

Will George Bush's Mideast war be his political undoing?

by Kathleen Klenetsky

President Bush launched "Operation Desert Shield" fully expecting that it would boost his political standing at home—partly by diverting attention from such embarrassments as the galloping savings and loans crisis and the overall collapse of the economy—and bring glory and riches to the new Anglo-American global order that he and Margaret Thatcher have ordained.

But Bush's decision to send massive military forces into the Mideast could actually prove to be his political downfall.

Opposition to the President's Mideast policy is definitely on the rise, fueled in part by rapidly worsening domestic economic conditions, as well as by the new round of warnings, coming from such ominous sources as the Soviet Chief of Staff (story, page 39), that Bush's colonial adventure in the Gulf could trigger World War III.

Anti-war ferment is taking hold, not only on campuses, but across a broad spectrum of the American population, from church leaders and minority spokesmen, to former government officials, and some members of Congress. There are growing signs that elements of the Establishment are becoming increasingly unhappy with Bush's handling of the crisis, if not with the intervention itself.

Reality sets in

In the aftermath of the jingoistic fever that initially gripped the country, people are sitting back and thinking a bit more rationally about whether the U.S. deployment to the Mideast is justified, and whether Bush's alleged objectives are worth what most experts agree would be a particularly bloody war.

This phenomenon is evident in a new poll, taken at the end of September by a group called Americans Talk Security. A majority of those polled said they support Bush's goals in the Mideast—but a whopping 9 out of 10 said they did not think the U.S. should start a war to achieve them. Even more revealing, 47% of those surveyed said they believed that, if war does break out, the U.S. government would lie to the American people that Iraq had started it, when the U.S. actually had.

Another poll, conducted by ABC News and the *Washington Post*, turned up similar results. Although 78% said they supported Bush's handling of the crisis, only 48% said they

would approve invading Kuwait to force Iraq out, if that meant war. And 52% said they would oppose the permanent stationing of American forces in the Gulf.

The lack of trust in the administration is making itself felt on Capitol Hill, where a small, but growing, number of key congressmen are breaking ranks with the President, and with their colleagues. House Banking Committee chairman Rep.

"We should have listened to MacArthur"

The following statement was issued on Sept. 27 by Lyndon LaRouche, congressional candidate in Virginia's 10th Congressional District:

Some years ago, Gen. Douglas MacArthur gave a most eloquent and insightful warning against the folly of the United States pitting itself against the cause of developing nations; against the rights of the nations of the former colonial world, to gain the same access to national sovereignty, to the economic development, using scientific and technological progress, capital-intensive, energy-intensive development, that we as a nation fought to gain when we fought our oppressor, King George III's Britain, back in the 18th century.

We have repeatedly ignored General MacArthur's warning. The Truman administration, misled by the Harriman forces (which are close to George Bush), made a fatal error in Korea, and turned that situation into a no-win war, the first of a series of no-win wars, which destroyed the morale of the American people and the defense capabilities of the United States. That error was repeated again and again, through the colonialist mentality from the New York banking community and social democrats, who are social-democratic dogs for larcenous, usurious bankers.

We made the mistake in Africa, we made it in Central America, we made it in South America, we made it in Indochina; we are making it again in Asia, and in the Middle East.

Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.) introduced a resolution Sept. 5 calling for withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the Mideast by Oct. 1; the resolution has been referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and, according to Gonzalez's office, has elicited an overwhelmingly positive response from his constituents.

On Sept. 28, Gonzalez gave a stinging denunciation of Bush's policy, comparing it to that of ancient imperial Rome, and calling U.S. tactics during its invasion of Panama "Hitlerian." "On August 2, we were in session," Gonzalez said, in remarks on the floor of the House. "Saddam Hussein invaded what was known as Kuwait, a nation drawn in the sand by British oil colonialists back some years ago. . . . We do not have the perspective to see ourselves as the world sees us, particularly in that part of the world. That part of the world and everywhere else sees us as the country stepping into the shoes of the two departed colonial powers, Great Britain and France."

Gonzalez continued: "The thing the men who wrought

the Constitution feared the most were king-made wars, but today, do we have Presidents, co-equal, not dominant, not greater in power but co-equal, independent and separate from the other two organs of government, or do we have Caesars? To me this is more evocative of the Caesarian period in Roman history, which you recall emerged from a republic. The Caesars were not like we picture a modern dictator, like Hitler, or something like that. No, they wanted to be popular with the populace. They wanted to play for public opinion. They did not want to be disliked. But they assumed total and complete power, and they first had to overcome what we have called the original Roman way of doing things, our Constitution."

Another Democratic congressman, Rep. Bob Traxler from Saginaw, Michigan, has announced that he is "unalterably opposed" to the U.S. Gulf deployment. A political power by virtue of his membership in the House Appropriations Committee—the panel that has final say over federal spending—Traxler said: "I do not believe in what we are doing. I

That message from Douglas MacArthur should be heard again, and again, and again. You are not a lily-livered pinko, as some folks say, if you are opposed to this war in the Middle East, which Mrs. Thatcher is so eager to have Mr. George Bush conduct. On the contrary: As General MacArthur says so eloquently, implicitly, you are a true patriot of the United States; and those who want this war, are not.

The following excerpts are from Gen. Douglas MacArthur's speech to the Joint Meeting of the Two Houses of the U.S. Congress, April 19, 1951:

Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Various methods through the ages have been attempted to devise an international process to prevent or settle disputes between nations. From the very start, workable methods were found insofar as individual citizens were concerned, but the mechanics of an instrumentality of larger international scope have never been successful. Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh. . . .

Long exploited by the so-called colonial powers, with little opportunity to achieve any degree of social justice,

individual dignity, or a higher standard of life such as guided our own noble administration of the Philippines, the peoples of Asia found their opportunity in the war just past to throw off the shackles of colonialism, and now see the dawn of new opportunity, a heretofore unfelt dignity, and the self-respect of political freedom.

Mustering half of the Earth's population and 60% of its natural resources, these peoples are rapidly consolidating a new force, both moral and material, with which to raise the living standard and erect adaptations of the design of modern progress to their own distinct cultural environments. Whether one adheres to the concept of colonization or not, this is the direction of Asian progress and it may not be stopped. It is a corollary to the shift of the world economic frontiers, as the whole epicenter of world affairs rotates back toward the area whence it started. In this situation it becomes vital that our own country orient its policies in consonance with this basic evolutionary condition rather than pursue a course blind to the reality that the colonial era is now past and the Asian peoples covet the right to shape their own free destiny. What they seek now is friendly guidance, understanding, and support, not imperious direction; the dignity of equality, not the shame of subjugation. Their pre-war standard of life, pitifully low, is infinitely lower now in the devastation left in war's wake. World ideologies play little part in Asian thinking and are little understood. What the people strive for is the opportunity for a little more food in their stomachs, a little better clothing on their backs, a little firmer roof over their heads, and the realization of the normal nationalist urge for political freedom. These political-social conditions . . . form a backdrop to contemporary planning which must be thoughtfully considered if we are to avoid the pitfalls of unrealism.