

G8 summit gives go ahead for US offensive against Iran and North Korea

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The G8 summit of the world's seven leading industrial nations plus Russia in Evian took the abject capitulation of the European powers before Washington to new depths.

The occasion will be remembered for the readiness of the governments of France, Germany and Russia to go beyond simply burying their past criticisms of the Bush administration's war against Iraq—this was already manifest by the United Nations Security Council vote endorsing America's post-war rule of Iraq on May 22. For, despite protestations to the contrary, a joint statement issued on Tuesday June 3 opens the door to military action by the US against Iran and North Korea.

President George W. Bush could not have hoped for a more successful outcome to his visit to France and from a meeting hosted by President Jacques Chirac, once the Republican administration's *bête noire* for his opposition to America's unilateral declaration of war against Iraq.

Bush treated the summit with no small degree of contempt, spending less than a day at the Alpine resort before flying off for a round of talks with Arab leaders, Israel and the Palestinian Authority on his proposed "road map" for peace in the Middle East. But before he left he was schmoozed and flattered by his formerly troublesome counterparts and given everything he wanted.

The first day of the summit occurred against a background of mass protests by anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation groups that were viciously attacked by riot police.

All over the world, news coverage was dominated by reports that the US administration and Britain's Labour government had falsified or exaggerated intelligence dossiers in order to assert that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and so justify their plans for war.

Coming after the failure of US inspectors to discover any evidence of WMD programs and embarrassing statements from Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz—respectively admitting that Iraq did not possess WMDs and that the issue had only been a "bureaucratic" pretext for war—this has forced the convening of limited governmental inquiries in both countries in order to contain any possible political fallout. In the rarified atmosphere of Evian, however, the man chiefly responsible for launching an illegal war of aggression could relax amongst friends—or sycophants to be more precise.

At their luxury hotel overlooking Lake Geneva, the day was largely spent engaged in a series of photo opportunities where Bush's hand could be shaken and mutual backslapping could occur. At a 25-minute private meeting Bush praised Chirac's knowledge of the Middle East, promising to consult with him on efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He called US-French relations "good", despite the fact that they had been through "a difficult period".

Clasping Chirac's shoulder, Bush thanked him for supporting his resolution to the UN giving the US free rein in running Iraq. He then gave the French premier three leather-bound books on American Indian culture. In return he received a more substantial gift from Chirac—a promise to send French troops to Afghanistan.

Bush also made an appearance on the hotel terrace with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder—with whom Bush has not even spoken to for months because of his anti-war rhetoric. Following the summit, Schröder clearly felt that he had been brought in from the cold. "It was clear that the past has not disappeared, but it is behind us," he said.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin, who has been given *carte blanche* by the US for his own criminal war

in Chechnya, added, “After the summit I have the firm conviction that the situation is better and that is the main result.”

Bush departed for the Middle East midway through the afternoon, with the blessings and good wishes of the G8 for a successful diplomatic effort. Canada’s Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said, “He represents the wishes of the rest of the countries at the discussions.”

Before leaving, he had first secured the drafting of a statement on the need to counteract global terrorism that promised to deny terrorists “a safe haven”, giving a pretext for continued military interventions by the US all over the world.

More important still, he had the agreement of all parties to explicitly threaten North Korea and Iran. A statement on the need to combat nuclear proliferation issued June 2 and a final statement issued the next day urged North Korea to “visibly, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle any nuclear weapons program” it had. It warned Iran that it would be targeted should its “advanced nuclear program” not maintain “full compliance with its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.”

Washington immediately claimed this as a green light for military action should it be deemed necessary. A senior US official said that a paragraph in the declaration referring to the “range of tools” available for curbing destructive weapons such as international treaties and inspections continued that “other measures” could be used if they were necessary and “in accordance with international law”. He said that “other measures” was code for use of force.

This caused concern amongst all other G8 leaders. Chirac called the interpretation “extraordinarily daring—There never was any talk of using force whatsoever.”

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said, “Unlike Iraq, we agreed that the North Korean issue must be resolved in a peaceful, diplomatic manner.”

Bush’s key ally British Prime Minister Tony Blair was forced to reassure MPs, “Nobody is threatening military action in respect of Iran,” while Canada’s Chrétien said, “The best course is always diplomacy, the United Nations and international organisations.”

However an indication of the continued readiness of the G8 partners to accede to America’s dictates was provided by Chrétien’s additional statement that—even

though diplomacy may be best—in North Korea, “you’re dealing with a government there that is not well known by anybody and not very well understood.”

In any event, differing interpretations of the fine print of such statements will count for nothing given Washington’s ongoing efforts to dominate the world by force of arms. As far as Bush’s clique is concerned, they have all the diplomatic ammunition they need. And as far as the other major powers are concerned, they will continue to support the US administration providing only that they get something in return.

At a post G8 press conference, Chirac declared with supreme cynicism that he had not changed his view that the US-led invasion of Iraq was “both illegitimate and illegal ... But now, the situation being what it is, we have got to work together. It is easy to wage war on your own; it is much more difficult to build a peace on your own.”

In short all that Paris wants for supporting the US takeover of Iraq is a share of the spoils. And all it will require in return for backing action against Iran or North Korea will be some other quid pro quo arrangement.



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