

Committee for a Workers’ International

‘The War in Afghanistan – A Decisive Turn’

1. This statement is the immediate reaction and conclusions of the International Secretariat of the CWI to the recent turn of events in Afghanistan. A fuller, more considered, statement will be produced in the aftermath of our forthcoming International Executive Committee.
2. Nobody could have predicted the dramatic turn of events in Afghanistan, and particularly the speed of developments in the last few days. The Northern Alliance has captured the key urban centres of Afghanistan, particularly in the north. First of all, Mazar-i-Sharif fell, quickly followed by the collapse or withdrawal by the Taliban from Kabul. Then Herat fell and the road was open to the Taliban’s ‘spiritual home’ and major base of Kandahar.
3. From controlling five to ten per cent of the country, 80 per cent of Afghanistan is now nominally under the control of the anti-Taliban forces. Neither Bush, nor Colin Powell, nor even Rumsfeld predicted the scale and speed of the Northern Alliance’s advance. Though decisive in a military sense, particularly through the merciless bombing of the Taliban positions, US imperialism nevertheless was not nor is now fully in control of the situation.
4. After the capture of Mazar-i-Sharif, Bush, accompanied by Pakistani military dictator Musharraf, urged “our friends” of the Northern Alliance not to enter Kabul but to “Go South” across the Shomali plain. The Northern Alliance warlords, particularly through their foreign minister Abdullah, publicly assured Bush that they would follow his advice and then did precisely the opposite in occupying Kabul. “To the victor goes the spoils”. In justification for their decision, they pointed to the “vacuum” which had opened up in Kabul, with the fleeing of the Taliban from the city. At the same time war, and particularly successful armies, have a momentum of their own. To have expected the Northern Alliance to remain on the outskirts of Kabul twiddling their thumbs in this situation was naïve of Bush and his advisers in the extreme.
5. In some areas like Jalalabad the city fell after “community elders in Jalalabad – between Kabul and the Pakistan border – negotiated a deal with the Taliban to abandon the city in return for safe passage with their weapons, Afghan sources said there Wednesday. Yunus Khalis, a local powerbroker, took control of Jalalabad after a withdrawal deal was struck, the Pakistani based Afghan Islamic Press reported. Mr Khalis declared himself independent of both the Taliban and the Alliance”[*International Herald Tribune*]. In the age-old tradition of Afghanistan Taliban warlords changed sides with as little difficulty as a man passing from a smoking to a non-smoking compartment of a train, “swapping their black (Taliban) turbans for the pakoul cap favoured by the Northern Alliance’s assassinated leader Ahmed Shah Masood” [*The Independent*, London, 16 November, 2001].
6. It is not clear, as we write this statement, as to whether a similar collapse of the Taliban in Kandahar and in the south will follow that of the north. A Pashtun ‘opposition force’ has been hastily formed in southern Afghanistan in order to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the Taliban. But up to now, the Taliban have rejected demands for their ‘surrender’ which probably sets the scene for some sort of military conflict. In Kunduz on the other hand, an estimated 20,000 Taliban fighters, largely ‘Afghan Arabs’, volunteers from Pakistan, Chechnya and the Middle East,

are putting up ferocious resistance to the Northern Alliance. Their determination to fight has been reinforced by the knowledge of the massacres of surrendering Taliban fighters by the Northern Alliance – 520 slaughtered in Mazar-i-Sharif alone. They correctly fear that the same fate awaits them if they capitulate.

7. The very ‘nightmare scenario’ which US imperialism and its allies from the beginning of the conflict have tried to avoid has now come about in Afghanistan; the collapse of the Taliban has left a vacuum which different warlords have rushed in to occupy because of the absence of an authoritative alternative to them particularly a Pashtun alternative in the south. Northern Afghanistan is now effectively dominated by the Northern Alliance and its component ethnic groups - Tajiks, Uzbeks and the Hazara Shia minority. However, even here within days of the fall of Kabul, conflict has broken out in the capital where the Hazaras – who constitute 30 to 40 per cent of the city’s population – object to Tajik domination and are threatening to send in three thousand fighters. The spectre of a re-run of the ethnic civil war of 1992-96 threatens to be repeated.

8. The US is frantic to avoid the consolidation of the Northern Alliance’s grip but the Northern Alliance is presenting the world with a *fait accompli* with its forces, as a British reporter remarked: “Already in the capital and busily acquiring the trappings of power; it may already be too late”. The political head of the Northern Alliance, Rabbani, was the president of Afghanistan between 1992 and 1996. This was the period when more than 50,000 citizens of Kabul were killed. Since then, Rabbani has still been recognised worldwide as the ‘president’ of Afghanistan, with his organisation occupying the Afghan seat at the United Nations right up to today. Moreover, they have deployed their own police and their own forces within Kabul, seizing the key

ministries of defence and the interior. The much-proclaimed ‘victory’ of Bush and Blair means that the Afghan people have exchanged the rule of one group of gangsters for another. However, the main war aims, the capture of bin Laden and the destruction of al-Qa’ida, remain unfulfilled.

9. At the same time, in Mazar-i-Sharif ‘General’ Abdul Dostum has established his power. For two years in the late 1990s he also used Mazar as the “capital of a mini-state that had its own airline and trade relations with the West” [*The Independent*]. All over Afghanistan, the former warlords who hibernated for five years during Taliban rule have emerged to reclaim their fiefdoms. In addition to Yunus Khalis in Jalalabad we have Karoum Kallili in Bamian who heads a coalition of eight Shia Moslem guerrilla groups, backed by Iran. In the south, in Oruzgan, a warlord is attempting to establish his position, while the former governor of Kandahar and a Pashtun tribal leader has returned with a fighting force to overthrow the Taliban in that area. And in Herat a force backed by Iran led by Ismail Khan is in control. In masterly British understatement, *The Independent* has admitted that these warlords: “May prove reluctant to yield power”.

10. This outcome of the war so far, unexpected and not fully desired by imperialism and its allies, has resulted from the change in the military strategy of imperialism in the last few weeks up to the collapse, as well as the complete rotteness and weakness of the Taliban – which could not be gauged from the outside. They collapsed like a house of cards, at least in the north, at the first serious challenge. In the first phase of the ‘war’ against terrorism, it was the cautious tones of Colin Powell, the Secretary of State of the Bush administration, which were in the ascendancy.

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11. However, for three weeks after the military campaign started on 7 October, the air strikes of US imperialism were deliberately muted because of the fear that the ‘war’ would get ahead of diplomacy. There was at that stage a reluctance to back the Northern Alliance. The air campaign was accordingly calculated to weaken the Taliban but not lead to its complete overthrow in the north and at the same time allowing time for a post-Taliban coalition to be assembled.

12. The approach of Powell and the CIA was that through diplomacy and military pressure enough Pashtuns could be persuaded to separate themselves from the Taliban and create the axis of a new government. But US public opinion, apprehensive after 11 September, combined with deep anxiety following the anthrax attacks, was whipped up by the media to demand immediate revenge. This compelled the US administration to switch its approach into supplying weapons to the Northern Alliance combined with much greater and heavier bombing unleashed against the Taliban.

13. Also, the growing antiwar mood in Europe in particular, with revulsion at the scale and effects of the bombing, as well as Pakistan’s Musharraf’s demand for a “short war”, all increased the pressure for an intensified military bombardment of the Taliban forces. While there was majority support in many countries, in Europe as well as the US, for the ‘war’ there was nevertheless growing opposition and unease at the inhuman spectacle of a “high tech bully” raining death from the skies on the poorest and virtually defenceless people of Afghanistan. The use of cluster bombs, the deployment of daisy cutters, which are like nuclear bombs “without the fallout” added to this mood.

14. In addition, oppositional voices were raised even within the ranks of the bourgeois on both sides of the Atlantic

questioning the bombing campaign and predicting that it would fail. Arthur Schlesinger, for instance, veteran US ‘Kennedyite’ commentator, stated that the US Joint Chiefs of Staff have wrongly based themselves upon the events of Kosova but a more apposite example would be Vietnam. US imperialism in Vietnam dropped more bombs than on all fronts in the Second World War, yet as Schlesinger pointed out this was not sufficient to break the morale of the ‘Viet Cong’.

15. However, the Taliban were not the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (Viet Cong). The latter was a peasant-based national liberation organisation with mass support, particularly amongst the Vietnamese peasantry. The Taliban are a messianic, obscurantist sect which, like bin Laden himself, are not a national liberation force or anti-imperialist, even in a mangled or distorted way.

16. It is true that some left organisations have mistakenly compared the Taliban to national liberation movements. This was entirely wrong, as recent events have demonstrated. The attempts to utilise some fragmentary comments of Trotsky from the 1930s to justify their position were completely erroneous. It is true that Trotsky did say that in the event of an attack by British imperialism on “semi-fascist” Brazil in the 1930s, he would be on the side of Brazil against imperialism. He made a similar point of siding with Ethiopia at the time of the attack of the fascist Italian state of Mussolini in 1935.

17. However, the international situation today and the position of the Taliban are not at all analogous. Both they and bin Laden are extreme forms of religious zealotry, are completely pro-capitalist, bitterly hostile to the working class, socialism and are counter revolutionary. They represent the ideology of the seventh or ninth centuries, with an extreme form of right-wing Islam that declares war on all ‘unbelievers’, which is

applied even to those Moslems who do not subscribe to the Wahhabi strain of Islam.

18. In his interview with a Pakistani journalist carried in the British press on 10/11 November, bin Laden justifies mass terror against the whole of the US population. He states: “The American people should remember that they pay taxes to their government, they elect their president, their government manufactures arms and gives them to Israel, and Israel uses them to massacre Palestinians. The American Congress endorses all government measures and this proves the entire America is responsible for the atrocities perpetrated against Moslems. The entire America, because they elect the Congress”. It is therefore justified to bomb and terrorise the mass of the working class as well as the US capitalists and imperialists. This is the doctrine of bin Laden.

19. It is true that the group of al-Qaida religious fanatics around him in the Arab world are ultimately a reaction to the imperialist domination of the Arab peoples – even amongst the privileged groups from whom bin Laden comes. But they are decoupled from the real national liberation struggle of the Arabs by their solely religious war against the ‘infidel’. The national liberation struggle in the Middle East can only be carried to a conclusion by the working class and the poor peasants of the Middle East. This would entail the overthrow of the rotten capitalist and semi-feudal Arab regimes and the Israeli capitalists and establishing a socialist federation of the Middle East.

20. Given the success of the last few days the strategists of US imperialism will undoubtedly draw the conclusion once more that an air campaign, without the deployment of significant ground forces and a high number of casualties, has worked. In the Gulf War, in the Balkan conflict and now in Afghanistan overwhelming air

superiority, it seems, can do the job. But such a conclusion, particularly when applied to the neo-colonial world as a whole, would be false. It was always certain that with the huge military and industrial weight of US imperialism and its allies that some kind of military victory was inevitable. However, the scale and the depth of the conflict were impossible to gauge beforehand. This was mainly because it was not possible to accurately estimate the resistivity of the Taliban, the morale of its troops, etc., and what degree of popular support it enjoyed amongst the population. Events have graphically illuminated that it had a very narrow base and very little support, particularly amongst the minorities in the north.

21. The scenes of celebration in Mazar-i-Sharif, in Kabul with the hated burka being replaced by women, the playing of music and football, and even children flying kites, which was prohibited under the Taliban, all serve to underline the deeply reactionary character of Taliban rule. It would, however, be false for imperialism to draw the conclusion that the methods it used in Afghanistan could be deployed elsewhere. Even in Kosova the bombing campaign was supplemented by the ethnic Albanian Kosova Liberation Army (KLA), which acted as the proxy ground troops of US imperialism and its allies. Similarly, after some hesitation, the Northern Alliance was used as imperialism’s ground troops in this campaign. There are, moreover, parallels between them and the KLA leadership in the sense that both were heavily involved in the drug trade. The Northern Alliance in Afghanistan responsible for 80 per cent of the growth and distribution of heroin which finds its way to the west.

22. There are some parallels as well in the mutilation and summary executions of opponents. The massacres of the Arab/Pakistani Taliban forces has compelled the preparation for deployment of extra troops – including 4,000 from

Britain – partly to help to ‘complete the war’ in the south but also to ‘watch over’ the warlords who presently wield the power.

23. The deployment of such forces will result in them becoming bogged down in deeper conflict. Even if some forces are initially welcomed by some people as “peace keepers” this will turn into its opposite and they will be seen as an enemy force of occupation. As the British Labour MP, Tam Dayell commented any deployment of troops will “become Northern Ireland thrice”.

24. How events will turn out in southern Afghanistan, in the Pashtun areas, is still not certain. It is not clear whether the Taliban are prepared to stage a last-ditch resistance around Kandahar. They have still an estimated 35,000-40,000, which numerically is bigger than the Northern Alliance at the present time. On the other hand, bin Laden and Mullah Omar may have decided to take to the hills to pursue a guerrilla campaign. Comparisons have been drawn with the struggle of the mujaheddin against the pro-Soviet forces in the 1980s. However, then the mujaheddin had the full backing of imperialism, with massive financial help and the supply of weapons, particularly from US imperialism. The Taliban do not enjoy the same advantages but, on the contrary, appear as a bedraggled, defeated force. Moreover, Mao Ze Dong’s famous dictum, that the ‘guerrilla is the fish that swims in the water’ may not apply in this case.

25. The feelings now of the Pashtun people towards the Taliban, the dominant ethnic group of Afghanistan, are not at all clear at the present time. The switch of sides, which former Taliban chiefs have undertaken, the uprisings against Taliban rule, reported as this statement is being completed, indicate an undermining of the base of the Taliban. On the other hand, Pashtun nationalism, manifested both within Afghanistan and in the North-West Frontier Province of

Pakistan, provided a certain base for the Taliban. It is possible that rather than a guerrilla war within Afghanistan the defeated Taliban forces and possibly even bin Laden will find refuge on the Pakistani side of the border.

26. This is a horrifying prospect for the Pakistani dictator Musharraf, the real loser so far out of this conflict. In the teeth of intense opposition from the right-wing Islamists, particularly in the border provinces of the Pashtun, he ceded the use of three military bases to US imperialism. His *quid pro quo* was the lifting of sanctions against Pakistan, imposed because of its acquisition of nuclear weapons, and the lowering of its foreign debt. This was accompanied by firm promises that the Northern Alliance would be kept in check and in particular would not enter Kabul. The fact that the Northern Alliance took not the slightest notice and has, moreover, demanded that there be no role for Pakistan in a post-Taliban Afghanistan is a big blow to Musharraf and Pakistani capitalism as a whole. One Pakistani paper has declared: “If Pakistan does not play its cards smartly, Islamabad and President [Pervez] Musharraf may soon find themselves redundant for the outside world, and engulfed in serious turmoil domestically”.

27. Afghanistan has always been vital to the Pakistani ruling class for diplomatic, military and strategic reasons. Militarily, it has always been perceived as a hinterland, a possible line of retreat, in the event of a new war with India. The mixture of the populations, particularly the Pashtun, has always meant that the Pakistani ruling class pursued a policy in Afghanistan which would prevent the destabilisation of Pakistan itself. Now, the defeat of the Taliban is not only a serious rebuff for Musharraf but also thousands of displaced Taliban fighters could decamp across the border, thereby reinforcing the intense hostility amongst the Pashtun to the Pakistani central government. The right-

wing Islamists will undoubtedly indict Musharraf as a ‘traitor’ and the prospect of a civil war or even a coup from the right-wing Islamists in the army could result from these events. The absence of any ‘democratic’ channel for the opposition of the masses to be ventilated would mean even greater violence than exists now. There could be an ‘Algerianisation’ of Pakistan with right-wing Islamists conducting a terror campaign and this being answered with mass terror by the state. This in turn could result in a tendency towards the fracturing or even complete Balkanisation of Pakistan along national and ethnic lines.

28. Even before the book is closed on this episode, with neither the ‘war’ in Afghanistan nor the original ‘war aims’ of capturing bin Laden and destroying the al-Qaida network complete, imperialist representatives are gloating over their ‘victory’. They have not yet gone quite as far as Mrs Thatcher who, after the victory over the Argentinian forces in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict declared “Rejoice! Rejoice!” Nevertheless one writer for *The Independent* cynically commented, “Terrible news from the front: we are winning the war. The capture of Mazar and Kabul is deeply depressing. If the Taliban are depressed, think how much worse it is for the antiwar lobby in the West”.

29. But the bourgeois would be as well to contemplate the words of the British military general and statesman, the Duke of Wellington, after the Battle of Waterloo. He declared: “Nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won”. The campaign had been designed to allow imperialism to call all the shots. Bin Laden and al-Qaida were to be smashed and a coalition government was to be installed, involving authoritative Pashtun leaders such as the ex-king Zahir, deposed in 1973. However, the Northern Alliance has now declared that, while the king can return as a ‘ordinary citizen’, there is no place for him in the government. Nevertheless,

imperialism is busy attempting to create a military counterweight to the armed factions that presently hold the power. Plans are afoot to create what Colin Powell called a “coalition of the willing”, largely made up of troops from Islamic countries such as Turkey, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Turkey already has 90 ‘advisers’ to the Northern Alliance, because of its interest with the Turkic-speaking people who are part of this force. At the same time, it wants a foot in Afghanistan as a counterweight to Iran, a traditional rival.

30. The interests of the neighbouring powers to Afghanistan, and their determination to enhance their own position at the expense of their rivals, has been pointed up in this conflict. Jack Straw, the British Foreign Secretary, can farcically declare that there will be no repetition of the “Great Game” of the nineteenth century. Then, it was a struggle between Russian and British imperialism for domination of Central Asia. The rivalry was intensified by the discovery of oil, which is now potentially important to western capitalism if supplies are cut off by the installation of a bin Laden type right-wing Islamist regime in Saudi Arabia. Despite Straw’s protestations, we do have a modern “Great Game” but this time with the involvement of a dozen powers instead of the handful before. Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Russia, China, the US, Britain and India are all jockeying to enhance their position at the expense of their rivals in the region.

31. The *Financial Times*, in London, on 16 November, bluntly contradicted Straw, when it wrote: “The UK deployment [of troops in Afghanistan], which was agreed with Washington indicated that Western governments have in effect carved out areas of responsibility within the country” France has now said that it is prepared to send troops “in the next few days to the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif”. This is all done under the shield of “distributing

humanitarian aid”. But it is in reality a new “Great Game” with outside powers calling the shots and deciding the fate of Afghanistan, which is the sole right of the Afghani people themselves. The CWI demands the withdrawal of all foreign troops and forces from Afghanistan.

32. The Afghani people are not what Rudyard Kipling called “the lesser breed without the law” who are incapable of fashioning their own destiny. We reject both the rule of imperialism in Afghanistan and a continuation of the undemocratic domination of feudal landlords. We demand full democratic rights, equal rights for women, the right to strike, freedom of assembly, for an independent press and for the right to vote for the government of their choice.

33. No capitalist government will be able to solve the problems of the Afghan workers and poor peasants. Only a democratic government of the workers and poor peasants can solve the problem of the land, begin to create the infrastructure of a modern economy and link up with the other countries in the region in a socialist confederation. We oppose the plans of imperialism and the warlords together with the king to convene a so-called ‘loya jirga’, which allows imperialism and the feudalists to arbitrarily decide the fate of the Afghan people.

34. Immediately, the threat of further ethnic strife and a repetition of the cycle of violence and bloodshed of the past can only be avoided if the Afghan workers and poor step in to create their own democratic committees and form ethnically mixed militias to maintain peace in Kabul and elsewhere, under the democratic control and supervision of the masses themselves. The organisation of separate armed detachments of Tajiks, Uzbeks, etc., is a formula for clashes and armed conflicts between the different ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

35. After decades of seemingly unending war and strife there is an obvious yearning for peace in Afghanistan. Imperialism and the feudalists will never be able to satisfy the masses’ demands for this. This can only be done by the workers and the poor themselves, organising democratic and ethnically mixed organisations in Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and elsewhere in Afghanistan. At the same time, only a separate mass party of the working people of Afghanistan, organised on a democratic and socialist programme, is capable of really opening a path for peace, jobs, prosperity and a new future for the peoples of Afghanistan.

36. At the same time, it is an exaggeration to crudely declare, as some on the left have done, that this conflict is nothing more than a “war for oil”. Of course, the oil giants such as Amoco have attempted to cuddle up to the Taliban in the past because of their dream of a pipeline for the oil from the Caspian Sea through Afghanistan. But this immediate conflict has more to do with re-establishing the injured pride and prestige as well as restoring the strategic interests of US imperialism in the region and worldwide. Undoubtedly, the strategists of US imperialism have pondered a doomsday scenario of the overthrow of the House of Saud in Saudi Arabia and with it the sundering of the oil lifeline of world capitalism. In the past, US imperialism has discussed that, in the event of such a development, US troops would be used to seize the oilfields. This was undoubtedly possible when Saudi Arabia had a scattered population with the oil located in relatively depopulated areas which could be easily defended by a US –led military force. However, in the current world situation, with the Middle East already in flames, such a military incursion would ratchet up the conflict in the region and would lead to new wars with the possibility of the overthrow of a number of right-wing Arab regimes, such as Mubarak’s Egypt.

37. One thing is clear: rather than ushering in a period of stability and calm, the ‘victory’ of imperialism in Afghanistan has laid the basis for the very opposite. Blair has virtually declared that the Afghan conflict and the military victory flowing from this has ushered in a “New World Order Mark 2”. A post-Taliban Afghanistan would this time prosper, he argues. It is true that imperialism cannot walk away once more, as they did following the defeat of the Russians in the 1980s. They will now be heavily involved in seeking to establish a ramshackle coalition, underpinned by a military force of a UN-type character, without necessarily the ‘blue helmets’ of the UN forces themselves. Afghanistan will be a virtual US protectorate, which moreover will have to be underwritten financially with substantial aid to drag the country out of the Middle Ages. The budget of the Taliban was a pitiful \$83 million. This amounts to a budget no greater than that of a department of a London borough.

38. At the same time, the war party in the US, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld and Rice, who are now in the ascendancy after this ‘success’, will push for an assault on Iraq. Former British Foreign Secretary David Owen, an ‘Atlanticist’ and close to the governing circles in the US, has suggested not just Iraq but other ‘terrorist states’ such as Syria, should be targets for future unspecified action by the US, Britain and its allies. Iraq is already being bombed. The hope clearly is that intensified bombing could lead to cracks in the army and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. However, if the Bush administration moves in this direction it will shatter the carefully assembled coalition, and particularly its Arab wing. It would mean the colossal intensification of the conflict in the Middle East and would lead to a revival of the antiwar movement, which in the event of the end of the Afghan conflict could subside somewhat.

39. However, we should be careful not to prematurely write off the antiwar movement, particularly if the ‘endgame’ in Afghanistan is more drawn-out than appears likely at the present time. Nevertheless, the victory of imperialism in Afghanistan will be milked for all that it is worth, as we have seen above, and will undoubtedly have an effect on consciousness, at least in the short term. It could reinforce the idea that US imperialism is ‘invincible’, at least in a military sense. But the other side of the coin is that it will enormously intensify the hostility and hatred of US imperialism and its allies worldwide, but particularly in the neo-colonial world.

40. Under the cover of this victory it is not an accident that the meeting of the World Trade Organisation has agreed to launch a so-called trade ‘liberalisation’ round from January 2002. The US trade representative declared: “We have removed the stain of Seattle”. But the measures that have been agreed on paper, if applied, will be a disaster for the world’s poor and will be fought. Even if the peace movement subsides, a new anti-capitalist, anti-globalisation movement is in the offing, which will be reinforced by the simultaneous world recession or slump which is underway.

41. An unprecedented period of instability, economic and social convulsions, and turbulence will result from the conflict in Afghanistan. In future statements the CWI will outline in detail what the outcome of this conflict now means for perspectives for the Middle East, for the neo-colonial world and for other geo-political factors such as the relationship between US imperialism and Putin. In addition, the vital questions of bio-terrorism and the acquisition by terrorist organisations of nuclear weapons, will be important issues for the workers of the world and socialists and Marxists in particular to discuss.

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42. US imperialism and, on its coat tails, British imperialism, have scored a victory in Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, the poll ratings of Bush and Blair will go even higher into the stratosphere. But it should never be forgotten that Bush’s father, George Bush senior, also enjoyed support over 80 per cent after the Gulf War. This did not prevent him from being defeated by Clinton in the 1992 presidential elections, the main factor being the world recession of the early 1990s. His son will face an even deeper and more drawn-out crisis economically, which will be reflected in unprecedented social and political turmoil in the US.

43. Most striking about the situation in the US is the elemental class conflict, epitomised in the clash between the fire-fighters and the penny-pinching New York City administration which wanted to wind up the recovery operation at Ground Zero, and the battle in Congress over tax cuts for the rich by Bush, rather than measures to help the mass of working people and middle class. The fissiparous tendencies at work in the US will result in gaping divisions between the classes, which in turn will allow for the emergence of socialist and

Marxist ideas on a hitherto unprecedented scale. This will be paralleled by colossal upheavals in the semi-colonial world – again typified by the economic and social crisis in Argentina, with unprecedented votes for the revolutionary left in the recent elections – and in the ex-Stalinist world of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Blair and Bush’s “New World Order Mark 2” will be even more feeble and shorter than that of George Bush senior and Mrs Thatcher in the early 1990s.

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16/11/01**

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Other substantial documents by the Socialist Party and the CWI on this war and other developments can be read on our Documents Collection.