

Gingrich, Clinton and Iraq

Martin McLaughlin
27 January 1998

On the eve of the State of the Union speech, with the media baying at Clinton's heels and congressmen of both parties openly discussing impeachment or forced resignation, House Speaker Newt Gingrich gave an unqualified endorsement to White House action in one critical sphere: the impending military assault on Iraq.

Gingrich declared, in a statement approved by the House Republican caucus, that notwithstanding the political warfare in Washington, "In matters of international relations, the United States is one nation." He warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein not to be "confused by the difference between headlines and national will."

Administration spokesmen have openly threatened to launch massive bombing raids against Iraq if Saddam Hussein does not bow to never ending demands by United Nations weapons inspectors—the vast majority of them British and American military and intelligence officers on loan to the UN—for access to Iraqi sites.

The saber rattling has been combined with a media campaign suggesting that Iraq—a war-devastated country unable to feed its own people—represents a significant military threat to the United States and the entire world. On one level, this propaganda effort, presenting Saddam Hussein as a madman seeking to accumulate enough chemical and biological weaponry to destroy the human race, appears bizarre and almost demented. But it is backed by the threat that hundreds of thousands more Iraqi men, women and children will be murdered by American bombs and missiles.

The scandal shaking the Clinton administration has led some commentators, such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, to question whether Clinton any longer can command the public confidence required to

mobilize popular support for such a military strike. The statement by Gingrich is aimed at answering such doubts.

Gingrich's statement underscores the bipartisan unity of the Democrats and Republicans when it comes to the fundamental interests of big business. The two parties may fight tooth and claw for the spoils of office and for control of the levers of power. But when it comes to defending the commercial and strategic interests of American capitalism, including its "right"—established in the bloody slaughter of Iraqi soldiers and civilians in 1991—to dominate the oil supplies of the Persian Gulf, they agree.

There is an obvious contradiction in this embrace of Clinton's foreign policies by his bitter political enemies, expressed most clearly in back-to-back editorials published by the *Wall Street Journal* this week.

On Monday the *Journal*, Clinton's most frenzied opponent, suggested that he was a victim of mental illness, subject to an "antisocial personality disorder" in which he displayed "a total lack of respect for the standards of society" and "an ability to lie without shame." The next day the *Journal* declared it would support this virtual psychopath should he decide to bomb Iraq.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact