

# Will the Financial Crisis Trigger World War III?

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

April 16—History has a wealth of examples of great economic and financial crises leading into wars, or, as in the 20th Century, into world wars. While it is becoming increasingly clear that a series of imminent national bankruptcies is ringing the death-knell of today's financial system, a combination of the escalation of the Afghanistan War, and a looming military strike against Iran, threatens to unleash a chain reaction which could plunge the world into a New Dark Age.

According to reliable sources, both a planned war against Iran, as well as the great Spring-Summer offensive in Afghanistan which is already under way, were the subject of numerous discussions during the just-concluded Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, aimed at firming up a coalition for these military operations. On top of that, an atmosphere is being built up to use the threat that Iran will soon have an atomic bomb, as the context for an early military strike—just as British propaganda did earlier over Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction." As is now common knowledge, those Iraqi weapons were nowhere to be found; and still today, the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate—the National Security Council's compilation of estimates from various U.S. intelligence services—sticks by its evaluation that Iran is still a good three to five years away from having the capacity to build a nuclear weapon.

Both the *New York Times* and the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* report that Ronald Lauder, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, secured the approval of Isra-

el's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before he released his open letter to President Obama, which was printed in the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In his letter, he warns against the Iranian regime's "nuclear ambitions," leaving no doubt about Iran's genocidal intentions toward Israel. The letter goes on to admonish the United States that it has committed itself to never allowing Iran to possess nuclear weapons.

## Sanctions Lead to War

Yet another contributing factor to the climate for a military strike against Iran, was the attempt by Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, during a three-hour session on April 14, to induce the Chinese, Russian, French, United Kingdom, and German delegations to agree to a UN Security Council escalation of sanctions against Iran. Her proposed measures included an arms embargo, the right to seize Iranian ships suspected of carrying materials destined for Iran's nuclear program, imposing limits on new foreign investment into Iran's energy sector, and punitive measures against leading members of the Revolutionary Guard, Iranian companies, and Iranian financial institutions.

In the same vein, 76 U.S. Senate and 333 House members addressed a letter to President Obama, demanding that he impose "crippling sanctions" against Iran, regardless of whether the UN Security Council goes along with them, and that Obama sign the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act which they have passed,

which prohibits business dealings with any foreign or domestic U.S. firm that has anything to do with Iran's oil industry. It's hardly surprising that the publication of this letter was paid for by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Given this thunderous drumbeat for strengthening sanctions against Iran, it is important to note that China is refusing to go along, and that Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu reminded the press corps in Washington, that sanctions kill children, too, just as they did in Iraq. In the wake of the first Iraq war, approximately 1 million people, a great many of them children, died as a result of the sanctions [see **Figure 1**]. Back then, this author founded a Committee to Save Iraq's Children, which organized substantial shipments of aid to Iraq, and also transported injured and ill Iraqi children to Europe and the United States for medical treatment.

Now Israel is accusing Syria of having delivered long-range Scud missiles to the Hezbollah in Lebanon—a claim which the Syrian government is categorically denying. According to the *New York Times*, an unnamed Israeli official has argued that the Iran-backed Hezbollah's arsenal could deliver a counterstrike against Israel, in the event of an Israeli strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. Obama's own remarks of April 13, that the Mideast dispute is a "vital national security interest of the United States," which the *New York Times* characterized as a "far-reaching shift" in U.S. foreign policy, could supply the pretext for a so-called "breakaway-ally scenario"—whereby Israel takes actions ostensibly without U.S. approval.

## Land-War in Asia

On April 14, Gen. David Petraeus announced a massive expansion and gear-up of military operations for a Spring-Summer U.S. troop offensive in Kandahar, Afghanistan. This offensive has in fact already begun, with special troops deployed against Taliban leaders, in preparation for the regular troops' offensive. These special troops include the Army's Delta Force, the Navy SEALs, the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) troops, and the Army Rangers.

An article in the British *Guardian* reports that irrespective of Obama's time-

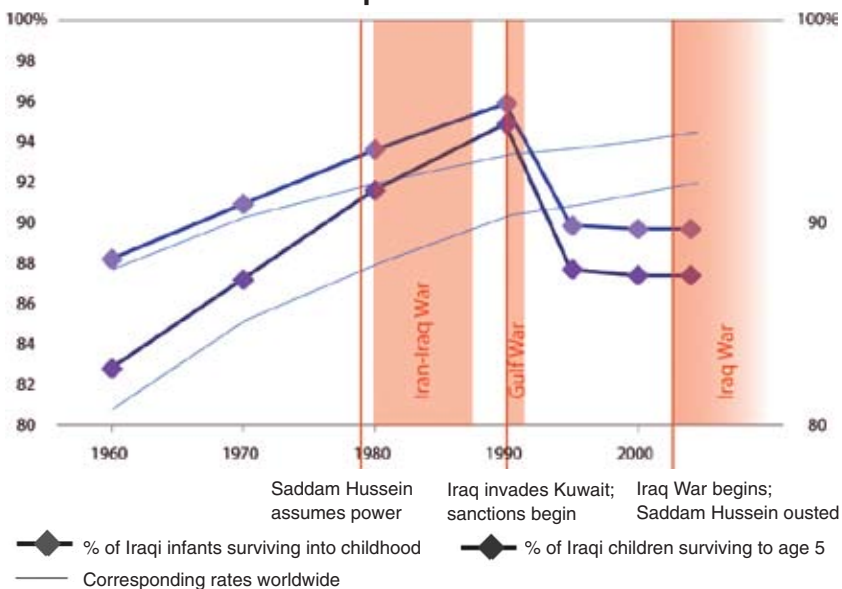
table for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan by 2011, the massive construction of airstrips and barracks at Camp Leatherneck in Helmand Province is an indication that military leaders are getting ready to remain in Afghanistan for many years to come.

Going in the right direction, at least, is legislation proposed by Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wisc.) and Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), which calls for an end of what they characterize as the "counterproductive" war in Afghanistan.

There is no doubt about the great danger that Germany's army, the Bundeswehr, could also be sucked further into such a no-win, ill-conceived war in Afghanistan. And so, already this week, Gen. Stanley McChrystal is to arrive in Berlin to present to Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, his concept of "partnering," which essentially says that as a matter of principle, Bundeswehr troops are to participate in military actions jointly with U.S. and other NATO troops.

The tragic death of four more Bundeswehr soldiers in Kunduz, when their armored reconnaissance vehicle strayed into a Taliban stronghold, gives us just a foretaste of what's in store for the Bundeswehr. The vehicle that was hit was an Eagle VI, the same type that German Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg has just ordered in Switzerland, to "improve" the protection of German troops.

FIGURE 1  
**Child Survival Rate in Iraq: Effect of the Sanctions**





Bundeswehr/Martin Stollberg

*A German soldier in Afghanistan, patrolling in the town of Faizabad. What's the point of the Bundeswehr being there, only to be sucked into a worse war?*

If it were ever to come to a military strike on Iran, this would result in a chain reaction with incalculable consequences. Already now, the entire region extending from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and also into Kyrgyzstan—which Russian President Dmitri Medvedev has warned is in danger of becoming a new Afghanistan—is one big powder-keg. Germany can neither afford to be drawn deeper into a war in Afghanistan, nor be pulled into a new coalition against Iran.

### Avoiding a New Dark Age

In the 14th Century, when the financial system of the Bardi and Peruzzi banking houses collapsed because of manipulation by the leading power at the time, Venice, a dark age ensued, in which one-third of the entire population, from India to Ireland, was wiped out by the Black Plague, starvation, superstition, irrationality, witch-burnings, flagellants, and the like. In Bosch and Bruegel's paintings, you can see the insanity on the faces of the people depicted there. So, if we want to avoid plunging once again into such a dark age—and that would be the outcome of a new war in Southwest Asia—we must move with utmost haste to end the financial and economic crisis, by instituting a two-tier banking system and a new credit system.

With regard to Afghanistan, the United States and the West must take up the offer from the head of Russia's anti-drug agency, to jointly destroy opium and cannabis production in Afghanistan, thereby drying up the source of financing for the Taliban and for terrorism

against Russia. Only after that is done, can there be a sensible reconstruction program in Afghanistan.

Even if it is difficult for the average citizen to detect the actual historic dynamic operating behind the apparent self-evidence of current events, a look back into history helps us to better understand why wars come about. Studying the prehistory of World Wars I and II can be quite useful. It is from that perspective, that we today must take seriously the assertions of such people as Bertrand Russell, who believe that war is an appropriate tool for population reduction:

“But bad times you may say, are exceptional, and can be dealt with by exceptional methods. This has been more or less true during the honeymoon period of industrialization, but it will not remain true unless the increase of population can be enormously diminished....

War ... has hitherto been disappointing in this respect ... but perhaps bacteriological war may prove more effective. If a Black Death could spread throughout the world once in every generation, survivors could procreate freely without making the world too full.... The state of affairs might be somewhat unpleasant, but what of it? Really high-minded people are indifferent to happiness, especially other people's.”—*The Impact of Science Upon Society*, 1951, emphasis added.

In the days and weeks ahead, the breakup of the Eurozone will no longer be possible to conceal. The crisis in Greece will be followed by even worse ones in Portugal, Spain, and Ireland, but also the potential state bankruptcies of Great Britain and the United States will make it clear that either the most important nations implement the LaRouche Plan for a new credit system, or we will plunge into a new dark age. An escalated war in Afghanistan, plus an unforeseeable chain reaction sparked by a military strike against Iran, would signify the imperial over-reaching, and sudden collapse of the financial system, which historian Niall Ferguson recently wrote about in his *Foreign Affairs* article. But it must not come to that!

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