

THE FRENCH PROPOSAL

France, with Russian and German support, has proposed the implementation of Resolution 1284: the definition of 'key remaining disarmament tasks', the setting up of the OMV system, and following the four-month schedule laid down in the Resolution. (24 Feb. 2003, <<http://www.un.int/france/>>)

Mr Blair was furious: 'This is not a road to peace but folly and weakness that means conflict, when it comes, will be greater in its devastation.' So if the inspectors carry out a process of verified disarmament in Iraq, this means that Iraq will be able to carry out 'greater devastation' in the future. 'The issue is not time. **The issue is will.**' By which Mr Blair meant Iraq's willingness to disarm, rather than US determination to go to war. (*Independent*, 26 Feb., p. 2)

THE CHOICE BETWEEN WAR AND DISARMAMENT

At the time of writing, the US and UK are giving up on their draft resolution (*Briefing 34 Last Push For War* critiques that draft), and trying an amendment with a deadline: 'In London, officials indicated the ultimatum would be short—measured in days rather than weeks—and would make clear that if Mr Hussein failed to disarm he would face the consequences.' (*FT*, 7 Mar.)

'The US and its allies are, however, said to be unenthusiastic about setting explicit benchmarks to measure Iraqi compliance, an idea recently floated in a Canadian attempt to broker a compromise. They fear Mr Hussein could comply with specific demands while retaining his overall weapons capability.' (*FT*, 7 Mar.)

In other words, if the UN says clearly (as it should do under Resolution 1284) what Iraq has to do to prove it has disarmed its weapons of mass destruction, there is a danger that Iraq might just do those things, and prove it has disarmed. If the US can no longer move the goalposts, it might not be able to carry out a war which it desires regardless of Iraq's weapons status.

The US military is racing to start a war before 27 Mar. despite the fact that the logistics are currently unfavourable (courtesy the Turkish anti-war movement). The rest of the world is racing to force the Security Council to implement Resolution 1284, and to start the verified disarmament process in Iraq by defining the 'key remaining disarmament tasks'. All voices should be raised to support this process, which may be the only way to derail war.

Briefings can be downloaded from the **ARROW WEBSITE** <www.j-n-v.org>

ARROW BOOK *War Plan Iraq: Ten Reasons Against War On Iraq* by Milan Rai (Verso, 2002)

'Readable and well-sourced' *The Times* 'Excellent' Tariq Ali 'Required reading' Professor Paul Rogers

PLEASE SUPPORT ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War) 0845 458 2564

We are making as many briefings as we can. Please help with printing/distribution by sending cheques to 'ARROW' (marked 'briefings'), c/o NVRN, 162 Holloway Rd, London N7 8DQ.

PLEDGE OF RESISTANCE Sign online at the **ARROW WEBSITE** <www.j-n-v.org>

RACE AGAINST TIME

Defining 'What Iraq Has To Do' Before War Comes **ARROW Anti-War Briefing 35 (7 March 2003)** **WAR PLAN IRAQ Update Number 12**

THE RACE AGAINST TIME

The rejection of a bill to allow US access to Turkish bases by the Turkish parliament has thrown US war plans into turmoil. 'The surprise rejection by the parliament in Ankara made the planning "more complicated", Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, said. Some military analysts predicted that an attack of the speed and decisiveness President George Bush wants might have to be delayed until late March or even early April.' (*Independent*, 4 Mar., p.1)

'Even if the troops of the US 4th Mechanised Infantry Division were to be allowed into Turkey, they would probably need at least two to three weeks before they were ready to fight. With the parliamentary delays, that could postpone the launch of an invasion of Iraq well into April.' (*Independent*, 5 Mar., p. 4)

If the planned start of war is being delayed into April, this would have two significant effects: the war would be scheduled to take place in the much hotter weather of April, *and* it would be scheduled to take place after AFTER 27 Mar., the deadline for the UN weapons inspectors to define Iraq's 'key remaining disarmament tasks'.

In other words, it would take place just **after** UN weapons inspectors had **started** the properly-laid down process of verified disarmament in Iraq.

This would make war politically impossible.

Thus the pressure to find alternative strategies: 'Instead, planners are looking at much riskier alternatives, including an airborne assault on Mosul and Kirkuk or switching the 4th Infantry Division to Kuwait, from where they would be asked to make a long and dangerous dash around Baghdad to reach Republican Guard divisions protecting President Saddam's home region of Tikrit.' (*Independent*, 5 Mar., p. 4) It's not clear that the delay can be avoided.

60 DAYS TO DEFINE KEY DISARMAMENT TASKS

The proper timetable for disarmament was set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1284, passed in Dec. 1999 (which also created the inspection agency UNMOVIC—UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission—headed by Dr Hans Blix).

Para. 7 of Resolution 1284 says that UNMOVIC and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency, which handles nuclear disarmament in Iraq), 'will each draw up, for approval by the Council, a **work programme** for the discharge of their mandates'. This will be done 'not later than 60 days after they have both **started work** in Iraq'.

This work programme will include 'the **key remaining disarmament tasks** to be completed by Iraq': '**what is required of Iraq for the implementation of each task shall be clearly defined and precise**'. (You can find Resolution 1284 at <www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/>.)

WAR COULD HAVE BEEN DE-RAILED IN JANUARY

As the weapons inspectors returned to Iraq on 27 Nov. 2002, one would have expected them to present their work programme on 27 Jan.

If this had been done, and if the 'key remaining disarmament tasks' had been defined on that day, we probably wouldn't be talking about a war right now, because it would be very hard for the US to shut down an open-ended disarmament process with clearly defined benchmarks for measuring the progress of Iraqi disarmament. There would be tasks still not yet dealt with.

Importantly, Resolution 1284 does not set a deadline for inspectors to finish their work in Iraq. The reason there are no deadlines for disarmament is that when Britain and the US drew up the Resolution, they wanted a way of stringing out the inspection process in order to string out the economic sanctions on Iraq.

Then, they wanted inspectors to have all the time in the world. **Now**, they want the inspectors rolled up ASAP.

AN EXTRAORDINARY AND FATEFUL DELAY

The 'key disarmament tasks' weren't defined on 27 Jan. War wasn't derailed. For a very peculiar reason. UNMOVIC spokesperson Ewen Buchanan, interviewed by ARROW on 24 Feb. 2003, explained that although inspectors had returned to Iraq on 27 Nov. and started doing things (clearing up the long-deserted office, carrying out inspections, etc.), it had decided not to define this as 'starting work', but as a 'build-up period'. The inspectors had decided to define the 'starting of work' as 27 Jan. This meant the 60 day deadline moved back another 60 days, so that the key remaining disarmament tasks now have to be defined by 27 Mar. instead of 27 Jan.

What made this decision so very very strange was that UN Security Council Resolution 1441 asked the inspectors 'to resume inspections no later than 45 days following adoption of this resolution' on 8 Nov. So if the inspectors had been consistent, they would have failed this test, because they they only 'started work' (in the sense of Resolution 1284) on 27 Jan.

They got around this by deciding that they had 'resumed inspections' (but not 'started work') in Iraq within the required 45 days. Mr Buchanan acknowledged that you could say the inspectors were 'having their cake and eating it'. When the inspectors looked at themselves through 1284 spectacles, they 'started work' at the end of Jan. 2003. When they looked at themselves through 1441 glasses, they 'resumed inspections' before mid-Dec. 2002.

US INTERFERENCE SUSPECTED

It is hard to believe that the inspectors came up with this contorted logic all by themselves. It is extremely hard to believe that the inspectors were not pressured to define the two start dates differently by the superpower which was intent on going to war with Iraq by mid-Mar. 2003, and which therefore needed to make sure the disarmament process mandated by Resolution 1284 was kicked into the long grass **beyond** any likely date for the start of war.

ANOTHER TWIST TO THE TALE

Let's go back to Resolution 1284. Para. 33 states that the Security Council will, after four months of verified cooperation with disarmament, suspend economic sanctions on Iraq on a rolling basis, 'with the fundamental objective of improving the humanitarian situation in Iraq and securing the implementation of the Council's resolutions.'

The clock starts ticking on this once the Security Council 'is in receipt of reports from both UNMOVIC and the IAEA that the reinforced system of ongoing monitoring and verification [OMV] is fully operational.' This OMV system itself cannot become 'fully operational' until its design has been approved as part of the 'work programme' agreed by the Security Council.

So the schedule should go like this: by 27 Mar., the Security Council approved a long-term system which can continuously monitor Iraq's capacity to make weapons of mass destruction and ensure that these factories and facilities are used only for civilian purposes. Then UNMOVIC and the IAEA set up the system. Once it's 'fully operational', the clock is ticking. If Iraq 'has cooperated in all respects with UNMOVIC and the IAEA' (para. 33 again) for four months after OMV goes 'fully operational', economic sanctions are 'suspended' (in July or Aug.). (From Iraq's point of view, the phrase 'cooperated in **all** respects' has a lethal vagueness. It means trusting the US and UK to recognise and reward a high level of cooperation.)