the decree, representing civil society. Among the first was Luis Henrique Ball Zuloaga, a prominent activist in Mont Pelerin networks. Ball had angered many in the opposition movement when he published an article in *El Universal* on Nov. 23, 2001, arguing that Venezuela needed an Augusto Pinochet, to implement Pinochet's economic program. Three other figures, representing business and the banks, signed the decree, but labor leader Alfredo Ramos, invited to sign for the CTV, did not appear. Strikingly absent from the new transition cabinet announced immediately afterwards, was any representation of the CTV. Carmona's Foreign Minister was José Rodríguez Iturbe, a top Opus Dei figure in Venezuela and well-known as a nasty "right-winger."

What had surfaced as a coup within a coup, quickly turned into a coup against itself. Carmona's moves split the opposition and the military forces which had put him into office. That split provided the opening through which the Chavista forces, emboldened by the international support coming from Project Democracy and Wall Street's press, moved. They deployed mobs against key points in Caracas in quasi-military fashion. Looting as they went, they surrounded the television stations, newspapers, and the Presidential Palace itself. All were left unprotected because no part of the military was able or willing to fight to defend what the Carmona government had become.

Irreconcilable Interests

Chatter about democracy restored in Venezuela, and reconciliation around the bend, is foolish. The hard-core Chavista terrorists, typified by the Mayor of the Libertador district of Caracas, Freddy Bernal (some of whose henchmen were videotaped firing into the crowd of demonstrators on April 11), are brazenly demanding that those who dared stand up to their regime, face "revolutionary justice." So confident are they of their control of Venezuela as a regional narco-terrorist safe haven, that top FARC representatives who were booted out of Mexico in mid-April, flew on April 13, not to Cuba, as had been expected, but to Venezuela.

The opposition has not given up. The CTV is organizing for a May 1 demonstration, and is calling for a referendum on whether Chávez should stay in office. Both the Social Christian (Copei) party and the Democratic Action (AD) party refuse to recognize him as Head of State. Others are calling for new elections.

But the collapse of the economy may shatter all plans. Capital flight drove down the value of the bolivar by 10% during April 12-16. An estimated $600 million in economic damage was wrought by the Chávez mobs looting their way back to the Presidential Palace on April 13-14. Businesses have announced they will close permanently. Over the next two months, the government has $700 million in foreign debt payments coming due. Should capital flight and devaluation continue as expected, that debt burden will quickly become unmanageble.

LaRouche on Egypt TV On Mideast, World Crisis

This is the opening of an interview with U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. on the Egyptian television program "Good Morning, Egypt," conducted on April 12 by Washington-based correspondent Hanan Elbadry.

Elbadry: Mr. LaRouche, welcome to "Good Morning, Egypt." First of all, I would like to know: How can you look at the American administration policy toward the Middle East crisis?

LaRouche: It's a tragic disaster, at this point. It is not a simple disaster, because I believe that the President of the United States does not really know what he is doing. That is, he is so controlled by a small group of people, which, probably except for [U.S. Secretary of State Colin] Powell, are pretty much on the insane line we're hearing. And, he's acting under tremendous pressure, from a lobby inside the United States, which has made very clear, to the President, that, if he does anything to offend Sharon, his brother will lose the election in Florida; and, many in the Republican Party, will lose posts all over the country. So, we have a situation, which is complicated by a President of limitations—that is, of conceptual limitations: He truly does not understand the situation. He probably despises Sharon personally, privately. But he's convinced that his political party, and he, depend upon not offending Sharon, at this time. And so, he's in an impossible, tragic situation.

What is happening on the other side, is, the danger is: We're now in a situation from a military standpoint, where, what Sharon is doing can not work; what the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] is doing can not work. You can not fight war this way.

Rabin understood that—Prime Minister Rabin. Rabin, therefore, made an agreement with Arafat, and met with Arafat, on what became known as the Oslo Plan: not because Rabin likes Arabs, but because Rabin realized, that they had to learn to live together at peace, because the alternative was something exactly like what is happening now, in Palestine and Israel—this nightmare, which is actually a copy of the Nazi operation against the Warsaw Ghetto. *Exactly*, literally: no difference whatsoever.

So, it's an impossible situation. But, this becomes, then, a trigger, which I think everybody in the region understands: This is a trigger for a wider war. Because Israel can not continue this internal operation, within the bounds of Palestine and Israel, at the present time. It will have to expand the war, or collapse. The immediate targets are Syria, through Lebanon; Iraq; possibly Iran. But, you have to remember, that

the Israeli command is not only Nazi-like in its thinking (not all Israelis, of course, but *these* people); but, they also are operating on a conception, in which they can do anything.

So, my concern is, in evaluating this situation: Europeans are resisting—not effectively, but they're resisting; the importance of their resistance is, they're putting pressure on the United States. The United States, alone, might not be able to stop Israel from doing what it's doing. But if the United States were to come over to the side of what some of the Arab nations and the Europeans are saying, that combination of forces *could* stop this horror-show.

That's my hope.

Elbadry: What about public opinion, the American public? You just mentioned how the people act, outside the capital. I need to know, how can you go through this? And, how can you explain, as a Democrat, does the Democratic Party have any role to play?

LaRouche: The Democratic Party is pretty much taken over. The Democratic Party, frankly, would probably be worse than the Republican Party, on Middle East questions, because of the leadership, and the financial control over it. Gore, for example: Gore would have been worse than Bush, by far. Lieberman would be as bad as Bush. Gore is stupid, but Lieberman is clever, and intelligent. But, he's also bad. . . .

The problem, in most countries, is popular opinion: We know this, in all countries. One of the controlling factors, which is called "democracy"—it's not really democracy, it doesn't mean anything, but, it's popular opinion. Swings in popular opinion can cause governments to do things that are insane, or topple governments, that are trying to do something sane. The problem is, we don't have, really, a healthy society in the world today. The individual does not feel that they are a responsible member of society. They feel they are a *victim* of society, who can protest; who are swung by moods.

The United States is one of the worst: We are more controlled, in the United States, than in Europe, or probably in most other nations of the world, by manufactured, orchestrated public opinion, through mass media. We're the greatest victims of it. This is a development, which became worse over the past 35 years, since about 1965. Popular-opinion swings dominate. Therefore, yes, it is a problem. And popular opinion, in the United States—in my experience, with this population, as with other ones—is that, only the perception of a *fundamental crisis*, a fundamental economic and other crisis, will convince American popular opinion *to break out* of the present mode. That is: If they perceive that the depression is the major issue—the economic depression—they're going to respond to the major issue: the depression. That will force a change in the agenda of thinking inside the United States. Now, that crisis is coming on fast. It's coming on around the world.

Elbadry: What about the November election? How can the American Arab, and Muslim, play a role? There are many motives for them to go and act. As you know, in your area [in Northern Virginia], there are more than 750,000 Arabs and Muslims, plus the people who supported them. And half of them, at least, have the right to vote.

LaRouche: Well, the problem is—what I've been trying to do, myself, in this connection: I've been put into a unique situation, personally, because I understand the situation—understand the situation here; I understand the situation in the so-called Islamic countries, which are targetted. I have people I know in these countries; I understand them, as much as any outsider would understand them. Therefore, I've tried to look at this from the top down: I understand the anger of the Palestinians. I understand the frustration of the Arab countries, around there. I understand the fear and anxiety of the Islamic population, as a totality—and others, as well. They tend to react with rage. If they believe there is no hope, for a better policy, from the United States and from Europe, they're going to become more and more angry. Which is bad for these countries, because they will tend to be more easily destabilized by their own, accumulated rage.

So, what I try to do, is to say to my friends abroad—Islamic countries, Arab countries: "Here's the way we must discuss the situation—not *you* discuss the situation; not *me* discuss the situation—how should *we* discuss *our common problem?* We're trying to save civilization. Forget the so-called 'differences.' We're trying to save civilization. You're capable of a rational solution—well, let's concentrate on it."

If we do that, *then*, the targetted populations of Americans—of Arab-Americans and others—then have a sense that there's somebody representing a position, which corresponds to two things: They are Americans; they have thought of themselves as Americans. They didn't think of themselves as immigrants: They've been here for two, three generations, or longer. They think of themselves as being Americans, with families and connections abroad. And, they've reacted, as they supported the Bush campaign, largely, in the last election—as they thought that Gore was worse than Bush on policies of their concern. And many of them mobilized to support the Bush election. Now, they feel betrayed by Bush. So, my sense, is to encourage them—and I would hope that others would do the same—to think of themselves as: They're American citizens, or American residents, whose immediate, personal interests are here; who have to find a way of expressing *their* views, here, but on the same level as people abroad, realize we have a common concern.