

## Iraq 'On-the-Ground' Reality Is Demanding LaRouche Doctrine

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

After a disastrous April in Iraq, in which the U.S.-led occupying Coalition killed thousands of Iraqis and lost hundreds of its own soldiers without achieving any objective, Coalition government officials and their allies were growing desperate to transfer some image of “sovereignty” to “the Iraqis.” But only one really workable approach was on the table: the LaRouche Doctrine—including an immediate announcement of withdrawal of occupying forces—outlined by Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche (see page 6), which is circulating throughout leading circles and discussion fora in Southwest Asia. Several leading Iraqi figures, and their Arab compatriots, are demanding that the LaRouche Doctrine, which defines an overhaul of U.S. strategy in Southwest Asia, be implemented immediately. The most recent high-level endorsement came on April 28 from Dr. Ahmed Al-Kubaisi, a leading Sunni religious figure and chairman of the United Iraqi Patriotic Movement, which includes Iraqis of all religious persuasions. Al-Kubaisi represents an important force within Iraq, and is respected as a Sunni scholar worldwide.

In the United States, the impact of LaRouche’s April 17 initiative, and of the reality “on the ground,” was also visible. A spate of articles appeared in the establishment press calling for the dumping of Iraqi Governing Council boss Ahmed Chalabi—known as the author of “de-Baathification”; the rehabilitation of viable Baathist nationalists; and pulling U.S. troops out. Retired U.S. Army Gen. William Odom, in the *Wall Street Journal* April 28, called for withdrawing American troops as soon as possible, so as to avoid regional destabilization, prevent the total international isolation of the United States, and protect its security and economic interests. “We have failed,” Odom declared. “The issue is how high a price we’re going to pay—less, by getting out sooner, or more, by getting out later?”

The American military and its dwindling allies in Iraq

are facing a situation where they are damned if they do and damned if they don’t. In the two strategically crucial battles of Fallujah, in the Sunni Triangle, and Najaf, one of the Shi’ite holy cities, U.S. forces are unwilling to tolerate Iraqi resistance control, but unable to seize control themselves. After days of tough talk by Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmit, U.S. marines attacked Fallujah on the night of April 25-26, attempting to enter the city under the cover of massive aerial bombardments. But after four days of such attacks, the U.S. forces announced on April 29 a “withdrawal” from Fallujah to positions outside the city, and plans to send in units of the “new Iraqi army” to try to get control. But on the same day, contrary reports appeared that large numbers of American tanks were being shipped quickly to Iraq, and further troop deployments were on the agenda.

Any Anglo-American Coalition decision to try to take Fallujah at all costs, would mean destroying the city and liquidating its population. Kimmit’s threats were backed up by statements from President Bush himself, who said everything necessary would be deployed to take the city. UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who had criticized the assault on Fallujah earlier in April, appeared on American television on April 25, after the new siege began, and called it collective punishment. “When you surround a city, bomb a city, when people cannot go to hospital, what name do you have for that? And if you have enemies there, this is exactly what they want you to do, to alienate more people, so that more people support them, rather than you.”

Conflict around Najaf escalated at the same time. Warnings proliferated against invading the city and harming the holy shrine of Ali. Brahimi warned of disaster in the event of a military attack on Najaf. “This is a city with a lot of history. . . . Sending the tanks hauling into a place like this is not the right thing to do, and I think the Americans know that

extremely well.” Every leading figure of neighboring Iran has issued similar warnings—most recently, President Mohammed Khatami. As one diplomat from the region told *EIR*, the U.S. forces have no understanding of the Shi’ite mentality. Among Americans, a soldier killed tends to increase public opinion’s criticism of the war. But for Shi’ite Muslims especially, one dead mobilizes ten more to join the fight, beginning with the immediate members of his family.

Regarding the Coalition’s planned transfer of “limited sovereignty” to “the Iraqis” on June 30, the occupying powers find themselves in a similar dilemma. As a result of international pressure—epitomized by those coalition partners who have voted against the occupation with the feet of their departing troops—the United States has been forced to seek help from the UN. Thus, the mission of Brahimi, which has yielded a preliminary approach to setting up an interim government. In a statement to the Security Council on April 27, Brahimi said he would quickly resume talks with Iraqis to reach agreement by the end of May, on the composition of an interim Iraqi government to take over on June 30. This “Caretaker Government” would lead Iraq until elections, scheduled for January 2005.

In Brahimi’s view, the Caretaker Government, selected by the Iraqi people, would be led by a Prime Minister; a President would serve as Head of State, with two Vice-Presidents. Its “sole purpose will be to tend to the day-to-day administration” of Iraq, and it should “refrain . . . from entering into long-term commitments,” he said. Brahimi also suggested the establishment of a Consultative Assembly or Council, a representative body which would advise this government. He floated the idea of convening a National Conference, consisting of at least 1,000 people, in July, to “engage in a genuine national dialogue” on Iraq’s challenges. “In our view,” he said, “the Conference should be convened not by the UN or any other external body, but by an Iraqi Preparatory Committee, which should be established as soon as possible.” The Conference would discuss the security situation, the forthcoming elections, and the Transitional Administrative Law. The National Conference “will appoint a Consultative Council, which will be available to provide advice to the Government,” added Brahimi. “The Council would conduct plenary debates to convey the preoccupations of the people to the Government, and it would form Committees, which would receive reports from Ministers.”

Brahimi’s approach is better than anything proposed by Paul Bremer or Washington; however, it is still full of snags. Who are “the Iraqi people” who are to choose the government? Without elections, the choice will not be legitimate; this has been stated categorically by Ayatollah Ali Hussein al-Sistani, the highest Shi’ite authority. Then, is it to be sovereign? Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz told the U.S. Senate on April 23 that the sovereignty of the government Brahimi was trying to organize, would be strictly limited by the Coalition. Sen. Chuck Hagel (R.-Neb.) asked U.S. Am-



*The LaRouche Doctrine, an immediate exit strategy for U.S. Coalition forces from Iraq which can build stability in the region, is being debated throughout Southwest Asia. Dr. Ahmed al-Kubaisi (left, being interviewed) is a respected Iraqi Sunni scholar and political leader who endorsed the LaRouche Doctrine on April 27.*

bassador-nominee John Negroponte on April 27: What powers should the interim government have? “If a country doesn’t have the sovereignty to make national security decisions for itself, and military commitments, then I’m not sure I would define it as a sovereign government.”

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld says the new government should sign a status agreement with the United States, allowing the American military to stay on indefinitely and protect Iraq. But how can an Iraqi government legally sign such an agreement if it is neither democratically elected nor sovereign? The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, illegal and unjustified under international law, cannot be “legalized” by such maneuvers. The longer the disastrous occupation continues, the worse will military, as well as political-social-economic, conditions become. The United States must admit its wrongs, and hand over complete responsibility for a political settlement to the United Nations, the only authority recognized by international law to undertake such a task. As the LaRouche Doctrine makes clear, the U.S. military presence must be terminated, and responsibility for defense and security handed over to Iraqi institutions which are trained and qualified to do the job.

The international debate over his policy which LaRouche called for is in full swing. Leading Arab newspapers like *Al-Arab*, are publishing the LaRouche Doctrine; *Islam Online* ran a one-hour chat session with LaRouche on April 29, on his proposal and personal leadership. LaRouche’s interview with Hussein Askary is to be broadcast on major Arabic and Farsi television networks, and is being circulated internationally as a DVD. His international webcast on April 30 marked the time to transform the debate into U.S. policy.