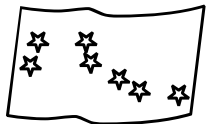


SOCIALIST VOICE



Ar son na stoichána, na haontachta, agus an tsóisalachais. For peace, unity, and socialism.

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Block the road to war!

IT was forecast that the wars of the twenty-first century would be about control of resources. Sure enough, we are now threatened with a series of wars, aimed at establishing and maintaining US control over the oilfields of the Middle East. Richard Perle, a spokesman for the oil barons and arms manufacturers who control the US government, was quite explicit about this: after Iraq, Iran must be brought under control; and if Saudi Arabia becomes unstable, it must be taken over as well. Bush himself promised us an unending "war on terror" against al-Qaida, originally a creation of the United States.

The Iraqi Communist Party, "the aspirations of the Iraqi people for change and democracy cannot safely be left to the US and British governments. There is no question that Saddam Hussein's continued rule has served US strategic interests in the region. In the twelve wasted years since the end of the Gulf War, the United States and Britain have contrived to keep the regime externally weak but internally stronger relative to the people and the opposition forces. This is because they fear the democratic expression of the people's will. Lifting the economic blockade will help our people and enable them to fight the dictatorial regime more effectively."

The last thing they want is for the Iraqi people to liberate themselves

In the build-up to war, the hegemony of the United States is just assumed. Other countries, and the United Nations itself, are expected to follow slavishly in the manner of Tony Blair. The future of the United Nations, according to Bush, depends on its endorsement of US policy; but Bush threatens war anyway, with or without the acquiescence of the Security Council. An unprovoked attack on another country, or "anticipatory retaliation," as Condoleezza Rice calls it, would be totally illegal, even if the Security Council were bullied or bribed into sanctioning it. The legality we would have then would be of the Wild West variety, on a global scale.

The future of the United Nations, on the contrary, depends on its ability to live up to its charter and defend peace. So far, the United States has been obliged to agree to the return of the arms inspectors to

How easy it was to redirect the frenzy against another former ally, Saddam Hussein, the war-criminal dictator of Iraq. His greatest crimes were well known to them; they were committed with the active connivance of the United States (represented in Iraq at the time by Donald Rumsfeld, who had then no objection to the use of chemical weapons). The alleged reason for war, Saddam's supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction, has no credibility whatever. Even if he does have them, and has succeeded in hiding them from the UN inspection teams of Hans Blix, the way to deal with them is not war. The Bush-Blair axis is determined on war, no matter what, and has not co-operated with the inspectors. Even the much-heralded multimedia presentation by Colin Powell, which was aimed more at the television audience than at the members of the Security Council, made no case for war. If there was evidence there, why had it not been given to the unfortunate Mr Blix?

If you have any doubt about their motives, just look at their plans for Iraq. Powell says they will hold the oil wells "in trust for the people of Iraq." They are looking for a new, more reliable Saddam to impose on the people of Iraq, just as they gave power back to the old warlords in Afghanistan. The last thing they want is for the Iraqi people to liberate themselves. The sanctions have been administered with immense cruelty towards the Iraqi people, making it harder for them to resist Saddam's rule. In the words of Salam Ali, a member of the Central Committee of

“War is a racket. It always has been. It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.” — Major-General Smedley Butler (US Marine Corps), 1935.

this was active collusion in preparation for war. The thousands of demonstrators at Shannon, the peace camp there and the brave people who truly defending Irish neutrality and Ireland's honour. What a disgraceful scene it was in Dail Eireann, with Ahern screaming at the Green Party TDs for not condemning the non-violent direct action. What is the crime of damaging a warplane compared with the crime of flying one, or the crime of allowing our land to be used by warplanes flying off to a cruel and unnecessary war!

Ireland's shame

Today, Saturday 15 February, demonstrators all around the world are protesting against the war plans. There are millions of us, representing a big majority of the world's people. We in Dublin are in solidarity with the millions of Americans who are upholding their tradition of struggling for democracy and humanity. We are also marching in solidarity with the Iraqi people. They have suffered too long from Saddam; they don't deserve a replacement approved by Washington.

it. politicians; but when this guy promises war, he means affairs—war and chauvinism. We are used to insincere for the rich and cut social services; and in foreign security," he has curtailed civil rights; he has cut taxes to Iraq. Domestically, in the name of "homeland lords, but not caught Bin Laden, he turned his attention to Iraq. Domestically, in the name of "homeland security," he has curtailed civil rights; he has cut taxes for the rich and cut social services; and in foreign affairs—war and chauvinism. We are used to insincere politicians; but when this guy promises war, he means it.

This US government is representative of the most ruthless, most chauvinistic, most unscrupulous section of the capitalist class, mainly oil barons and arms manufacturers. They won the presidency not by election but by fraud. Many of the members of the administration, including the President and Vice-President, have been involved in shady financial dealings. With financial scandals and economic recession threatening, they were saved by the most appalling atrocity to hit the United States in a century, the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. With the patriotism of a scoundrel, Bush wrapped himself in the flag and declared everlasting war. Having bombed Afghanistan to bits and brought back the war-lords, but not caught Bin Laden, he turned his attention to Iraq. Domestically, in the name of "homeland security," he has curtailed civil rights; he has cut taxes for the rich and cut social services; and in foreign affairs—war and chauvinism. We are used to insincere politicians; but when this guy promises war, he means it.

the United States will give them the go-ahead. they really want to attack the Palestinians, and hope they are most furious of all at the truly global opposition to their imperial madness. Millions have demonstrated their opposition in the United States itself as well as throughout the world. Imperial powers expect the population to rally round at the wave of a flag and the beat of a drum. This has not happened—on the contrary, even in the countries with the strongest jingoist tradition, the resistance is growing. The press and official opinion generally have poured abuse on the peace movement; anyone who supports the war is a friend of Saddam, a terrorist, or worse. Anti-Arab and anti-Muslim tirades are common in the tabloids: mad mullahs are represented as typical of Muslims and of Arabs; the warmongers are reaching for their old weapon of racism.

IRAELAND has a good record of defending peace and seeking peaceful resolution of conflict. This is what we mean by our traditional policy of neutrality, not merely staying out of military alliances. The Irish government held the strategic position of chairperson of the Security Council. If there was ever a duty and an opportunity to work for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, this was it. They did nothing, fearing to offend the United States. What a contrast when Germany took our place! The agenda became avoiding war, and the United States was put on the defensive. The Irish government must take responsibility for the time lost. But it is the use of Shannon Airport in the build-up of US military forces that shows up their craven sub-servience. No amount of hair-splitting by Brian Cowen or bluster by Bertie Ahern can disguise the fact that

government there is already using the war hysteria to is the protégé and agent of the United States. The resolution applying to it. It can do this only because it weapons in the Middle East and has defied every UN war against Iraq. Israel is, of course, the possessor of the biggest arsenal of chemical, biological and nuclear The terrorist Israeli regime is most anxious for a who elected it.

deeply unpopular, especially with the Labour voters might yet do a deal). In Britain, the Blair government's slavish subservience to the United States is against the war. While this does not seem to bother the ultra-right governments in Italy and Spain, the German government owes its election to its anti-war such a major issue. Furthermore, French and German capitalism are not ready to subordinate their interests to those of the United States. (Watch them: they are reaching for their old weapon of racism.

Public opinion in Europe is almost unanimous against the war. While this does not seem to bother the ultra-right governments in Italy and Spain, the German government owes its election to its anti-war stand, and Chirac cannot ignore popular opinion on Germany are most furious of all at the truly global opposition to their imperial madness. Millions have demonstrated their opposition in the United States itself as well as throughout the world. Imperial powers expect the population to rally round at the wave of a flag and the beat of a drum. This has not happened—on the contrary, even in the countries with the strongest jingoist tradition, the resistance is growing. The press and official opinion generally have poured abuse on the peace movement; anyone who supports the war is a friend of Saddam, a terrorist, or worse. Anti-Arab and anti-Muslim tirades are common in the tabloids: mad mullahs are represented as typical of Muslims and of Arabs; the warmongers are reaching for their old weapon of racism.

Germany and France for proposing alternatives to Iraq, and is now intent on stopping them from continuing, let alone completing, their task. They just want to get on with their war. They are furious with war, which might disrupt their schedule.

“The war madness has ... revealed our rulers for what they are—monsters in tooth and claw.—” James Connolly