

Oil Lust and Israeli "Hatchet Men" Behind U.S. Plans to Occupy Iraq

by Christopher Bollyn

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The White House plan to invade Iraq in order to replace its regime and seize its immense oil reserves is both politically unwise and illegal, according to critics and legal experts.

Un-named "senior administration officials" have recently revealed that the White House is planning to install an U.S.-led military government in Iraq after overthrowing Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad. If a U.S.-led coalition were to succeed in overthrowing the regime in Baghdad, "Iraq would be governed by an American military commander, perhaps Gen. Tommy R. Franks," and the U.S. military, for an unspecified time, would "control the second largest reserves of oil in the world," according to the *New York Times* of Oct. 10.[1]

The *Times* article suggests that the real motivation to wage war against Iraq is to impose a "lengthy occupation" of Iraq in order to secure its vast oil resources for American and British oil companies. While the U.S. plan reportedly calls for conducting war-crimes trials of Iraqi leaders, it is the war-planners in Washington, like the un-named official quoted by the *Times*, who are committing the most serious war crimes, known as "Crimes against Peace," by engaging in "an on-going criminal conspiracy to conduct a war of aggression," according to legal experts.

The U.S. occupation plan would "put an American officer in charge of Iraq for a year or more while the United States and its allies searched for weapons and got Iraq's oil fields working," the *Times* wrote. Apparently the White House is determined to occupy Iraq regardless of what happens to the regime in Baghdad, even if Saddam Hussein is overthrown in a domestic coup, in order to "ensure against anarchy," according to the un-named administration official.

As *American Free Press* has reported, Iraq's immense quantity of proven and probable oil reserves, an estimated 335 billion barrels, makes it possibly the richest country in the world in terms of oil and gas resources. Britain previously imposed a military occupation in Iraq from 1919 to 1932. Earlier in 1899, Britain had created the "British protectorate" of Kuwait by separating Iraq's coastal province from the rest of the nation and installing a cooperative ruling family in order to better control the region and its oil resources.

"Our intent is not conquest and occupation of Iraq," Zalmay Khalilzad, special assistant to the president for Middle Eastern affairs, said recently. "But we do what needs to be done to achieve the disarmament mission and to get Iraq ready for a democratic transition and then through democracy over time." Only after this unspecified transition period would the U.S.-military occupation government hand power to Iraqis. The White House plan reportedly calls for "a transition to an elected civilian government that could take months or years."

"NEW MANAGEMENT"

Khalilzad said that the Iraqi armed forces would be "downsized," and that senior Ba'ath Party officials who control government ministries would be removed. "Much of the bureaucracy would carry on under new management," he added. This is very similar to the strategy that Israel is currently applying in the Palestinian territories seized in 1967.

If the U.S. and its coalition partners (primarily Britain and Israel) overthrow Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath regime, the U.S. military and its partners would then administer Iraq and control its oil production for an open-ended period. "One sees little discussion of an occupation of Iraq, but it is the key element of the current debate," James Webb, assistant secretary of defense during the Reagan administration, wrote in *The Washington Post* in September. "The issue before Americans is not simply whether the United States should end the regime of Saddam Hussein, but whether we as a nation are prepared to physically occupy territory in the Middle East for the next 30 to 50 years," Webb wrote. "A long-term occupation of Iraq would beyond doubt require an adjustment of force levels elsewhere, and could eventually diminish American influence in other parts of the world."

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld says, "Don't do anything that is not achievable and which you can't sustain," according to Lt. Col. David Lapan, spokesman for the Dept. of Defense. *American Free Press* had asked Lapan how the Pentagon plans to occupy an Arabic-speaking nation the size of California when it has difficulties translating simple Arabic documents as evidenced by Sept. 11.

During the British military occupation of Iraq during the 1920s, Indians were imported to administrate the bureaucracy. The lack of Arabic-speaking personnel in the U.S. military and the growing use of private contractors to carry out U.S. foreign policy suggest that the Pentagon would turn to hired mercenary forces and Arabic-speaking sub-contractors to enforce the occupation.

Although the U.S. Congress voted to give President George W. Bush "flexibility" to use the military "against the continuing threat" posed by the Iraqi regime, there is substantial political, military, and legal criticism of the White House plan to use force to overthrow the regime in Baghdad and occupy the country.

In Russia the vote in support of the Bush war policy was sharply criticized as a provocation and threat to global political and economic stability. Viktor Ozerov, chairman of the defense committee of Russia's upper house of parliament, said the vote in Congress "can be regarded as a challenge to the world community that proves that the United States of America does not pay any attention to the norms of international law."

Francis Boyle, professor of international law at the University of Illinois, told *AFP* that White House lawyers are well aware that they are conspiring in "criminal activity" as they plot to invade Iraq and overthrow its government. Article 6 of the Nuremberg Charter, drafted by the United States and adopted as international and U.S. law after the Second World War, makes the "planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression" a Crime against Peace, a war crime for which senior Nazi officials were hanged.

"Leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices" who participate in "the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy" to commit any of the crimes proscribed by the Nuremberg Charter "are responsible for all acts performed by any person in execution of such plan." The language concerning involvement in a criminal conspiracy, Boyle said, comes straight from Supreme Court-approved U.S. law, namely the Pinkerton rule.

The White House lawyers are well aware that they are engaging in "an on-going criminal conspiracy to conduct a war of aggression," Boyle said, adding, "*The New York Times* finally conceded that the reason the United States sabotaged the International Criminal Court (ICC) is because senior members of the Bush administration are afraid that they risk criminal prosecution."

The notion that the U.S. government rejects the ICC because it places military personnel at risk of prosecution is "nonsense," Boyle said. It is the highly paid civilian planners at the Pentagon and the White House who have most to fear from the ICC because of their involvement in planning war crimes, according to Boyle.

"Israel-ization" of U.S. policy

Boyle named Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith, "well known hatchet-men for the Israeli lobby," as the primary civilian planners pushing for a war of aggression against Iraq. "Their behavior shows what lawyers call 'consciousness of guilt' because they know they are planning criminal activity already," Boyle said. "What we are seeing is the progressive Israel-ization of American policy."

The Pentagon's Lapan told *AFP* that he could not comment on the legality of U.S. war plans against Iraq because he did not know the law concerning a so-called "pre-emptive" war against Iraq to overthrow its government. Asked if the Pentagon was concerned that using such legally dubious actions as an Israeli-style "pre-emptive" war and lengthy military occupation could seriously erode America's military strength and its moral authority, Lapan said comments on these matters were "above my pay grade."

Gen. Anthony Zinni (U.S.M.C. Ret.), the former U.S. military commander for the Middle East who preceded General Tommy Franks as head of Central Command criticized the White House rush to war saying, "I'm not convinced we need to do this now." The Iraqi threat was "containable at this moment," Zinni told Washington's Middle East Institute on Oct. 10, adding that war should be considered only as the "very last resort."

Zinni said that getting Middle East peace talks going between Palestinians and Israelis was a higher priority than dealing with Iraq. Zinni has served as an unpaid consultant to the State Department on Israeli-Palestinian issues for the past two years.

1. The article being cited was actually published on October 11. From the *NYT* search archive:

FOREIGN DESK | October 11, 2002, Friday

THREATS AND RESPONSES: A PLAN FOR IRAQ;

U.S. Has a Plan To Occupy Iraq, Officials Report

By DAVID E. SANGER and ERIC SCHMITT (NYT) 1391 words

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ABSTRACT - White House is developing detailed plan, modeled on postwar occupation of Japan, to install American-led military government in Iraq if United States topples Saddam Hussein; senior administration officials say plan also calls for war-crime trials of Iraqi leaders and transition to elected civilian government that could take months or years; there has not been formal approval of plan yet, and it is not clear whether allies have been consulted on it; administration officials say they are scaling back initial role for Iraqi opposition forces in post-Hussein government, hoping to avoid chaos and in-fighting that have plagued Afghanistan since defeat of Taliban; say they want full control over Iraq while American-led forces carry out their principal mission: finding and destroying weapons of mass destruction; description of post-Hussein plan and possibility of war-crime trials of Iraqi leaders may be part of administration effort to warn Iraq's generals of unpleasant future if they continue to support Hussein.

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