

There Are Alternatives! -And Resistance Is Possible

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The ceaseless bombing and imminent invasion of Iraq by the USA and allies, particularly the UK, is one more step in the geo-fascist march toward world hegemony. It is "fascist" because of ruthless use of blunt state power, only "geo" as long as some US democracy is left. Serving a three-point agenda—oil, bases and Israel—other points have been brought up to legitimize war.

But these points can all be solved by governments, building on successful governmental diplomacy after the Second World War. A Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East, CSCME, modeled on the Helsinki Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE, 1973-75. The initiative was taken by a small country, Finland, the veto making the UN inadequate. Today Germany could take the initiative, or, even better, the EU. Participants would be Middle Eastern/West Asian countries, with Germany/EU as facilitators, and the conference would last years. Iraq, Kurdistan and Israel-Palestine would be on the agenda.

An image of a possible outcome for Iraq:

- as a federation with a Kurdish, a Sunni and a Shia part;
- Kuwait as an independent state could be associated with Iraq, with open borders, shared harbor facilities, joint oil regime;
- a lasting UN inspection regime for weapons of mass destruction, making the point that this also applies to Israel;
- a UN election monitoring of free elections

for a possible regime change, making the point that this also applies to the USA;

- lifting of sanctions, with emergency relief for hunger, DU, etc.

An image of a possible outcome for Kurdistan:

- guaranteed human rights for Kurds in the countries they live;
- high level autonomy for Kurds but no division with secession;
- a confederation of Kurdish autonomies with passport, governance.

An image of a possible outcome for Israel-Palestine:

- full recognition of Palestine within UN 242/338, capital in EJ;
- Jordan and Egypt lease some land to Palestine for some time;
- two Palestinian cantons in Israel (with some right of return);
- two Israeli cantons on the West Bank (with some right to remain);
- a Middle East Community Syria-Lebanon-Palestine-Israel-Jordan-

Egypt modeled after the European Community, with open borders for trade and tourism, and economic /cultural/political cooperation;

- a Truth and Reconciliation process to undo horrors of the past
- Massive boycott of US export products.

In most countries civil society is ahead of governments in massively protesting US belligerence and exploitation. There is talk of boycott of US products all over, building on successful action against the apartheid regime in South Africa, against

Deutsche Shell in the North Sea, and against the French nuclear testing in Polynesia. The triggering event would be an invasion of Iraq, boycott would include the UK and participating countries, and would apply to Israel if a transfer operation is started.

The purpose of the boycott would go beyond material protest to try to change US corporate behavior and to turn them against US belligerence and disrespect for treaties and world cooperation.

The boycott would cover consumer goods from movies, CocaCola, MacDonald to cars, capital goods of all kinds and finance goods like dollars (use euros, yen and others) and US bonds and stocks, demanding that governments do not buy and with corporations divest from US firms, starting with the vertically most reprehensible.

The average profit of a US corporation is around 6%, meaning that even modest participation will have major impact. Even a 3% decline in buying will place the trustees/executives in a dilemma between loyalty to Washington geofascism and their own profits.

Likely counter-measures against a boycott will include:

- pressure on governments to outlaw boycott; problematic because market freedom is a major part of neoliberal ideology;
- corporations asking Washington for compensation; problematic given the US economy in general and the federal budget;
- corporations cutting expenses to keep profits, laying off employees,

problematic because the high level of unemployment already;

- US boycott of products from boycotting countries; problematic given US consumer dependence on foreign products and solidarity (others may start buying from US-boycotted countries).

The boycott should be informed by gandhian nonviolence. The task is to reduce and eliminate the US military and economic grip on the world, not to kill US children. An emergency relief program for those who suffer in the US should be considered.

Massive human presence in Iraq

One hundred thousand Western foreigners in Iraq, among them some hundred prominent persons, would probably stave the hands even of these aggressors; notorious for their warfare against German and Japanese cities. They/we would be there not to protect the Saddam Hussein regime but to help protect the Iraqi people against one more wave of Western genocidal violence, and US and UK people against being co-responsible for this mass murder. Travel to Iraq, on foot, by bus/truck/car, by plane has already started, and nervousness has been observed at the top of the US Army, falsely alleging that this "human shield" is forced, organized by Saddam Hussein, and hence against the Geneva Convention.

Their claims to be democracies notwithstanding, the USA and the UK work with governments, by stick and carrot (like oil shares for France and Russia?). These Anglo-Saxon empire-builders should learn what democracy means: that people stand up for what is right, and put nonviolent power behind it. They should know that there are perfectly feasible alternatives to their bellicose fantasies in building sustainable peace and development. And that peace has to be based on equality of all, including for the law.

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