

# **Labour & Trade Union Review**

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# **The House of Straw**

Iraq has pleaded Not Guilty to possessing weapons of self-defence, i. e. weapons of mass destruction. The American and British Governments have stated definitely that they know that it does possess weapons of mass destruction. Iraq's failure to list weapons of mass destruction in its 12,000 page list of its armaments therefore places it in breach of the latest Security Council Resolution in the eyes of the Ameranglian arbiters of world affairs, who know for a certainty that it has got them.

The United Nations weapons inspectors are searching Iraq for weapons of mass destruction. The White House has made it clear that it does not expect them to find any - not because they do not exist but because the inspectors are incompetent and Saddam has devised a cunning plan of concealment.

Our Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw must appear to act on different grounds from his more substantial and matter-of-fact American leader. American Governments can act on the basis of what they conceive to be American interest because the American state never developed the habit of spewing out clouds of morality, as an octopus spews out ink, when it goes into action. It takes itself to be the only really worthwhile thing in the world and therefore takes it as self-evident that it acts right when it acts in its own interest. Its sense of what is right is simply existential, as Britain's used to be before it went onto octopus mode in 1914, and then lost its way in a moral fog-bank of its own making. Its fundamental categories of morality are the categories which have prevailed in real life throughout recorded history: Us and Them. In American eyes Them now consists of the rest of the world, excepting the Jewish colonisation of Palestine (which of course includes the state of Israel, but it has long since gone beyond it - with Israel as a base area), Britain, and perhaps Canada, which are extensions of its Us.

Conducting its affairs on this realistic, if rudimentary, moral ground, America discusses the realities which its interests encounter in the world with a matter-of-factness that has not been possible in Britain for 88 years and 5 months - the time it has been in octopus-mode, squirting out high-minded moral sentiment on every possible occasion. (Perhaps it would be better described as Pecksniff-mode).



Until August 5, 1914 its public reasoning as a state was much like that of the United States today.

An occasional Tory intellectual, remembering times past, tries to resume that pre-1914 mode of honest discourse. But it all sounds hollow at best and it usually sounds indecent. Interest must be pursued in Pecksniff mode, even if it gets in the way of a realistic calculation of interest.

The Jewish colonisation of Palestine is a case in point. The Balfour Declaration policy committed Britain to a policy of flooding Palestine with Jews with a view to making it a Jewish State. When the Balfour Declaration was written into the Mandate system of the League of Nations, Lord Islington, an experienced Imperial administrator, proposed in the House of Lords that it "directly violates the pledges made by His Majesty's Government to the people of Palestine in the declaration of October, 1915, and is, as at present formed, opposed to the sentiments of the great majority of the people of Palestine."

In his speech supporting the motion, Islington said:

"no amount of dialectics would ever persuade anybody that it [the Balfour policy] was anything but a direct repudiation of solemn pledges made to the Arabs. Parliament was not committed to Zionism and had given no decision upon it. Zionism ran counter to the whole human psychology of the day. Half the troubles of the world today had their foundation in the elemental conception of nationality, and importing an alien race into a native and local race was flying in the face of the whole tendency of the age. It was an unnatural, partial, and altruistic experiment" (Times report 22.6.22)

"Altruistic" is the operative adjective here. The war propaganda of 1914-18 had carried the British public mind into a transcendental condition of spurious altruism in which the realistic calculation of self-interest became impossible. Only a few old hands of pre-altruistic times kept a grip on reality.

The Lords voted two to one against the Balfour policy. But the Government, then as now, had a massive Commons majority, composed of cynics and altruists (often the

same people), and the catastrophic policy was put into effect.

Churchill, the Greatest Briton, chastised the hard-headed Imperialist, Islington, for failing to participate in the make-believe of the moment. Islington replied in a letter to the Times on 18 July 1922:

"It has always been the purpose of Britain, in its attitude to the peoples that come under its care, to lead them gradually to the point where they will be capable of self-government. Abandoning this canon, we nullify the whole principle of British government. What will be the inevitable outcome of the present mandate policy for Palestine and its prospect of a Jewish home? Let safeguards be multiplied and multiplied again, the result must be that the native Arab will become subject to the immigrant Jew and that, instead of being made capable of self-government, he will be given over to an alien system towards which every day he shows his repugnance more and more clearly. The spirit of nationality, never stronger than now, is outraged. That sentiment which binds together all the Moslem peoples of the world is stirred - and to the disadvantage of the Empire.... It will be an ironic comment on our execution of a mandate under the League of Nations if we succeed only in adding another factor to the causes of disorder in the world."

The Government, secure in the mindless majority produced by the propaganda of the Great War and the triumphalism of the victory, pressed ahead with the catastrophic policy which gives us today the major point of disorder in the world. And Zionism was embraced by the Labour Party in the 1920s and 1930s, disillusioned in its domestic attempts at social reform, as its exotic Utopia.

Islington's idea of the British Empire as an institution dedicated to nurturing backward peoples towards self-government must of course be taken with a pinch of salt. But it was at least an ideology of the Empire, although realisation of its ideal was always postponable to the indefinite future. And while ethnic cleansing and colonisation had been done before, in America and Australia, they had not been done in the name of democracy and nationality, or even set out clearly in government policy.

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And the national principle which was directly affronted by Zionist policy for Palestine was a principle which Britain had itself introduced to the Middle East for the purpose of gaining allies in its war of conquest against the Ottoman Empire.

After 1918, Britain spoke of itself as "liberator" of the Arabs from Ottoman tyranny. But the Arabs had not experienced life in the Ottoman Empire as tyranny. What they experienced as

tyranny was British conduct after Britain had stirred them up with nationalist propaganda - Jihad propaganda - for war against the Turks, and then suppressed the Arab state by force, and by force launched mass Jewish colonisation - immigration is not the word for it - in order to lay the foundation for the Jewish State.

As Britain bungled its way from one World War to another - and by bungling in the second brought about the conditions in which the extermination of Jewry was undertaken by the Nazis - Zionism was the constant ideal of Left and Right. And both Left and Right, treasuring it as a morally uplifting venture altruistically undertaken on behalf of another people, were careful not to see its implications for the people who were actually occupying the land of Zion. Unlike Joshua, they deluded themselves about what they were doing.

It has been a maxim of British political philosophy since Burke's tirade against the French Revolution that those who dedicate themselves to an ideal beyond the existing order of things are liable to become barbarians in its service. The "moderate" socialists of the 1920s and 1930s applied the maxim to their colleagues who were gripped by the Bolshevik ideal, averting their eyes from the barbarism clearly implicit in their own Zionist ideal from the start, and explicit on the ground in Palestine from the 1930s at the latest. Zionist resolutions were regularly adopted by Labour Party conferences until 1945. And when Bevin balked at the actual implementation of the Zionist policy when he became Foreign Secretary in 1945 he was viciously attacked from the Left by Michael Foot and Richard Crossman.

Foot's mind is impervious to fact. He lives in some transcendental never-never land. But Crossman faced up to the factual consequences of Zionism. He saw that the restoration of Zion required what Joshua did to the Philistines - the easy going people of Palestine - had to be done again. And he condemned the rulers of Britain in the 1920s for not doing it comprehensively with a straightforward exercise of Imperial power instead of leaving it to the Jewish colonists to do it piecemeal.

The reason the ethnic cleansing was not done swiftly and cleanly by the Imperial power, to establish a vacant space for Jewish colonisation and the establishment of the Jewish State as a Dominion of the

Empire, was that the British Empire had rendered itself incapable of competent and straightforward Imperial action by the way it fought its war of destruction on Germany and its war of conquest on the Ottoman State. In the generation between the wars it was caught between two incompatible ideologies, the Imperial and the national-democratic. Each of them had sufficient force to make coherent and purposeful action under the other a practical impossibility. But each, hindered from constructive action by the other, was able to exert its destructive influence. That is how the Middle East came about.

Jack Straw is at the head of the Foreign Office which has bungled the world for three generations. The most knowledgeable Foreign Secretary of the past half century was Douglas Hurd. Hurd brought the television cameras into the Foreign Office and let them record him advising his senior staff that the work of the Office was to position itself on every major international issue in such a way that, whatever the outcome, it could show that it had advocated it.

That's still the game. The decisions in which Britain participates after the event are made elsewhere. While awaiting decision Britain maintains a semblance of foreign policy position by equivocating.

Straw has been saying that it is up to Iraq to prove that it has no weapons of mass destruction. We assume he knows very well that a negative of that kind is incapable of proof, and that the statement is babble to fill in time until Washington decides.

Washington says it knows that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Whitehall repeats the statement because, if it did not repeat it, it would be contradicting Washington, which is unthinkable. Iraq says it hasn't got any. If the UN inspectors fail to find any, that will be a demonstration of their incompetence, because it is unthinkable in the present condition of the world that what the White House says in a matter like this should be found to be mistaken.

How that matter is resolved will be decided by argument within the Republican Party at Washington. And we are all equal before that fact, Straw and us, equally powerless.

The only possible source of

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A collectivist view of the world

countervailing power we can see is the Arab League. It has been a joke up to the present. Sooner or later it will be driven to acquire regional cohesion. Washington's greatest concern must be to ensure that it does not happen this time round.



# RESOLUTION 1441

by David Morrison

It is tempting to believe that weapons inspections in Iraq will go ahead smoothly, and fruitlessly, and that Bush and Blair will not get an excuse for the war they so obviously want.

Iraq has a double incentive to be helpful to the weapons inspectors: (a) it is the only possible way to avoid war and (b) it will annoy the hell out of Bush and Blair. So, could Bush and Blair be denied an excuse for war? Could economic sanctions be over in a year's time? Could Saddam Hussein even see off a second Bush in two years time?

Back to reality! Bush and Blair have said over and over again that Iraq has "weapons of mass destruction" and is a threat not only to its neighbours but to the whole world. How could they possibly allow the weapons inspections to proceed to the point where Iraq's lack of "weapons of mass destruction" is demonstrated to the world? They have brought the world to the brink of war on the premise that Iraq has "weapons of mass destruction" or is in the process of developing them. How could they survive as credible leaders if they were unmasked as connen who invented an excuse to make war on Iraq?

So they need an excuse for war. And they need it soon (a) because after March it is too hot for war, and (b) because the longer the inspection process continues without obstruction, the more public opinion in the US and Britain will come round to the view that there is no need for a war, that any disarmament of Iraq can be accomplished without it.

Launching a war that is perceived to be unnecessary may have adverse political consequences for the instigators, especially if there are significant casualties (though it can be taken for granted that if a war is launched, by hook or by crook, "weapons of mass destruction" will be found in order to justify launching it in the first place).

## BLIX IS NOT BUTLER

How can Bush and Blair manufacture an excuse? With the former UNSCOM inspectorate, headed by Richard Butler and with their own intelligence operatives serving as UNSCOM inspectors, it would not have been difficult. After all, Butler manufactured an excuse for the US and Britain to bomb Iraq in December 1998 (see L&TUR, November 2002).

But the new UNMOVIC inspectorate headed by Hans Blix is much less open to manipulation by the US and Britain. Hence, the mutterings against him in the American press: he is described as an old style international civil servant, who believes in the nation state and is unable to distinguish between good ones and bad ones – so he can't be relied to find Saddam Hussein's Iraq guilty.

Also, since he became head of UNMOVIC in 2000, he has consistently stated if he finds individuals amongst his inspectors working for other agencies, he will get rid of them. Infiltration by intelligence services is less likely in UNMOVIC since it has recruited more of its staff directly, rather than by requesting states to supply personnel with appropriate skills: that was how UNSCOM recruited its staff, which made it easy for the US and Britain to put in their own intelligence operatives.

Paragraph 3 of resolution 1441 requires the Iraqis to provide an accurate account of their banned weapons programmes, past and present, and of any banned weapons in their possession today. There is every incentive for them to do so. It is not a breach of 1441 to have, or have had, banned weapons or weapons programmes – but it is a breach if the inspectors discover the account to be inaccurate. Paragraph 4 says:

"[The Security Council] Decides that false statements or omissions in the declarations submitted by Iraq pursuant to this resolution and failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and cooperate

fully in the implementation of, this resolution shall constitute a further material breach of Iraq's obligations and will be reported to the Council for assessment in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 12 below."

If the Iraqis give an accurate account, then UNMOVIC can be relied upon not to stitch them up, and not to make a meal of minor discrepancies.

But could banned material be planted in order to stitch them up? Perhaps.

British and American spokesmen keep saying that it is an outrageous lie for the Iraqis to say that they have no "weapons of mass destruction" today and no intention of developing them. The Iraqis have said this since 1997 long before the UNSCOM inspectors were withdrawn. It is worth emphasising that the UNSCOM inspectors did not disagree with the Iraqi assessment in 1997 or later. What was at issue was a matter of accounting. The inspectors had documentary evidence of weapons production, 90-95% of which they accepted had either been used in the Iran-Iraq war or had been destroyed by Iraq or by UNSCOM itself. But there was a small amount unaccounted for, which Iraq claims had either been used or destroyed. That was all that was at issue between UNSCOM and Iraq.

## NO-FLY ZONES

Paragraph 8 provides another mechanism for stitching up Iraq. This says:

[The Security Council] Decides further that Iraq shall not take or threaten hostile acts directed against any representative or personnel of the United Nations or the IAEA or of any Member State taking action to uphold any Council resolution;

The assassination of half a dozen inspectors by the Iraqis, or in circumstances in which the Iraqis would be blamed, would provide an excellent excuse for war. If that happened, the Security Council would authorise war without hesitation.

Another question arises here: does Iraqi firing on, or threatening to fire on, American or British aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones in Northern and Southern Iraq constitute a breach of this para-

graph? Clearly, the US and Britain meant it to be so: that's why they included "personnel of any Member State taking action to uphold any Council resolution". And at the Security Council on 8 November when 1441 was passed, the US ambassador, John Negroponte, said that not only UNMOVIC and the IAEA but also any UN member state could report a breach to the Security Council. That only makes sense if paragraph 8 is deemed to apply to Iraqi action against the US/UK aircraft in the no-fly zones.

Of course, the no-fly zones and their policing are not mentioned, let alone authorised, in any Security Council resolution, so Iraqi action against US/UK aircraft infringing Iraqi airspace is self-defence permitted by Article 51 of the UN Charter. But the US and Britain continue to claim that they established the zones in the light of the humanitarian concern for Iraqi civilians expressed in resolution 688 passed in April 1991 just after the Gulf War.

(Resolution 688 condemned "the repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq". The context of this was the call by President Bush for people to rise up against Saddam Hussein, who naturally responded by putting the risings down – and President Bush left the rebels to their fate.)

White House spokesmen have stated unequivocally that Iraqi firing on US/UK aircraft in the no-fly zones is a breach. But, strangely, the British government has publicly disagreed. Jack Straw told BBC 2's Newsnight on 22 November that the British government didn't regard it as a breach. Geoff Hoon was more equivocal, in replying to the debate on resolution 1441 in the House of Commons on 25 November, saying:

"The coalition patrols in the no-fly zones are in support of UN Security Council resolution 688. Coalition patrols are justified under international law. As Members will recall, they were set up in response to an overwhelming humanitarian necessity. Let me be clear about this: Iraqi action against our aircraft is contrary to international law, but the focus of resolution 1441 is disarma-

ment of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and UNMOVIC provides a mechanism to take that forward."

It is worth noting that the Russian ambassador, Sergey Lavrov, told the Security Council after the vote:

"We also note the following clarifying points, presented by the sponsors [the US and the UK] when they introduced the resolution and confirmed by the heads of UNMOVIC and of the IAEA. Ö

"Paragraph 8 refers to personnel of the United Nations, to those of the IAEA and to any other personnel whom Members of the United Nations may provide to UNMOVIC or to the IAEA on the request of those organizations."

In other words, Lavrov is saying that Russia had been assured by the US/UK that paragraph 8 does not refer to their personnel in the no-fly zones. Kofi Annan has also said that this is the correct interpretation.

Since 1441 was passed, the US has claimed on several occasions that its aircraft have been threatened and that they have been "forced" to retaliate against anti-aircraft and ground-to-air missile sites. As yet, the US hasn't tried to make an issue of this alleged Iraqi action at the Security Council.

Ministry of Defence replies to questions from Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs spokesman, Menzies Campbell, have revealed that the tonnage of bombs dropped by US/UK aircraft over the southern no-fly zone has increased dramatically this year. In the period 1 March to 13 November, 126.4 tonnes were dropped, that is, on average around 15 tonnes a month, which is up 60% compared with last year (Guardian, 4 December). In April only 0.3 tonnes were dropped, compared with 54.6 tonnes in September and 17.7 tonnes in October. Obviously, this increase has been prompted by humanitarian concerns only, and has got nothing to do with softening up Iraqi air defences in preparation for war.

## TOUGHER INSPECTION REGIME

UNMOVIC could have been on the ground in Iraq in early October had they not been stopped by the US and Britain. The excuse for stopping what they had

previously demanded was that they wanted a new Security Council resolution with a "tough" inspection regime, and they wanted war to be authorised in the event of a breach without further recourse to the Security Council.

It would be an exaggeration to say that they got neither. But it is certainly true that 1441 is significantly different from their original draft resolution.

The provision in the draft resolution whereby "any permanent member of the Security Council may request to be represented on any inspection team" complete with armed escort, which amounted to invasion dressed up as inspection, has gone.

But the inspection regime is "tougher" than the existing one in two significant respects. First, the special arrangements for the inspection of presidential sites negotiated by Kofi Annan in February 1998 have been rescinded. Second, UNMOVIC and the IAEA must be given immediate, and private, access to anybody they wish to interview, and they and their families may be taken out of Iraq for that purpose. However, Blix has said that the latter is impractical.

## NO AUTOMATICITY

The draft resolution, if passed, would have authorised any member state of the UN "to use all necessary means to restore international peace and security in the area" in the event of an Iraqi breach, and it allowed any member to judge if a breach had taken place. That automatic trigger for war at the discretion of the US and the UK has gone.

The US ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, said so at the Security Council meeting on 8 November when 1441 was passed:

"As we have said on numerous occasions to Council members, this resolution contains no 'hidden triggers' and no 'automaticity' with respect to the use of force. If there is a further Iraqi breach, reported to the Council by UNMOVIC, the IAEA or a Member State, the matter will return to the Council for discussions as required in paragraph 12."

And Sir Jeremy Greenstock said something similar for the UK:

"We heard loud and clear during the negotiations the concerns about 'automaticity' and 'hidden triggers' – the concern that on a decision so crucial we should not rush into military action; that on a decision so



crucial any Iraqi violations should be discussed by the Council. Let me be equally clear in response, as a co-sponsor with the United States of the text we have just adopted. There is no 'automaticity' in this resolution. If there is a further Iraqi breach of its disarmament obligations, the matter will return to the Council for discussion as required in paragraph 12."

Those remarks by the co-sponsors were a condition for France, Russia and China supporting the resolution. That is clear from the joint statement they issued the same day:

*"Resolution 1441 (2002) adopted today by the Security Council excludes any automaticity in the use of force. In this regard, we register with satisfaction the declarations of the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom confirming this understanding in their explanations of vote [our emphasis] and assuring that the goal of the resolution is the full implementation of the existing Security Council resolutions on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction disarmament. All Security Council members share this goal."*

"In case of failure by Iraq to comply with its obligations, the provisions of Paragraphs 4, 11 and 12 will apply. Such failure will be reported to the Security Council by the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC or by the Director-General of the IAEA. It will be then for the Council to take a position on the basis of that report."

*"Therefore this resolution fully respects the competences of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations."*

#### REPORTING BACK

Paragraph 4 (see above) says that false statements or omissions in the initial Iraqi declaration constitute a breach, which must be reported to the Security Council. Paragraph 11 directs UNMOVIC and IAEA to report to the Council "any interference by Iraq with inspection activities, as well as any failure by Iraq to comply with its disarmament obligations".

Paragraph 12 says:

"[The Security Council] Decides to convene immediately upon receipt of a report in accordance with paragraphs 4 or 11 above, in order to consider the situation and the need for full compliance with all of the relevant Council resolutions in order to secure international peace and security."

The US and Britain specifically accepted in their statements to the Council on 8 November (see above) that if there is an Iraqi breach reported to the Council then as required by paragraph 12 the matter would come back to the Council.

#### RESERVING THE RIGHT

The Council could at that point pass a second resolution authorising war against Iraq. But, in line with what the Bush administration has said all along, Negroponte made it clear on 8 November that the US reserved the right to go to war without such a resolution. He said:

"And, one way or another, Iraq will be disarmed. If the Security Council fails to act decisively in the event of further Iraqi violations, this resolution does not constrain any Member State from acting to defend itself against the threat posed by Iraq or to enforce relevant United Nations resolutions and protect world peace and security."

Likewise in the House of Commons on 25 November, Jack Straw reserved the right for Britain to go to war without such a resolution:

"I should make it clear, as I did on 7 November, that the preference of the Government in the event of any material breach is that there should be a second Security Council resolution authorising military action. However, the faith now being placed in the Security Council by all members of the United Nations, including the United States, requires the Council to show a corresponding level of responsibility. So far, it has done so and I believe that it will do so in the future, but we must reserve our position in the event that it does not."

To the discomfort of Straw, Labour MP, Neil Gerrard, exposed the double standards in this approach. He said:

"One of the key problems is that we are being asked in the motion to support the UN, yet at the same time we are

being told that the US Government and our Government reserve the right to ignore anything that the UN says if they do not like what the UN decides when it looks at the weapons inspectors' reports."

"What would happen if we had a second resolution that explicitly called for military action and there were a veto? Would that prove that the UN had failed? We have been willing to use the veto in the past, as has the US. Are we saying that we will never use the veto again? That seems to be the implication of choosing to reserve our right to ignore a possible veto from another country."

"We cannot have it both ways. We cannot say, 'You must support the UN' and at the same time say, 'We reserve the right to do whatever we want if we do not like what the UN decides'."

#### SELF-DEFENCE ?

The US and Britain have always maintained that they do not need authorisation by the Security Council to go to war against Iraq to enforce the disarmament resolutions. They did so in December 1998. Their usual justification is that Iraq has broken the terms of the ceasefire at the end of the Gulf War in 1991, and therefore the authorisation to "use all necessary means" contained in resolution 678 for the purposes of expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait still stands - which is nonsense since there haven't been any Iraqi forces in Kuwait for nearly 12 years.

Judging by Negroponte's remarks quoted above, it looks as though this time they are going to claim to be defending themselves against the threat posed by Iraq, which is even more ridiculous. How can a broken-backed, impoverished state be said to be a threat to the greatest power the world has ever seen, which is thousands of miles away?

But they can say what they like, since as veto powers they can never be sanctioned by the Security Council for anything they do: they are above the law.

NB Security Council resolutions and proceedings are available on the UN website in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at [www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide](http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide).

## Notes On The News

### By Gwydion M Williams

#### Japan: Ninja Economics?

I always found it suspicious that Japan suffered an odd economic crisis just at the moment the Cold War was over and the US was looking for a new global foe. It's not in fact that they're in crisis, just that they've stood still and ceased the dramatic growth that looked likely to make them richer than the USA. Given what happened to Ceausescu in Romania, to Sukarno in Indonesia and to the Socialists and Christian Democrats in Italy, there was good reason to think that the USA had become a menace to old allies who were now unwanted. Even Saddam in Iraq fits the pattern: his invasion of Kuwait was an attempt to fight his way out of an economic crisis, burdened by debts he had built up while doing the West's work in fighting Militant Islam in Iran.

None of these countries were conceivably a threat to the USA, Iraq was possibly to Israel. Japan was a different matter, a conceivable threat to US hegemony, for as long as it went on growing. And then growth mysteriously stopped.

Which is why I was fascinated to read the following on page 21 of the *Economist* yearbook for 2003: "The course of policy in Japan over the past ten years would be easier to understand if it had actually been the goal of the authorities to keep the economy in slump. It still seems as if this will be their intention in 2003." The remark is rhetorical: the author sees it as obvious that money is the core of existence and does not wonder if something much more subtle might be happening.

Japan's economy remains static, but comfortable for most Japanese. Meantime there are large and growing ties between Japan and China, with China still growing fast and with an economy dominated by 'connections', the traditional Chinese model that is thousands of years older than the Anglo model.

#### If it prosper, 'tis not Extremism

After the recent election in Turkey, a political movement that was defined as 'extremist' when it was on the fringes has

now been redefined as 'Muslim Democrat'. And as if to confirm that image, the new government is keen to negotiate entry to the European Union.

Turkey has been seeking entry for years, but Muslim and mostly-Asiatic Turkey has been left out in the cold while a whole stream of European states have joined or are close to joining. Turkey was fine for NATO, but not for an economic union that drops barriers between people.

My suspicion is that the new Islamic government is 'boxing clever', acting as if it aspires to join the European Union, knowing that there is no danger of actual admission. When they are shut out again, as is almost certain, then they have every justification for taking Turkey in a new direction.

#### Five Bitches Called Eve

In late November, news broke that almost all modern dogs trace back to a small number of wolves living in East Asia 15,000 years ago. Maybe three, maybe five, but these are assuredly the common mothers or 'Eves' of the canine world.

This news came packaged with a study showing dogs as smarter than any other non-human animal at picking up signals from humans. "In a simple experiment designed to compare their behaviour to those of wolves and our closest relative, the chimpanzee, the findings clearly showed that dogs - even young puppies - were far better at interpreting social cues from humans." (BBC Online, 22<sup>nd</sup> November.)

And that's the important thing about dogs. Chimps are in many ways smarter, but understanding people is different from analytical skills, while computers offer an 'automated officiousness' that does not deserve to be called 'intelligence'.

Humans keeping dogs may have begun earlier, but perhaps those animals left few descendants into modern times. If there were two sorts of dog, one which just helped you with hunting and another that gives every sign of liking you and under-

standing you, which would you choose? I doubt that our ancestors thought much differently, which may be why a small group of friendly dogs were preferred and came to dominate the 'descent of dog'.

#### What The Butler Never Said

One aspect of the oddly curtailed trials of Royal butlers has been missed, as far as I know. The rules of English law mean that defendants can say what they like and slander does not apply, nor is it libellous to report it at the time. A damaging story that was too doubtful to be published as regular news could be circulated through the medium of criminal evidence, it would be reportable with no redress beyond the rules on perjury. Perjury is a criminal offence, certainly, but that means that it can only be punished if it can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the evidence was an intended lie.

#### Sad to be Nasty: the Tory disintegration

If morals are not what they were 20 years ago, why is this?

Iain Duncan Smith chose to use the Tory conference to declare that the Tories must lose their image as the 'nasty party'. But then, for no clear reason, he chose to try to enforce party discipline against the notion that gay couples might be allowed to adopt. It was an obvious matter of conscience: most Labour MPs voted for but some against, most Tories would have voted against but some for, and some still did in defiance of IDS's authority.

What we are seeing is the unravelling of Thatcherism. The basic incompatibility of the Libertarians and the Reactionaries. The lesson of the 1980s should have been the accidental nature of the connection between middle-class or "bourgeois" social values and capitalist economics. Marxism was closer to the truth when it saw middle-class social values as self-destructive with its promotion of capitalism. The mistake was to suppose that capitalist economics might not carry on within some different set of morals.

The current situation is a set of shattered middle-class social values which have so far prevented anything else from replacing them. And Iain Duncan Smith is broken-heartedly discovering that most of his MPs are revolting.



# Codology

by Sean McGouran

Mike Hume used to be the editor of the Revolutionary Communist Party's "Living Marxism" magazine, now he produces a weekly column for Rupert Murdoch's *Times*. He also edits an on-line magazine called *Spiked*, which may have something to do with an actual magazine of the same name produced some years ago. It wanted the Church of England disestablished (the established Church of Scotland was not mentioned), there were a number of other fairly tiresome aspects top the publication. The on-line version reads like a cross between RCP and FCS (Federation of Conservative Students) attitudinising from about 1987, it is a very odd mix. Hume is not the only RCP'er to go 'mainstream', Frank F. Redi (usually minus the umlaut) can be heard occasionally on *Any Questions?* on Radio 4 UK, and read in the posh papers and magazines, mostly traditionally 'right wing' ones. The RCP formally dissolved itself about ten years ago. The material submitted by these and other former leading members of the Party (a breakaway from the IS / SWP [International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party] in the direction of Trotskyist orthodoxy) is often quite commonsensical, especially compared with the frivolous Fleet Street twaddle in which it is embedded.

But it can be glibly apolitical, (or apparently so) as in Hume's piece in *The Spectator* (16 / 11 / 2002), where he ruminates on the futility of the anti-[Gulf] War movement. "The old Left, ignorant of geopolitics, was obsessed with finding a direct economic cause for every war", he claims that *Militant* (always good for an easy dig), said the Falklands War was about fish stocks in the South Atlantic. Well, they did, but it was among a bundle of things, including the notion that there is oil in them tar waters. (Presumably 'fish stocks' is mentioned to raise a superior smile, but the seas were then, and are now even more obviously over-fished. The 'Cod Wars' between the UK and Iceland may have been to subject of jokes in the Home Counties – in Iceland, and the

English and Scottish fishing ports – they were deadly serious.

Hume also writes that it is "interesting how the notion of an international Jewish conspiracy can now be comfortably espoused by much of the Left as by far-Right fragments and Islamic fundamentalists." This is, in the context of modern journalism, too clever by half. Neo-Nazis may well believe in a Jewish conspiracy straight out of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (one of the dullest texts committed to paper), "Islamic fundamentalists" are probably in there because they are *The Spectator's* currently favourite out-group. What they see is Israel as an alien intrusion on western Asia, with America standing behind it. Despite the demonisation of "Islamic fundamentalists" as anti-Semitic because they are anti-Zionist, they are largely anti-USA (the bombing in Bali had very little to do with Israel. And a great deal to do with Australia being Uncle Sam's policeman in that part of the world.)

As for "much of the Left", an arm of the Zionist state is the World Zionist Organisation, which takes pride in its capacity to influence events from Ethiopia, to Russia, to the USA. It is certainly international in scope – the word "conspiracy" hardly enters into the matter – the WZO, the Jewish Agency and literally thousands of relatively minor agencies operate in every continent. They concentrate on America partly because it has a very large Jewish population and Zionist lobby, but mainly because it is the most powerful state on the planet: more overwhelmingly powerful than any other state in history has ever been.

These arms of the Israeli state are quite well aware of the power of the Shoah / Holocaust as a weapon of psychological warfare. It is useful in incapacitating Germany. (The UK state commemorates the Holocaust – which can be used to intimidate other peoples on mainland Europe, the French for example – rather than the Slave Trade in which it played such a large part for three centuries.) The USSR was ac-

cused of being anti-Semitic in the 1970s and '80s when it dithered about allowing relatively well-educated people to leave in their hundreds of thousands. The mess the erstwhile USSR is in must be very gratifying for the WZO. But probably not to Israel as such, there the Russian-speaking Jews behave as if they should be somewhere else; preferably the USA, or, in a surprisingly large number of cases back in the USSR; or at least CIS.

This is all in the context of how feeble the current anti-war movement is, and how it has not focussed attention on what Bush and Blair are up to in the Gulf / Iraq, Hume seems to have forgotten about Iran and North Korea, the other elements in the 'axis of evil'. The anti-war movement is also moralistic about war, which is a fair enough criticism, but nobody is going to get crowds onto the street by giving disquisitions on geopolitics. He ends his article with "[a] plague on both the White House and the whiter-than-white houses". That is not even going to get Mike Hume onto the streets in protest, much less apolitical people left rudderless by New Labour.

In the course of his discussing the "old Left" (which presumably now includes the New Left), and its economism, he shrugs off the notion that "it's all about oil". The problem with this is that it emphatically is "all about oil" – and the twenty first century will be a series of wars about this dwindling resource.

**The web addresses for the Church & State and associated sites have recently changed. These are their new locations:—**

**Athol Books**  
<http://www.atholbooks.org/index.shtml>

**—Aubane Historical Society**  
<http://www.atholbooks.org/ahs/index.shtml>

**—Church & State** <http://www.atholbooks.org/magazines/cands/index.shtml>

**—The Heresiarch**  
<http://www.atholbooks.org/magazines/heresiarch/index.shtml>

# Why is NATO expanding ?

by David Morrison

## FULL MEMBERS

NATO is expanding apace. At its meeting in Prague on 21-22 November, seven states – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – were invited to join, bringing the total number of full members to 26 by May 2004.

This is the second tranche of former Soviet bloc states to join – Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary became full members in 1999. But, with the accession of the Baltic states, this is the first time that states that were formerly part of the Soviet Union itself have become full members. This tranche also includes one state, Slovenia, which is a product of the dismemberment of Yugoslavia.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

But this is only a part of the story. Beginning in 1994, NATO has drawn another 20 states within its orbit, in the so-called Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), aka Partnership for Peace (PfP).

46 states in all are now represented on the EAPC (see full list below), including the Western European states, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland, which stayed out of NATO during the Cold War because of their "neutrality", plus every former Soviet bloc state, plus every former Soviet republic, apart from Russia itself.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council now encompasses such unlikely Euro-Atlantic states as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

NATO in its PfP guise almost circles the Northern Hemisphere from Alaska in the West to the borders of China in the East. Russia is now almost surrounded by NATO states.

The only European states that are not members of the EAPC apart from Russia (and minnows like Liechtenstein) are Bosnia and the rump Yugoslavia. They are expected to be brought in "once necessary progress is achieved, including full cooperation with the ICTY", to quote from the Prague Summit Declaration, that is, once they do what their told by Britain and America, including hand over suspects to the Hague.

## BELARUS & UKRAINE

By some miscalculation, two states – Belarus and the Ukraine – whose presidents occasionally refuse to do as they're told, have been allowed into the EAPC already,

and to the discomfort of the NATO hierarchy they proposed to turn up as was their right to an EAPC meeting in Prague.

On orders from the US, the Czech government refused President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus a visa to enter the Czech Republic on the grounds of his "human rights abuses". That solved the Belarus problem.

But President Leonid Kuchma was more difficult to ban, because NATO has also got a special relationship with the Ukraine through the so-called NATO-Ukraine Commission, which was also due to meet in Prague. Even more embarrassingly, the US and the UK allege that President Kuchma personally approved the sale of a Kolchuga early warning radar system to Iraq recently. It was hoped he wouldn't turn up in Prague. But he did.

What is more, because alphabetically Ukraine comes just before the United Kingdom and the United States, he was due to sit beside Tony Blair and George W Bush. This embarrassment was avoided by ordering the seating in accordance with the French names of states, French being the other official NATO language. This meant that the Ukraine ended up next to Turquie and a long way away from Etats Unis and Royaume Uni.

(NATO is also extending its tentacles southwards through its so-called Mediterranean Dialogue which was launched in December 1994 and currently involves seven non-NATO nations in the Mediterranean area: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.)

## NO MORE NATO WARS

On the face of it, this enormous expansion of NATO since the collapse of the Soviet Union doesn't make sense. NATO's reason d'être as a defensive alliance against the Soviet bloc disappeared when the Soviet bloc disappeared. But instead of disbanding itself NATO has expanded out of all recognition, and clearly intends to expand further in its various forms.

Also, this expansion is taking place at a time when it is clear that NATO will never fight a war as an alliance again. It has only ever fought one war as an alliance – against Yugoslavia in 1999. The US provided the vast bulk of the resources for that war, but it was constrained from applying them as it wanted, in particular, from bombing non-military targets from the outset of the war,

because the war was run under the NATO umbrella by a 19-member committee.

The US is not going to let that happen again: in future, the US is going to be in full political and military control. The US will decide what has to be done, and will put together a coalition of states willing to help do it under US direction. In future, NATO will not be able to constrain the US from doing what it wants to do in the way it wants to do it. The role of other NATO members, whether full or associate, will be to assist the US to do what it wants to do in the way it wants to do it.

The experience of the war on Yugoslavia on its own would probably have meant that the US would never again have allowed its forces to fight under the NATO umbrella. But the coming to power in Washington of people like Donald Rumsfeld who favour unilateral action by the US in the world and the 9/11 attacks on the US, which have given them the opportunity to follow their unilateralist instincts, make it certain. As a war fighting alliance, NATO is dead.

The so-called "war on terrorism" is not a NATO war. It is a US war in which a few other NATO states have bit parts under US direction. It is true that after 9/11 for the first time in its history NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (which says that an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all of them) and expressed its willingness to rush to the aid of the US. But that was, near enough, the beginning and the end of NATO's contribution to the "war on terrorism".

NATO assets were redeployed at the request of the US: Airborne Early Warning aircraft to patrol US airspace (because the equivalent US assets were being used over Afghanistan) and NATO naval forces to the eastern Mediterranean to monitor merchant shipping. But unlike the war on Yugoslavia, NATO as an organization has no role whatsoever in the direction of the war. Nor will it have any role in a war on Iraq.

## ANTI-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

Gorbachov claimed he was promised by Bush Senior that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe if the Warsaw Pact was disbanded. But it has expanded, massively, not only into Eastern Europe but also into Asia in its PfP guise, so that now every state that emerged out of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War is now associated with NATO. This expansion was obviously directed against Russia, and the ex-Soviet



states were happy to participate in it as a guarantee of their independence.

Russia has not had the will to resist this encirclement. It objected at the outset to the extension of full membership into Eastern Europe, but there has been barely a whimper of protest at the extension of associate membership into Asia. Over time its objections have melted away, so much so that Putin's comment on the recent extension of full membership at Prague was that it was "not necessary" (Guardian, 23 November).

## POLITICAL ALLIANCE

The new NATO states have proved very useful to the US in its "war on terrorism". They may have very little in the way of military assets, but they were in a position to provide bases and overflying rights for US forces in Eastern Europe and Asia.

The US has proposed that NATO create a 21,000 strong multi-national force capable of going anywhere in the world at short notice. This was approved at Prague and it is due to be operable in some form by October next year. The purpose of the force is to assist the US in its "war on terrorism". This will be a NATO asset which can only be deployed with the consent of all 19, soon to be 26, full members of the alliance, with the possibility that in some cases one or more of them will bloc deployment.

The US must have mixed feelings about augmenting NATO assets, which may be denied to it on a vital occasion. From its point of view, there is much to be said for a loose political alliance most of whose members can be persuaded, by whatever means, to render appropriate assistance when the need arises. It follows that the extending full membership to more states is not necessarily desirable from the US point of view.

## DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE

Despite having changed its nature at the end of the Cold War, NATO has not changed the Treaty under which it operates. According to this, NATO is a defensive alliance, established to render collective assistance to any one of its members that is attacked in Europe or North America.

Article 5 of the Treaty says:

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area."

What kind of armed attack demands a collective NATO response? According to Article 6, this includes an armed attack "on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, or on the territory of or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer" or "on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer."

The Treaty does not authorise the use of armed force in any other circumstances. Plainly, therefore, the NATO war on Yugoslavia (which was not a response to an armed attack on any of the member states) was not authorised in the Treaty. The same will most likely be true of operations all over the world by the NATO Response Force.

It is not true to say that the Treaty forbids armed action by NATO in these circumstances, but such action is contrary to the defensive character of the Treaty.

Why has NATO not changed the Treaty to reflect its new character? The answer must be that the US and Britain don't want to draw attention to the fact that it is no longer a defensive alliance, nor to define what its new role is. Far better to leave that undefined, so that no limits are placed on its role.

## NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL

To blunt its objection to NATO expansion, Russia was accorded special consultation rights with NATO, first via the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council established in 1997 (prior to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joining). This was replaced by the NATO-Russia Council in May this year. The main difference between the two is that whereas the former was bilateral, that is, between NATO as an organisation and Russia, in the latter Russia sits down with the 19 other members of NATO proper. But both are about consultation – and in exchange for this Russia has acquiesced in being surrounded by NATO states and in US forces being based in these states.

It is a mystery why it has accepted this sop, when that gives it no power at all in NATO affairs. Full membership would at least give it a veto over the disposition of NATO assets. Has Russia asked for full membership? If Jack Straw is to be believed, apparently not. He told the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee on 14 November that Russia had never offered to join NATO, nor had NATO asked it to join.

## EU RAPID REACTION FORCE

Over the past two years, Turkey has demonstrated the power of veto that a full member of NATO can exercise. The EU Rapid Reaction Force was formally established by the

Nice Treaty in December 2000. But two years later it has yet to get off the ground, because Turkey has vetoed the use of NATO assets by an EU force, over which it has no control because it isn't an EU member.

This has presented Turkey with a golden opportunity to press its claims for EU membership (which it first sought in 1963) and to apply pressure for a favourable settlement in Cyprus prior to it joining the EU. Lately, in a bid to get the use of Turkish bases for war on Iraq, the US has become a public advocate for Turkish EU membership.

Further doubt has been cast on the EU force by the agreement to create a NATO Response Force. It will use the same NATO planning assets and the same actual forces as the EU force, and will have first call on these resources. In other words, it is doubtful if both can be deployed at the same time, at least not at full strength.

Negotiations with Turkey about the EU force have dragged on since December 2000. On more than one occasion it looked as if the matter was settled but it is still up in the air. At the outset, Turkey demanded full participation in EU military decision-making even though it wasn't a member of the EU, but Greece was less than happy about that. The matter has yet to be settled.

It was hoped that the first deployment of the EU force would be to take over peacekeeping duties from NATO in Macedonia this autumn, but that had to be abandoned. It is fitting that Macedonia should have been selected for the first deployment of a force which is a bone of contention between Greece and Turkey, since Macedonia itself is also a bone of contention between them. At Greece's insistence the internationally recognised name of the state is "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", and that is how it is referred to in all NATO documents. However, every such reference is accompanied by a footnote saying: "Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name".

## POSTSCRIPT

The 46 members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council are:

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan.

# Review & Comment

by Sean McGouran

## On the Origins of the 'Gulf War' Politics and Theology

Peter Brooke, — the compiler is probably the right word — of this pamphlet, puts 'Gulf War' in quotes partly because the hugely unequal contest in 1991 barely deserves the name. There is also the fact that the long war between Iraq and Iran was fought in largely the same terrain. It was an appallingly bloody war in the course of which hundreds of thousands were killed or maimed. (Dilip Hiro makes the same point in his *Dictionary of the Middle East*, and describes them as Gulf War I, and Gulf War II.)

There are three items in the pamphlet, the first is *How America Destroyed The Peace* (reprinted from *Labour & Trade Union Review*, May 1991). Hugh Roberts, the author, was/is "a specialist in Algerian politics" at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He was founder-secretary of the SOAS-based Society for Algerian Studies, and now lives in Egypt.

He uses the phrase "Jesuitical sense of truth" in regard to John Major's hawking about peace with Iraq. The Jesuit notion of truth is far more subtle than what is reported here. Major told a lie and got away with it because he was Prime Minister of the UK. And because he was lying on behalf of George Bush, President of the USA. This is the nearest this highly political pamphlet gets to 'theology' (apparently other pamphlets are more religiously-oriented.)

Roberts gives a vigorous recounting of the skulduggery engaged in by the US Establishment (Dick Cheney, then Secretary of Defense, being particularly energetic), to prevent a peaceful solution. The states of the Arab League, had, at a regular meeting of Foreign Ministers at the beginning of August, unanimously condemned the invasion of Kuwait, but had decided that it was an internal Arab problem. By August 9, 1990, the majority decision at a summit-meeting was effectively a declaration of war on Iraq, in support of Kuwait. This was in part, a public humiliation of Yassar Arafat (of the PLO - Palestine Liberation Organisation) and King Hussein of Jordan, both of whom had put themselves about attempting to

bring about a peaceful, Arab, resolution to the problem. Arafat was to meet King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, on August 7, but the latter was too deep in discussion with Cheney to talk to Arafat. A summit consisting of Fahd, Mubarak (of Egypt) and Saddam fell through because Mubarak did not turn up (it is not made clear whether or not Saddam was also embarrassed.)

The belligerent anti-Iraq resolution put to the League summit in Cairo had been so hurriedly produced that Arafat claims that what was put before the meeting was actually written in English. Roberts mentions here the slightly bogus quality of some League members' freedom of action.

## Oil money talks.

Iraq, which had presumably thought the Kuwaitis would hold out for longer than a morning, decided at this point to annex Kuwait as a province. Saddam and company must be surprised to find themselves still in charge in Baghdad ten years on.

Next is an interview by *The Guardian* (12 / 02 / 1991) of Crown Prince (now King) Hassan of Jordan. Jordan had had little to do with Iraq until Gulf War I, when its port of Aqaba became Iraq's entrepôt. Of the twenty two border disputes in the Persian Gulf area since 1900, twenty one had been resolved by force. In other words, Saddam was not being exceptionally wicked in attempting to strong-arm Kuwait, which was messing Iraq about, demanding repayments of enormous loans for the conduct of the war against Iran.) Hassan leaves it unsaid, but most of the 'force' would have been used by the UK in its capacity as hegemon of the area. The breast-beating about chemical weapons was absurd, there had been no such moralising when they were being used against the Iran-ians. The immediate problem could have been solved, and probably peacefully, by the Arabs themselves. Brooke describes this as "moral and intellectual integrity" — since recanted. But even in this guarded interview, the feeling comes across that the poor relation Jordanians, (on the front line against the Zionist state, among other things), were not heartbroken about the Kuwaitis' plight.

The *Guardian* being quoted here is

fairly obviously the left-liberal British newspaper. It is not (just) nit-picking, nor pedantry but there is a US weekly (more left than liberal) of the same name, which could well have carried such an interview.

The final item is a reprint of the interview between the career-diplomat April Glaspie and Saddam prior to the invasion of Kuwait. It consists of a lengthy setting-out of Iraq's position by Saddam Hussein. Despite having fought what was, in effect, the West's war against Iran, the US had a dubious attitude towards Iraq. It appeared to see the place in the same light as Romania, a sort of Soviet satellite, with himself as a dictator with no popular support. Glaspie denied this and made the famous remark about America not taking sides in the Iraq / Kuwait border dispute.

An alternative version in which she incites Iraq to take over Kuwait, is given. If it is accurate Brooke is quite correct in describing it as "incriminating".

## FREUDIAN SLIPS?

In his *Sunday Times* column (20 / 10 / 02) Andrew Sullivan mentioned "the Saudis" as part of an 'Islamofascist' front. It is a bit of a Freudian slip, as Saudi Arabia was, during Gulf War II, and will be again, Our Honored Ally. The Saudis are technically, religious purists. They are, in fact, seedy hypocrites, and objects of contempt for those who take Islam seriously. The latter despise everything about the Saudi family and state except the money. Some day soon, even that will be thrown back in their faces.

Israel's position is taken as read, Sullivan does not have to tax us with trivia like the UK's rôle in promising the Zionists a 'National Home' on a piece of land it did not possess. That was in 1917, and was designed to swing the Jewish community in America, in particular, behind the Entente powers (which had included Russia, the world centre of anti-semitism). The Tsarist political police, the Okhrana, forged the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, which he claimed was being sold at an anti-War rally. There seems to have been a forlorn



hope that newly-Republican Russia would remain in the war with backing from its Jewish community.)

The UK also stirred-up Arab nationalism (a previously weedy phenomenon centred on Christian intellectuals in Beirut) and directed the great Arab Revolt. A vision of an Arab state from the Yemen to the edge of Anatolia, from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, was held out, in 1915 - '16, to people who had previously accepted the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph as an unremarkable fact of life. They shed their blood helping defeat an enemy of England's that proved to be unexpectedly tough. England then reneged on every promise and hint of 1916 onwards and partitioned Arabia into pseudo-states. These were bundled-out to the UK and France as League of Nations 'Mandate' territories, — colonies in all but name.

Both imperial states set about dividing the people of their 'Mandates' on the easiest available basis. This was usually religion, and was a very heady concoction in 'Lebanon' (something of a concoction itself). In Palestine this was compounded by the shared racial contempt of the British and the European Zionists for Arabs of all religious persuasions, and even to an extent of the resident 'religious' Jews.

Sullivan contrasts Israel's "economic growth, technological skillsÖagricultural miracle" with its neighbours. (Surely Iraq must have some "technological skills" to make the nukes and biological weapons he complains about?) He does no mentions the fantastic sums of money the USA makes available so that Israel could acquire all the above good things.

Sullivan was, in the wake of the 9/11 bombings, a decided 'hawk', intent on war: with anybody, it seemed. With the thrashing about in this article, one wonders if his heart is really in war anymore. Making an issue of an attempt to sell the *Protocols* (an excruciatingly dull read) at a mass rally falls flat. He attacks "the Left" for being inarticulate, though none of these dimwits get quoted, except a couple of anonymous students. He tries to convince himself that Israel is a beacon to the world, but has to admit that it has engaged in "occasional crimes in self-defence".

In the course of this column, Sullivan mentions China and Tibet. "[U]nlike China's occupation of Tibet, Israel's annexation [of the West Bank - NS] was a defensive action against an Arab military attack." Apart from the fact that this assertion has been called into question, there are other interesting matters here. The relationship between China and Tibet is not just that of invader and victim. In the days when China was a decaying empire, the religious hierarchy ruling Tibet was quite happy to acknowledge Beijing / Peking's overlordship. The erstwhile Tibetan ruling class of priests and monks objected to a revolutionary-egalitarian Chinese state, not the Chinese state as such. They would probably have found a state run by the Guomintang nearly as objectionable as 'Red' China.

The Beijing authorities may well be heavy handed, there may well be widespread patriotic feeling (though the folk-memory of ordinary ethnic Tibetans must

be of a parasitic caste that did little or nothing, but took everything) and there may be opposition to the Chinese as such. China, despite all that, has a genuine historical claim to the region, it predates the foundation of Israel, it predates the foundation of the USA, and even the 'discovery' of America.

This little excursion may be another Freudian slip, Sullivan was born in outer London, and still speaks with an English accent, but, possibly because of that, he is a very American American. The rulers of the US, at the turn of the last century, assumed that China would be their empire. Then Japan made a grab for it, as a consequence of which it (apparently) became part of Stalin's 'empire'. Now it is clearly becoming a major economic power, and possible superpower.

It needs to be put in its place; under Uncle Sam's thumb.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

In the November issue of the magazine Brendan Clifford wrote "In the issues of *The Communist* for that period there is a dispute between the editor and Joe Keenan about the role of the individual in history. The editor held on to the economic determinist Marxist position as stated by Plekhanov in defiance of Keenan's subversive critique of it. In fact

Joe Keenan wrote Dr. Black's side of it as well as his own, setting out Dr. Black's Marxist belief in reasoned form, and putting it at it strongest, for the purpose of developing the argument. He did this in collaboration with Dr. Black."

The situation at the time was certainly confused enough to give rise to any number of misleading impressions. I don't think it's all that easy to clear it up, but here goes.

In July 1985 I wrote an editorial confidently predicting that the annual conference of the NUM would reject Arthur Scargill's proposed changes to its rule book. In August I found myself

having to account for its firm refusal to do anything of the sort. There were two perfectly coherent responses possible: one that Scargill had played fast and loose with the balloting procedures (the figures reported in the press simply did not add up, and did not square with delegates' declared intentions; the other was that the miners deliberately threw reason out the window and asserted "the democracy's right to sheer devilment". In the event, after talking to Boyd Black who was the de jure editor, I wrote an editorial expressing the first view and a reader's letter expressing the second view.

The philosophical argument took off from that point with Boyd putting all of his own determinist side of the matter over the next few months.

All in all it's not difficult to see how Brendan has got on the wrong side of rather a fine distinction.

Fraternally,

Joe Keenan Belfrast

## MISCELLANY

By David Morrison

### PEACE PRIZE FOR WARMONGER

Ex US President Jimmy Carter has been awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize for, according to the citation, "*his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development*".

The award is not as obviously incongruous as some previous ones, for example, to Dr Edward Kissinger in 1973 (which prompted satirist Tom Lehrer to say that political satire was now obsolete) or to David Trimble in 1998 (which was described by Derry journalist, Eamon McCann, as like winning the lottery without buying a ticket).

But it should be remembered that Carter's "*decades of untiring efforts to find peaceful solutions*" included arming the mujahadeen in Afghanistan in order to overthrow the pro-Soviet Afghan government beginning in 1979 and encouraging Iraq to attack Iran.

Yes, Carter initiated US intervention in Afghanistan on the side of the mujahadeen, which has had enormous consequences for this world. He did so six months before the Soviet Union intervened to support the Afghan government in December 1979. And he did so for the purposes of enticing the Soviet Union into a war in Afghanistan. The Peace Prize winner was very successful in provoking a war which has raged in one form or another for over 20 years.

An account of this was given by Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, in a very revealing interview published in the French weekly magazine, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 15-21 January 1998. The relevant part of the interview is as follows:

Question: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs ["From the Shadows"], that American intelligence services began to aid the mujahadeen in Afghanistan 6 months before the Soviet intervention. In this period you were the National Security Adviser to President Carter. You therefore played a role in this affair. Is that correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan on 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was on 3 July 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.

Q: Despite this risk, you were an advocate of this covert action. But perhaps you yourself desired this Soviet entry into war and looked to provoke it?

B: It isn't quite that. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

B: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter that we now have the opportunity of giving the USSR its Vietnam war. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.

Q: And neither do you regret having supported Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists?

B: What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?

Q: Some stirred-up Moslems? But it has been said repeatedly that Islamic fundamentalism represents a world menace today.

B: Nonsense! It is said that the West had a global policy in regard to Islam. That is stupid. There isn't a global Islam. Look at Islam in a rational manner and without demagoguery or emotion. It is the leading religion of the world with 1.5 billion followers. But what is there in common among Saudi Arabian fundamentalism, moderate Morocco, Pakistan militarism, Egyptian pro-Western or Central Asian secularism? Nothing more than what unites the Christian countries.

One wonders if Zbigniew Brzezinski (and Carter) are as blasé about "stirred-up Moslems" after 9/11.

The later part of Carter's presidency was dogged by the consequences of the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in February 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini. When Iraq attacked Iran in September 1980, it did so with the blessing of the US. According to William Rivers Pitt in *War on Iraq*, Brzezinski publicly encouraged Iraq to attack Iran (p14). I have also seen it suggested that, at Carter's request, he met Saddam Hussein in Jordan two months before his assault on Iran.

Isn't that interesting? So when "the comprehensive evil that is Saddam Hussein"

(to use Jack Straw's recent phrase) attacked his neighbour Iran in 1980, he had the backing of a US President who went on to win a Nobel Peace Prize. It's a strange world we live in.

### EURO PACT

"The problem is that when we got into the Euro, and Ö maybe there's a lesson in here for Britain too, the individual states gave away the two most critical instruments of macro-economic management, ie interest on money and government spending. And now that we are in a deep slump we have woken up and seen that our economy can no longer be managed by us and therefore logically we have to put pressure on either the EU or the Central Bank to accommodate what Germany wants or needs."

Those were the words of Josef Joffe, the editor of the Hamburg weekly, *Die Zeit*, speaking about Germany and the Euro on the PM programme on Radio 4 on 16 October.

This is a stark statement, perhaps an overstatement, of the degree to which states within the Eurozone have lost the ability to manage their economies. They have ceded the power to set interest rates to a European Central Bank (ECB), which has been constructed by treaty to be independent of the states and which sets rates with the single objective of keeping interest below a target the Bank itself chooses.

Not only that, they have also agreed to the fiscal constraints of the EU Stability and Growth Pact, which, amongst other things, requires them to keep their public sector borrowing below 3% of GDP and failure to do so can, in theory, lead to the offending state being fined up to 0.5% of GDP by the European Commission.

In bad economic times, public borrowing tend to rise automatically, even if governments do nothing, because tax revenues do not come up to expectations and spending on welfare benefits tends to go up as a result of rising unemployment. Gordon Brown has recent experience of this. Trying to reduce borrowing in these circumstances by raising taxes or cutting public spending simply removes spending power from the economy and makes the problem worse. But that is what the Pact forces states within the Eurozone to do if their public borrowing approaches 3% of GDP. It's a case of when you're in an economic hole keep digging.

Poor little Portugal has had to submit to the Pact and cut spending and raise revenue. But Germany and France are both about to breach the 3% limit also (which was the occasion for Herr Joffe's remarks). Neither of them is going to submit to the Pact and there is no way the European Commission can make them, which is hardly fair on poor little Portugal. The ECB still insists that the Pact is essential, but it cannot do anything about enforcing it either.

The final outcome is unpredictable. Theoretically, the Pact could be abolished or amended significantly but there doesn't seem



to be the political will in the EU to do it in the face of opposition from the ECB. Most likely, the Pact will just fall into disrepute since the big economies will refuse to submit to it. But it's not beyond the possibility that there will be a serious crisis.

Will our prudent Chancellor advise that the UK join the Eurozone in these uncertain circumstances? I think not.

## WHY THE TREASURY BROKE UP BRITISH RAIL

BBC4 has an occasional series called "Witness to History", in which individuals who played leading roles in major events are gathered together to discuss what went on behind the scenes.

On 23 October, the subject was the privatisation of the railways and an impressive group of witnesses to that event were assembled around a table to converse about it under the chairmanship of David Aaronovitch. These included the Chairman of British Rail, Bob Reid, its Chief Executive, John Welsby, the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Transport, Sir Patrick Brown and the Conservative Transport Minister in the latter stages of the process, Sir George Young. Significantly, in the light of the ensuing discussion, no Treasury ministers or officials were present.

The discussion centred on the structure of the privatised railway system. It had always been intended that British Rail would not be privatised as a single unit, so a key question was how should it be broken up. Regionally, so that the railway system reverted to something like its pre-nationalisation form with four regional companies owning and operating infrastructure and trains? Or should the infrastructure be split off from the train operations? The latter scheme prevailed and Railtrack and a multitude of train operating companies came into being.

Bob Reid and John Welsby made it clear in the programme that this scheme for fragmenting the railway system had been drawn up without the knowledge of British Rail. When at the last moment they became aware of what was being proposed, they made their opposition known, as did all 30+ operations managers in British Rail, who warned of the additional safety risks of separating infrastructure from train operations.

But the Treasury was insistent on this separation, because this meant that there could be competition in the operation of trains (they said). Specifically, the Treasury wanted so-called "open access" to the infrastructure so that anybody who owned a couple of trains could apply for a licence to run them, and as a result different companies would end up competing against each other on the same track. That was the Treasury's ideal, and in pursuit of that ideal, the Treasury insisted that infrastructure be separated from train operations.

There is a fundamental difficulty in putting that ideal into practice, namely, railways are not roads and trains are not buses. Trains have to run on tracks, which have a very limited number of passing loops, and the train services

that can be provided are therefore greatly restricted by the availability of train paths. What is more, in order to avoid carnage, train paths have to be allocated in advance by the track owner. The operation of buses on roads has no such restrictions.

The Treasury gurus who were pressing the case for open access didn't seem to realise that there was a fundamental difference between running trains on track and buses on roads. Chief amongst these gurus was the head of its privatisation unit, Steve (now Sir Steve) Robson, who was later responsible for PFI and its specific application to the London Underground, so common sense was obviously not a dominant feature of his makeup.

Another problem with competition in train operation was that operators were not going to want to run trains outside peak times, when it was likely to be unprofitable to do so. Since this was politically unacceptable, the government moved to the idea of issuing franchises to train operating companies, requiring them to provide a prescribed minimum level of service for a number of years.

However, the idea of competition in train services remained. The White Paper New Opportunities for the Railways, published in July 1992, said that the franchises were to "be designed, wherever possible, to promote competition" and it was suggested that any private company that wanted to operate trains should have open access to the network.

One doesn't need to have a Nobel Prize in economics to see that franchising and open access are incompatible in practice - no train operator is going to accept a contract to provide a minimum level of service if at any time other operators can come along and compete against his profitable services. Nevertheless, these mutually incompatible concepts appeared in the White Paper, which laid the basis for rail privatisation.

The phantom of open access was never formally abandoned. But it was abandoned in practice in January 1993 when the Transport Minister, John McGregor, said: "If some franchises have to be made exclusive in whole or in part, then they will be made so". They were all made so, completely so, otherwise no franchises would ever have been let. Nevertheless, the break-up of British Rail went ahead as planned, and the infrastructure was separated from the trains.

In the BBC 4 programme, Sir Patrick Brown, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Transport at the time, freely admitted that he and its colleagues in the department knew from the outset that open access was impossible and that therefore the break-up of British Rail into infrastructure and trains was unnecessary. He said:

"I don't think any of us in the Department of Transport thought that open access as described could have any part in the privatisation. But you couldn't say so.

"Because the Treasury were very keen on

it, it was impossible to admit openly what later became obvious and you knew to be the truth earlier, which was that open access was impossible."

British Rail was broken apart in pursuit of a Treasury phantom. And New Labour let it happen: if the party had made it clear unequivocally that the railways would be returned to public hands as an integrated system the process would have been stopped in its tracks - because there would have been no volunteers to take up the train operating franchises. As it was, there were very few of them.

## HANSARD: A VERBATIM RECORD?

Until recently, I thought that Hansard was near enough a verbatim record of what was said in Parliament. But this is certainly not the case, and I have the impression that it is increasingly less so.

The following is the Hansard record of remarks by the Deputy Prime Minister to a query from his Conservative shadow, David Davis, on 19 November. It was about housing association tenants having the right to buy their homes.

"The right hon. Gentleman said an awful lot about giving housing associations the right to buy. We shall wait for the plans which he suggested at his party conference were part of a new policy. The proposal is in fact not new - it was proposed by Mrs. Thatcher in 1979 and, I believe, by the right hon. Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague). The trouble, however, is implementation. Housing charities have real difficulties with the long-term financing of housing - I am sure we all agree about that. The proposal was good for conference, but there was not much action - it was just about getting conference going."

What the Deputy Prime Minister actually said (according to Simon Hoggart in the Guardian the next day) was:

"Can I also say that I note he says an awful lot about we're going to give this right to buy to the housing associations, we'll wait to see how they come up with the plans, he suggested at his own party conference it was new policy, it's not new, it was said by Mrs Thatcher in 1979 and I think it was said by the honourable - he leads the party - but the trouble is they weren't able to whipperite [sic] it for very good reasons because on housing and charities you have difficulties about the financing of long-term finances affecting those housing, very real problems and I'm sure that we agree with them, but it was good for conference but it wasn't much action, it was an awful lot of getting the conference going, yes I will give way..."

This is no doubt an extreme example of the divergence of Hansard record from what was actually said, since John Prescott has an unparalleled facility for speaking gibberish. But he is not entirely alone in speaking gibberish regularly.

A couple of questions arise from this divergence. First, what rules, if any, are applied in translating what was actually said into the Hansard record? Second, should Ministers be held to account for what they actually said in Parliament or for the Hansard record of what they said?

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A Video from  
Voices in the Wil-  
derness

Followed by dis-  
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