

South News

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Pentagon Steps up Threats Against Iraq, Libya

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Recent U.S. threats to Iraq, Libya and Iran reveal how the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex would carry out their "Defense Planning Guide" in the Middle East.

This document, excerpts of which were published in the Mar. 7 *New York Times*, plans for Washington to rule the world, and for the Pentagon to police it. The Planning Guide brazenly threatens allies and enemies alike who want a greater role.

Iraq has already been bombed into a pre-industrial age. Some 60 percent of the population is unemployed. There is hyperinflation and mass hunger. The real need is to immediately lift the 19-month-long trade embargo, which is causing so much suffering.

Instead, the U.S. and its allies are threatening to resume the bombing because Iraq balked at a UN ultimatum to destroy key weapons by March 26. Neither Washington nor the media mention that this ultimatum and other terms of the imperialist-brokered cease-fire violate Iraqi sovereignty and would destroy it as an independent nation.

But the ultimatum does sum up how the Pentagon would like to treat all oppressed nations that dare oppose Washington's plans in the period of the New World Order.

It's not just Iraq. Syria and Egypt, which joined in the attack on Iraq, both pulled out of the pro-imperialist coalition after Washington declared it might again bomb Iraq.

Syrian President Hafez al-Assad charged on March 12 that Washington was trying to strip the Arabs of their military strength. At issue was not only Iraq. It was Washington's contemptuous disregard of the right of the Palestinian people, as well as an uproar the Bush administration created over a north Korean ship heading to the Middle East.

Washington maintained the ship was delivering Scud-C missiles to Syria and Iran. In blatant disregard for international law, the Pentagon threatened to intercept the ship.

Both Syria and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea denied Washington's allegations. Syria also maintained its right to purchase the weapons necessary to its national defense. Iranian newspapers have described the new U.S. threats as part of "psychological warfare" against Iran.

Iran is also getting more heat. The March 18 *Wall*



Street Journal carried a lead story headlined "Iran is re-emerging as a Mideast power as Iraqi threat fades." This, the article says, poses "a renewed threat to American interests" in the Gulf. Translation: The U.S. government wants to be the only power in the Gulf, and will tolerate no competition from the people and governments indigenous to the area.

The Pentagon is also turning its guns toward Libya, a country of fewer than 4 million people. On March 18, the Bush administration urged all U.S. citizens to leave Libya before air links are cut. The U.S., Britain and France plan to introduce a resolution in the UN Security Council imposing sanctions on Libya.

The U.S. government blames Libyan nationals for the explosion aboard a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, on Dec. 21, 1988. Citing no evidence, the U.S. government alleges the bomb was in unaccompanied baggage transferred to the Pan Am plane from Air Malta flight KM 180. Neither the media nor the administration cite an Air Malta investigation, which concluded that there was no unaccompanied luggage on flight KM 180.

That's because the real issue is not the Pan Am explosion. It's Washington's attempts to re-subjugate Libya, whose leader, Muammar Qadhafi, has long supported national liberation struggles and opposed U.S. aggression.

In the oil-rich and strategic Middle East, U.S. finance capital's goal is to reduce the nations there to be outright vassals of imperialism as they were a hundred years ago. But Wall Street and the oil companies will not have the last word. The stinging blows of the iron fist do not crush the struggle. Instead, these blows generate the anti-imperialist rage that drives the struggle on.

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DID THE CIA FORGE EVIDENCE AGAINST LIBYA? Scottish Member of Parliament Tom Dalyell has charged that the CIA may have created "evidence" to make Libya take the rap for the bombing of the Pan Am aircraft over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988. The Labour parliamentarian was quoted by Reuters on Jan. 6, saying that after talking to some people who took part in the Scottish police investigation, he was convinced that some evidence had been "placed" by the Central Intelligence Agency. He did not elaborate.

LIBYAN HIGH COURT RULING. February 18 - Libyan High Court Judge Assawi ruled today that there was no reason to bring charges at present against the two Libyans indicted over the Lockerbie affair, and that they would not be extradited. He charged that what the British and Americans were demanding was legally impossible, and represented an "interference in the Libyan judicial process." Assawi further accused the British and Americans of withholding crucial evidence from the Libyan authorities, and of trying to act simultaneously as prosecutor and as judge. He asked why Libya alone was being concentrated on, when other countries were previously named as central to the Lockerbie investigation.

In a commentary today, Germany's *Deutsche Welle* radio said that the British and American demands were historically unprecedented, since there has never been a case when a country has been ordered to extradite its own citizens.

PLO INVESTIGATION: LIBYA IS INNOCENT. February 18 - The Palestine Liberation Organisation has concluded a secret investigation into the Lockerbie affair, the conclusion of which is that "Libya is innocent and is not implicated" in the bombing of the Pan Am jet, chief PLO spokesman Bassam Abu-Sharif announced in Tunis on Feb. 15, according to a report in the French *Le Monde* daily.

"Confidential evidence received by the PLO shows clearly the involvement of Middle East parties," he declared. He said the PLO has compiled "a detailed list of names of persons directly implicated in putting the operation into effect and executing it." Abu-Sharif said the PLO would be "ready to cooperate" with any competent commission of investigation into Lockerbie, to "prove the truth" of what occurred. It was willing to make its findings available to foreign governments, and had informed the Bush White House that it was prepared to provide the relevant evidence.

SYRIAN PRESIDENT TARGETS U.S. DOUBLE-STANDARDS. In a speech inaugurating his fourth seven-year term as president of Syria, Hafez Assad repeated Syrian determination to acquire more surface-to-surface missiles, "according to our needs." Assad asked, "How could the door be open for Israel to manufacture all kinds of weapons with no limits, and at the same time Syria is besieged and prevented from importing? How could America patronize Middle East peace talks based on its own initiative and on United Nations resolutions, and at the same time impose a blockade on Syria and other Arab countries?"

Assad charged that the Gulf War was so inimical to Arab interests, that it sometimes appeared as if "what happened had been deliberately planned and executed for Israel's interests." Syria poses any renewed military action against Iraq and has quietly moved to patch up its relations with Baghdad. Postal connections have been resumed, Syrian media have stopped their attacks on Iraq, the Syrian Oil Ministry is studying the possibility of reopening the oil pipeline from Iraq to Syrian ports of Tripoli and Baniyas, and the Syrians have called their relations with the Damascus-based Iraqi opposition.

IRAQ BLAMES U.N. SANCTIONS FOR 400% JUMP IN DEATHS SINCE WAR. U.N. sanctions have quadrupled Iraq's death rate, Saddam Hussein's trade minister said Thursday in the first official comment from Baghdad since Iraq was condemned in a Security Council debate. "The death rate has increased four times, 400%, between the month before sanctions and this month, particularly for children," Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh told a news conference. He said the United States was set on wiping out Iraq. "Iraq and the Iraqi people are the object of the U.S. to be destroyed," he told Western journalists. "They didn't consider the hardships...the deaths of children, the disease." "They are using excuses to say Iraq does not comply with U.N. resolutions," said Saleh.

In Wednesday's Security Council debate, the United States and Britain said force might be used against Iraq unless it reveals all its weapons of mass destruction. But Iraq, which contends it helped destroy its weapons, says Washington wants to wreck its industry. Iraq's health ministry said March 9 that more than 21,000 people, including more than 8,000 children under 5, died in the first two months of this year because of a lack of food and drugs. The report brought to 120,000 the number of Iraqis said to have died because of the shortages, which the government blames on sanctions.

HANDS OFF LIBYA Seminar
Wednesday April 15 2.15-4.00pm
Non-Smoking Room Union Bar UNION
All Welcome