

Eurasia 'Axis of Reason' Moves Against Iraq War

by Jonathan Tennenbaum

A group of leading nations of Europe and Asia—pivoted on the role of France, Germany, and Russia, and with important input from circles in the Vatican and other institutional forces—has joined together in an extraordinary offensive to stop war in Iraq, and a misguided U.S. Administration from bringing catastrophe upon itself and the rest of the world. A decisive feature is that this new coalition is emphatically *not* anti-American in orientation; on the contrary, it strives to bring the United States from the insanity of the Rumsfeld-Cheney war party back to reason, and potentially, to the kinds of FDR policies that Lyndon LaRouche has placed at the center of his 2004 Presidential campaign.

This emerging alliance for peace represents the coming-together of several combinations of nations, including: a renewed French-German partnership in the European Union; a new “Paris-Berlin-Moscow triangle”; the much-discussed “Russia-China-India strategic triangle”; the cooperation among Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan around solving the Korean situation; and urgent efforts by the Pope and other religious figures, including in the Islamic and Eastern Orthodox world, to prevent a “Clash of Civilizations” and the outbreak of generalized religious warfare which would be unleashed by an invasion of Iraq. Whatever now happens around Iraq, the cooperation of this broad coalition of forces is already an historical factor of potentially very far-reaching significance.

Here, as LaRouche himself emphasized in his Feb. 15 address to the Schiller Institute in the Washington area, is the stuff of Classical tragedy, enacted on the stage of current history! Noting the unprecedented motion against the war, among the leaders and people of France, Germany, Russia, China, India, and others—a degree of mobilization that would have been unimaginable just months earlier—LaRouche declared: “We’ve come to a time . . . where mankind is shaken. We find people moving, as they have not moved for a long time. . . . We have an affirma-

tion from humanity, from implicitly the great majority of humanity, saying: ‘This war shall not be allowed to occur!’ . . . We’re in a time of great tragedy, and a challenge of awakening of humanity, in a way which has not been possible in recent times. . . . The question is, can we bring to this situation, where the opportunity for change is here: Can we bring the spark of true leadership into this process?”

At the same conference, Helga Zepp-LaRouche emphasized the deep reasons for the opposition by “Old Europe” to a “pre-emptive” invasion of Iraq—an opposition rooted in the incredible suffering of the two world wars of last century, and further back in such experiences as the Thirty Years’ War. Exactly this point was brought up in public again and again by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, in the context of his meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and French President Jacques Chirac.

That principled nature of the coalition among France, Germany, and Russia in particular, has elicited the angriest outbursts from the war party in Washington and London, as well as a campaign of denial in much of the world’s mass media. As the triangular coordination of France, Germany, and Russia began to take decisive shape following President Putin’s visits to Germany and France on Feb. 9-10, the press was full of insinuations of “opportunism” and “unreliability” of the partners, each of which was allegedly on the verge of abandoning the others, in favor of a dirty deal with the Bush Administration.

But exactly the *opposite* has occurred. Over the last week of February and first of March, despite massive pressure from Washington, the Paris-Berlin-Moscow alliance has grown



The shifts that led up to the March 5 “no to war” common front in Paris, of Foreign Ministers Dominique de Villepin of France (center), Igor Ivanov of Russia (left), and Joschka Fischer of Germany (right), involve much more than UN Security Council negotiations. Their countries are allying to repel the twin dire threats of global economic depression collapse and unstoppable warfare.

more courageous, up to the point of taking on frontal confrontation with the Bush Administration over the proposed war resolution in the UN Security Council.

Allying Against Two Dire Threats

The sudden toughness exhibited by Chirac, Putin, and Schröder, in particular, has astonished many observers. But readers of *EIR* could follow, over the last six months, one sign after the other of an improved understanding within governments and institutions in Europe and Asia, of the deadly twin threats of the global financial and economic crisis on the one side, and the Rumsfeld-Cheney-Wolfowitz-Perle “war party” in the United States, on the other. At the same time, there is a growing orientation, in Europe and Asia, toward the conceptions of the “Eurasian Land-Bridge,” the “Russia-China-India strategic triangle” and LaRouche’s New Bretton Woods, and toward his role in effecting a potential change of policy inside the United States, as the only available direction to get out of the mess.

Schröder’s extraordinary stand against a war in Iraq, in the German elections at the end of last year, echoed the high-visibility election campaign of Helga Zepp-LaRouche’s Civil Rights Movement-Solidarity (BüSo) party. Following this, Russian President Putin’s back-to-back visits to China and India in early December aimed at consolidating the Strategic Triangle. Then Schröder’s Dec. 31 inauguration, in Shanghai, of the world’s first high-speed commercial magnetic levitation train, put forth a symbol of the Eurasian Land-Bridge policy for technology-sharing and an infrastructure-centered economic boom. In the course of January, the move by Schröder and Chirac to decisively strengthen the German-French relationship as the core of Europe and the key to a war-avoidance policy, was marked by the 40th anniversary celebration of the famous Elysée Agreement between Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer. Finally, the turning-point of the Feb. 9-10 Putin-Schröder and Putin-Chirac meetings—the joint French-German-Russia declaration on Iraq, immediately endorsed by China—brought the subsequent resounding rejection of the Washington war policy at the UN Security Council meeting of Feb. 14.

Lead-Up to March 4 ‘No’

Since then, the momentum of the peace coalition has grown still further, with Moscow acting as the pivot of an extraordinary series of Eurasian diplomatic moves during late February.

On Feb. 23, former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov travelled to Baghdad for a confidential meeting with Saddam Hussein, reportedly to discuss an “exit strategy” for the crisis. The next day Russia, France, and Germany, with support from China, submitted a new programmatic joint memorandum in the UN Security Council, explicitly countering U.S.-British attempts to push through a resolution authorizing invasion of Iraq. The French-German-Russian-Chinese initiative was a central focus of the meeting of President



The war party in Washington and London has been alleging that Russian President Vladimir Putin (here meeting with French President Jacques Chirac) “had a price” and would break from France and Germany to support war on Iraq. But Putin hardened Russia’s opposition to the war further in the first days of March.

Chirac and Chancellor Schröder in Berlin on the same day, at which both sharply rejected the U.S.-British resolution and emphasized that war “can and must” be avoided.

On Feb. 26, Kremlin chief of staff Alexander Voloshin travelled to Washington for a highly unusual, closed-door meetings with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and President George Bush himself, focussed on a way out of the Iraq crisis. Although international press was full of black propaganda that Voloshin’s mission was to negotiate the price for a Russian sell-out on Iraq, in the subsequent days President Putin hardened Moscow’s anti-war position even further. On Feb. 27, Chancellor Schröder made an unplanned “lightning” visit to Moscow to discuss the Iraq crisis and joint Russian-German-French-Chinese initiative with Putin. A visibly satisfied Schröder emerged to tell the press that Russia and Germany, through their tragic experience of World War II, “know what war means,” and were doing everything to avoid it now.

On the same day, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov was in Beijing, for meetings with not only his Chinese counterpart, but also with the present and designated Presidents of China, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jiantao. An unambiguously worded Russian-Chinese communiqué was issued, demanding that the United States adhere to the Security Council and the UN Charter of the United Nations. In a press conference in Beijing, Ivanov declared that “Russia has the right to veto in the UN Security Council and will use it if it is necessary in the interests of international stability.”

All of this led to the stunning press conference and joint declaration of the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, and Russia in Paris on March 4, at which France’s Dominique de Villepin stated point-blank, that the three nations would “not permit passage of a UN resolution that would authorize the use of force” in Iraq. France and Russia, as permanent members of the Security Council, would “assume all their respon-

sibilities on this point.”

The next day, Papal representative Cardinal Pio Laghi delivered a strong message from Pope John Paul II directly to President Bush, to adhere to the United Nations and desist from unleashing a new war. It should be noted, that since the end of last year, significant breakthroughs have occurred in relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church—signalled, for example, by a warm exchange of Christmas greetings between Patriarch Aleksii II and the Pope—with a common focus on countering the war danger.

Russians See ‘Riemannian’ Shift

An interesting reflection of the significance of this process, from a Russian standpoint, is contained in a signal article published Feb. 28 in the Russian daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, “The Axis of Peace as the Beginning of a Greater Europe,” by Igor Maksimych, a veteran diplomat and leading researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Europe. This Europe, Maksimych made clear, extends “from Reykjavik to Vladivostok”; that is, it coincides with the development area of the Eurasian Land-Bridge.

Maksimych declared that the joint French-German-Russian initiative for peace goes far beyond “simply reacting” to policy moves from London and Washington; it actually allows the world “to choose between two alternative conceptions of the future development of the world.”

“The extremely close coordination in the positions of the three countries on questions of international affairs,” Maksimych wrote, “has still another aspect, not less important than the effort to find a way out of the mess that the United States has gotten itself and the whole world into. Today France, Germany, and Russia have taken the step toward becoming the initiating group for creating a Great Europe. . . . The group . . . is composed of the strongest and most influential nations of the continent, which, in the last analysis, will determine its future. If France were not to participate, then the cooperation between Russia and Germany could easily be portrayed as a ‘rebirth of Rapallo.’ If Germany were not to participate, then it would suffer the fears of being surrounded, as did German policy from the time of Bismarck’s ‘nightmare-coalition.’ Without Russia, this group would not have an all-embracing European character, which, indeed, defines its essence.”

A leading scholar of the Moscow Institute for World Economics and Politics (IMEMO) commented that “Maksimych was not just speaking for himself. He is speaking for a prevalent view in the Academy of Sciences and, more importantly, for an influential group within the Russian government itself. This group is in bitter conflict with a powerful ‘U.S. lobby,’ connected especially with oil interests, who are pushing the unrealistic idea that Russia stands to gain a lot from energy deals with the U.S.A.” Putin is trying, in this situation, “to preserve all the positive achievements of Russia, both in relations with the United States, and in relations with Europe.”

In any case, the IMEMO scholar concluded, “Russia’s relations with Europe are absolutely vital and will not be sacrificed. That is why Putin and Ivanov are doing absolutely everything they can, to prevent a war in Iraq from starting, and provide a positive way out for all sides.”

A well-known Russian military-strategic expert, Gen. Leonid Ivashov, noted that the actions of the war party in Washington and London “have called forth a powerful reaction from continental European and Asian civilization, including France, Germany, Russia, China, India, and some Islamic nations like Iran. . . . A reaction of the type of a ‘Riemannian change of geometry.’ ” These nations, Ivashov said, seek to defend civilization against “the forces of chaos” being unleashed by the war party, and “to develop new principles for a dialogue of cultures.”

Their great hope is that the United States can be turned around toward support for this perspective.