

# **Blessed are the peacemakers**

by Janet Jagan

Lined against the most powerful military machine in the history of the world and proclaiming peace instead of war are some of the most influential people and important countries.

The man who has pushed the hardest for peace and who has withstood tremendous pressures is French President Jacques Chirac. Along with the Chancellor of Germany, the two have led Europe's anti-war campaign. Both nations also hold important seats in the United Nations Security Council which is a key element in the struggle to prevent an armed attack on Iraq.

Certainly, Canada's Jean Chretien deserves praise for his forthright stand against his powerful neighbour, the USA. He strongly criticised the US call for the removal of President Saddam Hussein and asked if the ending of Saddam's rule was part of the UN Security Council Resolution 1441, which deals with disarmament.

Another neighbour of the USA, Mexico, is taking an anti-war stance. Anyone knowing US methods, must appreciate the courage of these two bordering states to go against the colossus that dominates the Western Hemisphere.

What will Turkey do? The people and their representatives in Parliament are against the presence of US troops on their soil. Yet their leaders, with eyes dazzled by US dollars are willing to take on the troops and make an invasion easier, since Turkey borders Iraq.

As the likelihood of war gets closer, more nations are expressing their abhorrence of war. Russia, China, Japan are three important countries which have taken strong positions against war on Iraq. Russia has expressed the view that the US and UK keep changing the rules and despite what they say, are already attacking Iraq in their flights over the 'no fly zone' in Southern Iraq.

It is of interest to note that UK Prime Minister Tony Blair took a beating in the House of Commons recently when 120 Labour MP's voted against his motion on Iraq. Blair promised not to commit British military to any involvement without first getting consent of the House of Commons. How does Blair account for the fact that British aircraft are bombing Iraq along with US planes in the 'no fly zone,' killing civilians and attacking defence targets of Iraq? Irate MP's have asked this same question.

The USA has considerably influenced the United Nations Weapons Inspectors who now seem to be taking orders from the USA. In the beginning, Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix had said he takes orders from the UN, not the USA. However, now, the pressures on him seem successful and he is in the process of clearing Iraq of any weapons of self-defence, in the wake of the constant promises by the USA that it will attack Iraq, whatever.

The USA has every weapon of mass destruction ever invented and will bomb Iraq and its people to oblivion. We saw the devastation in Afghanistan. What it will do in Iraq will be far greater.

One can only wonder why Iraq has been pinpointed for destruction. Apparently during the Clinton era, it was not considered a threat. Mr. Bush has not succeeded in persuading anyone that Saddam was linked to the September 11, 2001 attack on New York and Washington. No one loves the Iraq regime, yet why should it be the pivot of all the war plans of the USA?

We must be grateful for the presence of peacemakers throughout the world - the Jimmy Carters, the Nelson Mandelas, the Pope, Jacque Chirac and the millions of ordinary people everywhere who have marched in protest of war! Blessed are the peacemakers!

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