Wall Street Journal editorial reveals imperialist arrogance and racism behind US war drive

Patrick Martin
13 March 2003

An editorial published Wednesday in the *Wall Street Journal* drops the pretense that "human rights" and democracy are the motivation for a US war against Iraq, and fulminates in unabashedly chauvinist and imperialistic terms against any international opposition to the Bush administration's war plans.

The editorial, entitled "Bush in Lilliput," presents the United States as a world-straddling Gulliver, beset by opponents so insignificant that they should be brushed aside with contempt. It is focused on the six countries—Guinea, Angola, Cameroon, Mexico, Chile and Pakistan—which have so far, despite enormous US pressure, refused to commit themselves to support the US-British resolution authorizing war.

The *Journal* bemoans the Bush administration's decision to seek a second resolution from the UN body, complaining, "The US has already been reduced to bribing these countries with cash or other favors in return for their support. Yet they've all played hard to get, posing as Hamlet for their 10 minutes of fame on the world stage."

The leading US business newspaper describes the six undeclared countries in racist terms, lashing out at "the Mexican and Chilean fandango," sneering at "the always strategically vital Cameroon," and referring to the six countries—including three African nations—as "pygmies." (There is ignorance as well as racism here, since the six countries have a combined population of 293 million, greater than that of the United States).

The *Journal* editorial denounces the UN weapons inspectors for siding with Iraq, particularly Mohammed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which inspects nuclear facilities. "Mr. El Baradei made a public fuss last week about one British-US claim that turns out to have been false, but which was in any case peripheral to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction," the newspaper said. This is a cavalier dismissal of the issues raised in the Security Council debate. ElBaradei noted that the US-British charges of a secret Iraqi effort to obtain uranium for an atomic bomb were based on forged documents.

There is, however, one true sentence in the editorial. The *Journal* declares, "As each day passes, the evidence mounts that the UN inspections regime is not about containing Saddam; it is about containing America." In other words, it is the Bush administration, not the regime in Baghdad, which is regarded by most of the world as the greatest threat to international peace and security.

The vitriolic language of the *Journal* exposes the real attitude of the US ruling elite to democracy and national sovereignty, even in the extremely limited and distorted form in which they find expression in the United Nations. As far as the warmongers in Washington and on Wall Street are concerned, the only national sovereignty that counts is that of the United States, which refuses to accept any international check on its own use of force and violence to attain its ends.

The UN is based, at least in theory, on the equality of nations, with every state casting one vote in the 191-member General Assembly. The Security Council is a far more restricted body, with five states holding permanent membership and wielding veto power, and the remaining 10 states, elected by the General Assembly, holding rotating membership.

None of these procedures alters the fact that the UN, since its inception, has been a tool of the major imperialist powers, above all of the United States,

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which customarily employs a mixture of bribery and threats to have its way. The outburst of venom from the *Journal* expresses the outrage in the US ruling elite over its inability to work its will in the usual fashion, primarily due to the opposition of France, Germany, Russia and China.

The *Journal* makes the claim that Bush's opponents on the Security Council will be responsible for the deaths of American and British soldiers once war begins, and is to blame for the ongoing economic havoc brought on by the looming threat of war. But its real fear is that the US government will be held responsible for the colossal loss of life that will ensue once the dogs of war are unleashed in the Middle East.

It is worth noting in this context that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan appeared Monday at a ceremony in The Hague, opening the first session of the International Criminal Court, the war crimes tribunal which the Bush administration has adamantly opposed and whose jurisdiction it refuses to accept. The UN chief declared that a war against Iraq launched in defiance of the Security Council would violate international law. Given the venue for his comments, it was a pointed reminder that war crimes tribunals could be convened in the aftermath of a new Persian Gulf war, with US and British leaders facing prosecution.

According to a report March 12 in the *Washington Post*, British Prime Minister Tony Blair has already been told he could face such charges: "British officials also expressed fresh concern that failure to obtain a resolution authorizing war against Iraq would expose them to potential prosecution by a newly established International Criminal Court with jurisdiction over war crimes. Britain is a signatory to the treaty establishing the tribunal, but the United States is not. Blair was advised by his attorney general last October that military action to force 'regime change' in Baghdad would violate international law."

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