

SUSAN WATKINS

Editorial

VICHY ON THE TIGRIS

His Majesty's Government and I are in the same boat and must sink or swim together . . . if you wish me and your policy to succeed, it is folly to damn me permanently in the public eye by making me an obvious puppet.

*King Faisal I to the British High Commissioner,
Mesopotamia, 17 August 1921.¹*

RARELY HAS A passage of powers been so furtive. The ceremony—held two days ahead of schedule, deep within Baghdad's fortified Green Zone—lasted just ten minutes, with thirty us and Iraqi officials present. Outside the cement stockade, the military realities remain the same: an Occupation force of 160,000 us-led troops, an additional army of commercial security guards, and jumpy local police units. Before departing, the Coalition Provisional Authority set in place a parallel government structure of Commissioners and Inspectors-General (still referring to themselves as 'coalition officials' a week after the supposed dissolution of that body) who, elections notwithstanding, will control Iraq's chief ministries for the next five years.² The largest us embassy in the world will dominate Baghdad, with regional 'hubs' planned in Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla and Basra. Most of the \$3.2 billion that has been contracted so far is going on the construction of foreign military bases.³ The UN has resolved that the country's oil revenues will continue to be deposited in the us-dominated Development Fund for Iraq, again for the next five years. The newly installed Allawi government will have no authority to reallocate contracts signed by the CPA, largely with foreign companies who will remain above the law of the land. Two thirds of the cabinet ministers are themselves us or UK citizens.

Iyad Allawi, hailed in the Western media as the blunt, independent-minded leader the country needs, is an appropriate appointment as prime minister. Little secret is made of the fact that, like his counterpart Karzai in Afghanistan, he has been a paid CIA agent for many years; the time is long past when that was considered something to hide. Allawi's career to date has more than qualified him for his present role. Iraqis recall him as a Baath enforcer in London student circles of the 1970s, with a bogus medical degree conferred by the regime for services rendered. According to an ex-INA colleague, he was simultaneously dealing with MI6 and running a Mukhabarat death squad for Saddam's faction, targeting Baath dissenters in Europe, until falling foul of it himself in 1978.⁴ After a few years in hiding he resurfaced in Amman, co-founding the Iraqi National Accord in 1991 with Salih Omar Ali al-Tikriti, a former supervisor of public hangings in Baghdad. The INA specialized in recruiting military and intelligence defectors; the bomb blasts attributed to it in the mid-90s—one in a crowded theatre, another killing schoolchildren on a bus—were purportedly 'proficiency tests', set by the CIA. Duly persuaded of the INA's merits, the Agency provided funding for Allawi's botched coup attempt of 1996 which, uncovered by Saddam, resulted in over a hundred executions. He was subsequently responsible for passing on the intelligence that prompted Blair's claim of 45-minute WMD delivery systems, and pinpointed Saddam's supposed bunker for bombardment at the start of the 2003 Iraq War.⁵

With the Occupation in place, Allawi was put on the Governing Council in charge of security. His campaign for the post of prime minister—his lobbying firm spent over \$370,000—was naturally run in Washington,

¹ Telegram from the High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The British had been concerned lest King Faisal 'did not realize what degree of control we expect him to submit to'. Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [1978], London 2004, p. 324. Many thanks to Sami Ramadani and others for their comments and observations. They naturally bear no responsibility for what follows.

² A CPA-appointed official on the Communications and Media Commission in charge of media licensing explained that 'they can kiss goodbye to any European funds' and 'considerable US resources would be withheld' if there were any attempt by the interim minister to disobey the Commission. *Financial Times*, 5 July 2004.

³ *Economist*, 26 June 2004; *Financial Times*, 5 July 2004.

⁴ For former INA propagandist Dirgam Kadhim's account: Eli Lake, *New York Sun*, 17 January 2004; Seymour Hersh, 'Plan B', *New Yorker*, 28 June 2004.

⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 7 December 2003.

not Baghdad.⁶ Once appointed, he embarrassed his masters by attempting to proclaim martial law before his inauguration. His colleague Ghazi al-Yawar, Iraq's new president, made a comparable show of independence by demurring from Bush's proposal to blow up Abu Ghraib: it would be a pity to demolish the prison when the Americans had spent so much money on it. (Yawar, an obscure telecoms manager in Saudi Arabia when the us established contact with him not long before the invasion, began dressing up in Shammar tribal robes as soon as he was put on the Governing Council; perhaps a tip from Karzai in Afghanistan.) Similarly, the first act of the interim Human Rights minister, Bakhtiyar Amin, was to announce state-of-emergency legislation. His predecessor on the Human Rights portfolio, a fellow Kurd, had resigned in disgust at the torture photographs from Abu Ghraib; Amin has showed no such compunction.

Character of the resistance

That it has taken Washington over a year to establish such a threadbare front—Karzai was parachuted into place in Kabul within a matter of days—is testimony to the strength of the resistance. In June 1940 the French Army, like its modern Iraqi counterpart, collapsed in face of the German *Blitzkrieg* without a serious fight. Within a month French National Assembly deputies gathered at Vichy had voted, 569 to 80, in favour of a collaborationist regime under Marshal Pétain.⁷ The Vichy government was swiftly recognized by the us and other powers, and the majority of non-Jewish French settled down to life under the Occupation. It was two years before the *maquis* began to offer serious resistance. Elsewhere in Europe, the pattern was similar. The Germans were efficient in organizing indigenous support: Quisling in Norway, the Croatian Ustashi and ss-trained Bosnian and Kosovan regiments in Yugoslavia, Iron Cross in Romania, Arrow Cross in Hungary. In their classical form, twentieth-century resistance movements were slow to constitute themselves. Those that did appear nearly always had external

⁶ For the sum Allawi's hired lobbyists Theros & Theros set up meetings with Bill Frist, Richard Lugar, Dennis Hastert, Tom DeLay, Henry Hyde, assorted National Security Council officials, vp's office, Defence Department and CIA, as well as getting Allawi a column in the *Washington Post*. See Ken Guggenheim, *Associated Press*, 24 January 2004; Jim Drinkard, *USA Today*, 2 June 2004.

⁷ For the comparison, see Tariq Ali, 'Postscript', in the paperback edition of *Bush in Babylon*, to be published by Verso in October 2004.

state support. If the Allies' supplies were crucial to the anti-Nazi underground of Continental Europe, the general pattern was much the same in Asia or Africa. Chinese weaponry was a condition of Vietminh victory, as Egyptian and Tunisian backing was for the FLN in Algeria. Typically, such foreign help functioned in conjunction with an already existing political leadership and party network with a potential for hegemony at national level, as with the local Communist movements in France, Italy or Indochina.

The resistance that has emerged over the past year to the us Occupation in Iraq fits none of these categories. It began early, the first armed attacks erupting in May 2003, within weeks of Baghdad's fall. It escalated over the summer, as demonstrations and street protests were regularly fired upon. ('The apprentice is gone, the master is here' was the chant of the million-strong march on Karbala that spring.) The initial hit-and-miss harrying of the Occupation force—roadside devices, rocket-propelled missiles, amateurish shelling of the CPA compound—had developed by August 2003 into assaults on strategic military and diplomatic targets: the Jordanian Embassy, the UN compound. By November us forces were suffering heavier losses, with the insurgents bringing down helicopters. Vicious reprisals led to a further escalating spiral. Like any other military occupation, the Anglo-American regime has been one of sanctioned murder and torture; the resistance to it has been savage, too.⁸ Suicide raids, car bombs and mortars have sown havoc in the big cities. Attacks on us forces doubled between October and December 2003, from around fifteen to over thirty; by June 2004 they had risen to an estimated forty-five a day. Increasingly sophisticated assaults on pipelines and pumping-stations (estimated at over 2,000 in the past year) have cut oil exports for weeks at a time. Yet the simultaneous rebellions that broke out across the Shia south and Sunni centre in April 2004, and the joint Shia–Sunni convoy from Baghdad to Falluja, have done most to trigger the alarm of Western and Arab governments—prefiguring a national resistance leadership, to be avoided at all costs. Meanwhile, CPA polls measured the solid bank of popular support behind the fighters: some 92 per cent of Iraqis saw the us troops as occupiers; only 2 per cent considered them a liberation force.

⁸ For a vivid portrayal of the mindset of alienated us troops—a cocktail of gun culture, video games, pornography and deracinated violence—see Evan Wright, *Generation Kill*, New York 2004; the prevalence in us prisons of the methods of humiliation practised in Abu Ghraib has been well documented.

Nor has the Iraqi resistance received support from any foreign state. Externally, it faces a front of unprecedented official hostility—a global unanimity unimaginable in any previous age. UN Security Council resolution 1546, passed on 8 June 2004, extends unqualified support to the CPA-appointed regime, conferring the full legitimacy of the ‘international community’ on its collection of old CIA hands and carpet-baggers.⁹ Explaining that the country—lacking an army, and with a transparent absence of WMD—‘continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security’, it authorizes the US-led occupying force to take ‘all necessary measures’, ie, whatever American commanders deem fit. All UN members are, of course, bluntly prohibited from supplying arms or material to the Iraqi people. France and Germany offered the comedy of a request that sovereign control over the Occupier’s army be entrusted to the Iraqi façade it has manufactured—only be told by Allawi and Yawar that Paris and Berlin should ‘not be more Iraqi than the Iraqis’, who desired only that the US command ‘keep them informed’.

In the Middle East itself, the Arab states have played their accustomed role. The governments that rallied to Washington in the first Gulf War—Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Tunis, Algiers, Rabat—have stuck with it through the second, with Amman now rapidly catching up. Algeria voted for resolution 1546, Syria for its predecessor 1511 in October 2003. Mubarak has offered the services of Egypt’s security services to train the new Iraqi *gendarmerie*, while simultaneously backing Israel’s *razzias* in the Gaza strip. King Abdallah is providing parade grounds in Jordan and has readied his troops to help out. The wider Islamic world has proved equally reliable. In June the fifty-seven states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference met in Istanbul to pledge their support for the Occupation’s native face—Karzai logically in the lead. Erdoğan, their host, has not only offered Turkish troops for Iraq but hurried to participate in Washington’s Broader Middle East initiative, at which even Mubarak balked. Iran has helped keep the southern clergy quiet as the Americans ring the shrine cities of the Shia heartland. In Pakistan, Musharraf is bombing his Waziri subjects on US instructions.

Politically, the Iraqi resistance has been heterogeneous and fragmentary, lacking the established party networks crucial to most previous

⁹ Current UNSC members, in addition to the Permanent Five: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Spain.

anti-occupation movements. It includes Nasserites, former Baathists, secular liberals and social democrats, multi-hued mosque-based networks, and splits from the collaborationist Iraqi Communist and Dawa parties. American observers have commented on the social breadth of an opposition that draws on support from nearly every class, both urban and rural: 'Its ranks include students, intellectuals, former soldiers, tribal youths, farmers and Islamists'.¹⁰ Ideologically, nationalism and islamism—'for God and Iraq'—are potent calls, but there are elements of Third World anti-imperialism and pan-Arabism too. It remains to be seen whether these groups can establish some equivalent of a national liberation front, to unite religious and secular groups around the central demand for the expulsion of all foreign troops.

Subjective resources

Externally isolated and internally unsynchronized, the Iraqi *maquis* nevertheless possesses a number of distinct resources. First, strong social networks: resilient clan and extended-family connexions; city neighbourhood quarters that retain some cohesion; mosques that offer a safe local gathering place, unimaginable in occupied Europe. Arab writers have pointed out the attendant weaknesses of these forms: particularism, local rivalry, lack of coordination, the treachery or opportunism of unaccountable demagogues, a fringe of criminality—though within this fluid, oral and highly mobilized environment, leaders can also be forced into taking more resolute stands, to retain their supporters.¹¹

Second, the considerable quantity of arms that the resistance has at its disposal. American estimates—three million tons of bombs and bullets, AK47s, rocket launchers and mortar tubes, plus the artillery shells used to make roadside bombs—may be inflated. But unlike previous anti-occupation movements, plagued by lack of arms, it seems likely that the Iraqi guerrillas have sufficient explosives to harry the occupiers for years to come. Shock-resistant, these weapons have to be painstakingly dismantled, one by one; an attempt to blow up an ammunitions stack

¹⁰ Ahmed Hashim, 'Terrorism and Complex Warfare in Iraq', Jamestown Foundation, 18 June 2004.

¹¹ Points made in the last essays of the novelist Abderrahman Munif (1933–2004), published as *Al-Iraq: Hawamish min al-Tarikh wa al-Moquoumah* [Iraq: Footnotes from History and Resistance], Beirut 2003.

simply scatters it, unexploded. The us has only a few hundred engineers in Iraq capable of the task.¹²

Third, the natural dislike of any people for a foreign occupation has been reinforced by the stark deterioration of social conditions since the Anglo-American invasion. In much of the countryside, the long-term agrarian crisis—salination, pump failure, silted canals—is worsening as agribusiness imports increase. Rising rural unemployment has swollen the slum populations of Basra and Baghdad. In most towns outside the North, small businesses have been hit by a combination of cheap foreign goods and the breakdown of law and order. Much of Iraq's shrunken 70s-era industrial sector—already skewed towards arms production during the Iran–Iraq war, then targeted by Western bombs in the 1990s—faces not privatization but closure, putting a once-skilled workforce on the street. Two-thirds of the pre-invasion workforce may now be unemployed. As for the future, promotional literature for the country as a regional trade hub—a giant Dubai, handling freight operations for the Greater Middle East¹³—offers Iraqis little more than a distant prospect of integration into the global economy as baggage handlers and warehousemen. A deepening social crisis is concealed behind the daily military communiqués, and the tangible Occupation presence provides a ready target for its frustrations.

Fourthly, the resistance can draw upon vivid historical memories of battles finally won against the last imperial occupier. The modern Iraqi nation is a creation of the struggle against British colonialism, after London seized Mesopotamia from Istanbul in 1917. The countryside uprising in the summer of 1920—small tribal sheikhs and sayyids along the Euphrates joining with ex-Ottoman officials in Baghdad and hard-hit northern merchants from Mosul—forced London to retreat from direct administration on the Delhi model. Its solution, 'ruling without governing' as the Secretary of State for the Colonies later defined it,¹⁴ was to set up a monarchy dependent on British arms for survival, backed by a League of Nations Mandate authorizing 'all necessary measures'. The British High Commissioner remained the highest power in the land and, when

¹² Evan Wright, 'Iraq's vast arsenal', *International Herald Tribune*, 18 June 2004.

¹³ See for example the effusions of Joseph Braude, *The New Iraq*, New York 2003, pp. 132–3.

¹⁴ That is, 'exercising control through an ostensibly independent native government': L. S. Amery, Foreign Office Memorandum, 7 February 1929.

the Mandate expired, the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty guaranteed British control over Iraq's foreign policy, seaport, railways, airbases and, in times of war, security forces. Compliant local notables signed up to the Treaty, willing to forgo external independence—as one of them put it—as long as they had internal control. The majority of the population rejected it. When resistance broke out in 1922, the British High Commissioner arrested political leaders, banned nationalist parties and famously subdued rebellious tribes with punitive bombing and mustard gas.

But despite London's efforts to foster conservative landlordism in the countryside, packing tame national assemblies with loyal sheikhs and fabricating a 'manly' desert image for them, urban social forces could not be held down indefinitely. In 1936, social-democratic lawyers and civil servants joined forces with nationalist officers in a short-lived coup d'état. The nascent Iraqi Communist Party began organizing rank-and-file soldiers. Strike waves swept the Basra docks, Baghdad railway workshops, Najaf weaving factories, Kirkuk oil fields and Habbaniyah military base. In May 1941 the pro-British Regent, the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister Nuri al-Said were forced to flee abroad when pan-Arab officers with mass nationalist backing seized power and abrogated the wartime provisos of the Treaty. The UK had to re-occupy the country to restore imperial control, returning the Crown Prince to Baghdad in a British tank.

In January 1948 popular anger at the recycling of the Treaty¹⁵ and at the British role in Palestine set off an insurrectionary movement in the capital, mingling middle-class students and nationalists with communist railway workers and slum-dwellers. In November 1952, another rising pitched them against Hashemite troops and police in the streets of Baghdad. Four years later riots erupted in Najaf and Hayy against the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt. Finally, in July 1958, a Free Officers' coup toppled the monarchy with the backing of both Communists and Baathists (at that time a small party with under a thousand members). Huge crowds clogged the streets to block any counter-revolution, as the Republic of Iraq was proclaimed by a left-nationalist government led by Abdul-Karim Qasim, and the door to national independence and social reform opened.¹⁶

¹⁵ Now 'oiled over with the idioms of mutuality' in the form of the Portsmouth Agreement: Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 550.

¹⁶ It was the strength of the Iraqi Communists in this crucial Middle Eastern state that prompted the first, CIA-backed coup by the Baath Party, oil and business interests in 1963. For the US role as described by King Hussein of Jordan, see Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 985–6.

Iraqis are well tutored in these battles, the ABC of their modern history. But the past rarely offers exact analogies, and to view contemporary events through its lens highlights differences as well as similarities between the old imperial occupation and the new. Militarily and politically, the machinery of American power in Iraq today is far more formidable than Britain's was. With 160,000 troops at his disposal, Negroponte has a greater vice-regal command of violence than the British High Commissioner ever possessed. American control of Iraqi harbours, airports and security forces—not to speak of courts, education, trade, finance, media and foreign policy—has been given the UN seal, with a force of 'international law' going well beyond the bilateral Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. Washington's coffers are deeper than London's ever were, and today's oil revenues were undreamt of in the 1920s. The capacity of the Occupation to buy consent to its rule is far higher. It can also hope to rely on the sheer exhaustion and dislocation of life after March 2003 to create a desperate longing for some semblance of normalcy, under new arrangements that promise to transfer, however nominally, elements of sovereignty back to the country.

Prospects for the Green Zone

It would be a mistake therefore to think that nothing has changed since Bremer flew out of Iraq. As in the German-occupied Europe of 1940–41, native collaborationist regimes typically offer an initial degree of relief, after the humiliation of foreign invasion, as well as lucrative business or administrative positions to servants of the new order. The puppet government in Baghdad today enjoys far less autonomy than Pétain's regime in Vichy; in that respect it is closer to Quisling's in Oslo. But it has a basis of support from an array of privileged groups in the post-invasion landscape—not just carpet-baggers on CIA or MI6 payrolls but technocrats, eyeing career opportunities; a large swathe of the semi-expatriate bourgeoisie and the sanction-busting *nouveaux riches*; traditionally collaborationist rural families like the Yawars, leaders of the Shammar tribe in the Mosul region, who sided with the British in 1920; and the large Kurdish population in the North. For the moment, the regime also enjoys the tolerance of the Shia hierarchy around Ayatollah Sistani; Tehran still seems bent on appeasing the us. Washington can hope at least to keep the situation out of the news headlines in the run-up to the us elections. It may yet recoup its adventure with the stabilization of a client state—if the *maquis* can be crushed or co-opted before they sap too much domestic support.

All this, however, must contend with the general detestation of the Arab population for the American occupation itself. The foreign hand is everywhere visible in the new Iraq. Even in the North, where us troops are scarcely needed, the Kurdish leadership has installed a network of Israeli intelligence agents and hit squads, the culmination of its disastrous record of political misjudgements, if in a legitimate cause.¹⁷ If its client regime is not to be permanently associated with American bombers, tanks and jails, the us urgently needs an effective native enforcement body.¹⁸ It is one measure of the resistance's strength that, despite the unemployment levels, enlistments by June 2004 were lagging at 10 per cent of planned figures, and the loyalty of new recruits was still in doubt. It remains to be seen whether Allawi's attempts to brigade or buy over former Baath officers will produce better results.

On the ideological front there is little more light. The hazy electoral horizon already appears to be in doubt. Under rules endorsed by UN resolution 1546, the January 2005 polls (if they are held) will choose candidates selected by the us Embassy for a 'transitional' administration with strictly limited powers, charged with drafting a constitution for a further, equally restricted ballot by January 2006. In the meantime, a hand-picked, one-thousand-member consultative conference may or may not be called into being, to discuss appointing a smaller, equally consultative, body from amongst itself.¹⁹

Internationally, the regime and its masters look forward to strengthening their position by planting the UN flag once again in Iraqi soil. So far the

¹⁷ The Pentagon has issued no denial of Seymour Hersh's detailed report in the *New Yorker* of Israel's qualitative expansion of its long-standing security foothold in Iraq's Kurdish provinces, training units of the 75,000 *peshmerga* in *mistaravim* commando tactics for operations in Iraq, Iran and Syria. According to a former Israeli intelligence officer, the Israeli leadership had concluded in August 2003 that, in terms of rescuing the situation in Iraq, 'It's over. Not militarily—the United States cannot be defeated militarily in Iraq—but politically'. 'Plan B' would attempt to salvage an independent Kurdistan, with access to Kirkuk's oil, as a strategic platform in the region. Hersh, *New Yorker*, 28 June 2004.

¹⁸ Even if it wants it on the cheap. 'It is clear that a desire to reduce costs and cut corners was a big factor in the Pentagon's choice of Ukrainian gear . . . Dozens of us military suppliers revealed their disappointment at the minimal requirements': not even ballistic protection for troop carriers, or air-conditioning for ambulances. *Financial Times*, 18 June 2004.

¹⁹ Elections for university deans held, as scheduled under the previous regime, in the summer of 2003 returned solidly anti-Occupation candidates; the CPA swiftly cancelled the mayoral polls due in their wake.

Secretariat has not dared to return to Baghdad—and with good reason. Infant mortality under the UN sanctions regime in the 1990s caused on conservative estimates some 300,000 deaths of children under five from disease and malnutrition, while the Secretariat skimmed administration fees of over \$1 billion. In December 1998 the UN contracts committee, working out of the Secretariat's office, awarded the 'oil for food' programme contract for monitoring Iraqi imports (of often rotted food and diluted medicines) to Cotecna Inspections, a company which employed Kofi Annan's son Kojo as a consultant throughout the bidding process.²⁰ In June special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, a leading member of the junta that cancelled elections in Algeria in 1992, and broker of the Karzai regime in Afghanistan, rubber-stamped Bremer's selection of members of the Governing Council for reincarnation as ministers of the Interim Government; but, duty performed, could not wait to get out. When they do come back, UN functionaries will need a large private army of their own to protect them.

November and after

Formally speaking, the Anglo-American invasion has been stripped of its original pretexts. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Human-rights violations have branded the liberators. The need to bring democracy to Iraq, let alone the rest of the Middle East, has become less pressing. It is the strength of the Iraqi resistance—and it alone—that has led to widespread uneasiness in the Western establishments. Washington think tanks have begun to debate exit strategies, estimating the costs to US political credibility ('high, or unacceptable?'), assessing 'indicators for withdrawal'.²¹ The American electorate has turned against

²⁰ Cotecna's undemanding task was to issue Confirmation of Arrival certificates for goods containers passing through Umm Qasr port or the Jordanian border crossing at Trebil, triggering payments from the UN escrow account into which the proceeds of Iraqi oil sales were paid. The UN contracts committee reports directly to the Secretary-General, who signed off on all the 6-monthly phases of the programme. The Secretariat is currently refusing to release details of Cotecna's fees to Congressional inquiries into the Kofigate scandal. In May 2003 the UNSC gave it six months to 'tie up loose ends' before administration of the oil funds switched to the CPA that November; in the process, 25 per cent of contracts were scrapped, as companies had either disappeared or were unwilling to sign on without the 10 per cent kickback that the UN was now hurriedly eliminating. See Therese Raphael, *Wall Street Journal*, 11 March 2003; Claudia Rosett, *National Review*, 10 and 21 March 2004.

²¹ See for example the April 2004 Centre for Strategic and International Studies Policy Forum, 'Iraq: on the Precipice'.

the war since April 2004: 56 per cent of voters now think the invasion was a mistake. The images from Abu Ghraib have weakened the authority of the White House.

Yet those who shook their heads at the pre-emptive proclamations of the 2002 National Security Strategy have been unwilling to see it founder. With the upsurge of resistance in Iraq has come a flood of liberal imperialist advice on how to run the Occupation better. Joseph Nye laments the paucity of American TV channels capable of beaming us soft power into the Arab world. Anthony Cordesman offers recipes for more effective interrogation of prisoners. Michael Ignatieff, after deploring the painful moral juxtapositions that even sullied Reagan's funeral, warns that 'America cannot abdicate its responsibility'. Andrew Moravcsik explains: 'Europeans may find the next Iraq is a Kosovo, and they want America to intervene'.²² Though celebrations have been muted, the UN-sponsored installation of a hireling regime in Baghdad has been all but universally hailed in the Western media as a 'positive step'.

From those who opposed the Anglo-American invasion in 2003 on the grounds that it lacked UN legitimation, or that sanctions were doing the job, there has been, understandably, a deafening silence about the future of the Occupation, broken only by murmurs about deadlines. For many, opposition to empire has been reduced to abhorrence of Bush. But the Bush administration has already implemented every step in the Democrats' programme: handover to an Iraqi government, with UN blessing and NATO involvement, as in Afghanistan. Hopes that a Kerry Administration would significantly alter current US policies in the Middle East are futile. As Clinton's foreign-policy linchpin Strobe Talbott recently explained: 'The Bush administration was right to identify Iraq as a major problem. A President Gore or McCain or Bradley would have ratcheted up the pressure, and sooner or later resorted to force'.²³ Kerry backed the invasion, will retain the Patriot Act, supports Sharon's security policies and is calling for an extra 40,000 active-duty US troops and a doubling of special forces capability. On present showing, a vote for him is little more than another bullet for Iraq. In this sense, the Bush revolution has succeeded; it has produced its heir. Whatever its colour, the next

²² Respectively: Nye, 'America needs to use soft power', *Financial Times*, 18 April 2004; Ignatieff, *New York Times Magazine*, 27 June 2004; Moravcsik, *Financial Times*, 26 June 2004.

²³ 'The Burning of Bush', *Financial Times* magazine, 26 June 2004.

us administration will attempt to consolidate its position there. It will not be the November polls that decide the fate of the march on Baghdad. The reality is that, so long as hard blows continue to be inflicted by the resistance on the occupying army and its clients, domestic support for the recolonization of Iraq will drain away, regardless of which multimillionaire sits in the White House.

The same holds true of Europe, where Paris and Berlin have predictably hastened to patch up their relations with Washington and approved NATO engagement to support its Baghdad regime; in the case of Chirac, sealing the pact with the Franco-American invasion of Haiti, and UN-backed overthrow of the constitutional government there. The rifts that, eighteen months ago, supposedly threatened the Atlantic alliance have been ceremoniously buried in the Normandy sands, in County Clare and Istanbul. Washington's military-imperialist thrust into Central Eurasia, at first deplored by right-minded pillars of the status quo as an overreaching adventure, has become the basis of a new world consensus: the hegemon must not be allowed to fail. The first, elementary step against such acquiescence is solidarity with the cause of national liberation in Iraq. The US-led forces have no business there. The Iraqi *maquis* deserves full support in fighting to drive them out.



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