losing their lives, limbs, or shelters. They see much compassion for the animals in the Gulf as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) rushes into the area, while the U.N. places obstacles in the way of Iranian initiatives to ship food and medicine to the Iraqi people.

The resentment of the West is not only building in Arab and Muslim nations but many other developing nations. Even anti-Muslim opposition parties in India are calling on the government to support Iraq, for they feel that this is repression of all developing nations.

Although the allies win this war militarily, they will lose in the real sense of the word as they are making the situation more complex.

Anti-American speeches are already being circulated in Saudi Arabia through the underground as many of the vices that follow soldiers (prostitutes and drugs) begin to surface. The destruction of Iraq — whose military power was seen by many as the only check against Israel — will mean the emergence of Israel as the unchallenged regional power. This will further fan the flames of anger.

Many analysts predict that this growing indignation in the Muslim and Arab world will result in its radicalization, and decades of trouble for the "new world order." The war must stop and a comprehensive solution — addressing the legitimate claims of Iraq, the rebuilding of Iraq, and the other regional issues including the Palestinian problem — must be found in order to diffuse this explosive situation.

The West must realize that the Middle East is no longer their geo-political gameboard, and must place Arab interests ahead of their own in this region. Otherwise, the repercussions of this war will not simply be relegated to the veterans' hospitals, asylums and hollywood movie studios but will continue to remain at the forefront of international politics.