

Frankenstein

and the

Chickenhawks



Then — and Now!
by
JOHN BARKER



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Frankenstein and the Chickenhawks Then and Now

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AND THE
CHICKENHAWKS
THEN AND NOW**

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by John Barker

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If you find mistakes in this publication, please remember that they are there for a purpose. We publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes!



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FRANKENSTEIN AND THE CHICKENHAWKS: THEN AND NOW — I *THEN*

THE IMMEDIATE prospects for those people who live in and around Iraq without the insulation of wealth or privilege are grim. For those in Iraq they have been grim for a long time. What is at least encouraging in the West, and which will hopefully improve the prospects of those people, are the many signs of an active democratic spirit in our deformed democracies. The motives and purpose of a military attack on Iraq, sought after by the reckless power elites of the USA and UK especially, are being questioned on a mass scale in spite of the full weight of propaganda from these states, questioned and not believed. That this is so is shown not just by opinion polls, but by the response felt when leafletting for demonstrations against the sought-after war, and the tone of outrage from the media branch of the power elite that this should be so.ⁱ This active democratic and compassionate spirit resists being presented with war as ‘inevitable’. It also reflects a more general unarticulated anxiety. Increasing economic inequality both domestically and globally, a concentration of wealth when all restraints on that process are removed to the extent that an entire middle class can be impoverished as in Argentina, can only make for a more violent world, and the military arm of concentrated wealth more active. The increasing weight of intellectual property rights revenues, debt repayments, and the profits from financial derivatives in this concentration of wealth also increases the scope and need for such military policing activity. Since the possibly one-off event of September 11th 2001, the power elite of concentrated wealth has attempted to focus unarticulated anxiety on to the Islamic world. In the present instance this is being resisted and, with the exception of some cold war leftists, is being done without the ‘sentimental evasions’ as regards Saddam Hussein, of which the democratic spirit is accused by the power elite.

The Ba’ath regime of Iraq, coming almost entirely from its Sunni minority, is fascistic in character. It destroyed the progressive movement of the country by murder and terror when it came to power; instigated and pursued a war against Iran, supported and armed by the West, wasteful of human life and economic resources on an epic scale; which over the years has continued to waste lives and resources; which has periodically tortured and killed large numbers of its own citizens, usually Kurdish and Shi’a citizens; and has been distinctly unsentimental in its treatment of its own poor or Arab migrant workers in the country. Now and then it will use a radical rhetoric, in support of the Palestinians against Israel, or for a more equitable distribution of wealth in the Middle East, but the actions of the regime have done nothing to further either cause, in the case of the Palestinians, quite the reverse. In 1990-1 he was as Sami Yousif put it, “the perfect bogeyman, the ugliest face in the current line-up of US-backed Third World fascists.”

To the surprise of both the power elites of the USA-UK and cold war leftists, people are not stupid, are opposing the sought-after war because they do not believe the flimsy evidence as to the existence of an Iraqi weapons programme that represents any kind of serious threat; do not trust either the motives or judgement of the Bush administration; and know one thing without absolute certainty: that the war is not being sought after because the Iraqi regime is fascistic. The mistrust of the Bush administration is palpable, accompanied by the view that Tony Blair

is either a fool for not understanding its nature, or yet one more arrogant elitist for sympathizing with it. In addition this democratic scepticism comes from things we have learned from what has happened before, inescapable facts about what the power elites have done and not done, despite the immense resources of flim-flam and propaganda at their disposal.ⁱⁱ In the present situation what specifically 'happened before' is the Gulf War of 1991 and the purpose here is to counter a media amnesia on what happened then, which can only give more substance to our scepticism and compassion. This amnesia is not surprising given the way in which the rhetoric of principle from the West was followed by the most cynical behaviour, behaviour which caused thousands of deaths and untold suffering. [NB: As I write this Don McCullin does a great job (*The Guardian* 14/2/03) and puts together a several-page spread of the horror of 'the highway of death'.]

Two women, the journalist Helga Graham and the scholar Dr Marion Sluglett were both remarkably prescient at the time, and give us no excuse not to be. As early as August 1990, days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which prompted the Gulf War, Marion Sluglett said she feared a compromise that left Saddam Hussein's military strength intact as an excuse for US military presence in the Gulf, which is more or less exactly what did happen. Helga Graham at the same time described how Western made armaments had smashed previous Kurdish resistance which had been the nucleus of an Iraq-wide opposition. Of this she said with a pessimism shown to be all justified in March-April 1991: "It is a fact little understood that due to modern technology, democratic opposition in some parts of the Third World is becoming as obsolete as the mangle." Most of all, they were prescient and absolutely clear-sighted as to the fascist nature of the Ba'ath regime and its history of suppressing the once vigorous left wing politics of the region and done it what's more, in the name of 'anti-imperialism and anti-zionism' while also clearly showing that there had never been Western support for an Iraqi democratic opposition.

Their clear-sightedness before-it-was-too-late, is also an inspiration to oppose attempts by the cold war left to monopolize democratic opposition to the sought-after war. By the cold war left I mean those whose strategy amounts to little more than the enemy of my enemy is, if not my friend, at least a neutral figure. I mean those who say 'Yes Saddam is bad', as quickly as possible then a 'but' followed by many pages; as if for example there were no hierarchical class system in Iraq; as if the country were a blank on which to put the symbol of anti-imperialism.

SECRETS AND LIES

More generally democratic scepticism come from knowing that Western governments have supported not just Saddam but a wide range of dictatorships; that Western intelligence agencies often do not get things right; and that governments lie, the US government doing it as a matter of course in war or 'crisis' situations. In the region itself, without for the moment even considering the militarized state of Israel and its militarized colonial policies, the question is asked, what then of unconditional Western support for the *de facto* dictatorships of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Algeria. Given that the Bush administration's policies are supposed to have been super-determined by the September 11th attacks this question is especially pertinent when asked of its policy towards Saudi Arabia.

As to Western intelligence agencies, despite the hyper hi-tech of its satellite-based surveillance, its inexhaustible access to data, it gets things wrong. In some instances (and how easy it is to be reckless with the lives of others when safe behind a bank of screens) innocent people are killed in large numbers when targets are wrongly identified as military or weapon factories. These have been well documented in Sudan, Afghanistan and in Iraq itself.ⁱⁱⁱ We know that intelligence is often tailored to suit how its masters want things to be and that very often it fails to see things when they really do matter. The case of September 11th itself is the most spectacular example but it follows others like the failure to predict India testing its first nuclear

bomb, and the original invasion of Kuwait by Saddam's army in August 1990, the event which prompted the Gulf War of 1991 though this, as will be outlined, was an especially murky case.

All this belongs to a secret world, and all governments have their secrets and secret sections. The present Bush regime as befitting one which couped its way into power, and in spite of its standard right wing flim-flam about cutting the power of Washington, keeps secret not only its intelligence budget, but 40% of its Defence budget. Secrecy is especially attractive to power elitists^{iv} and what it makes for (apart from mocking all notions of democratic accountability) is an absence of any check against the temptation of governments to lie, and just as bad, the creation of all types of weird and obsessional conspiracy theories by those not in the know, and with that, the ability of such governments to dismiss accurate analysis of what they are really doing (which may in fact be especially devious), as conspiracy theory. This line is being used now by Mr Blair for example, and during the Gulf War against anyone questioning its conduct. And yet thanks to the courage of Daniel Ellsberg especially, that lies are produced from information kept secret, and then used for militaristic reasons has become common knowledge. That, for example, John F Kennedy lied about the missile gap with the USSR which was in fact 10 to 1 in favour of the US; that Lyndon Johnson lied over the Gulf of Tonkin incident; what Nixon and Kissinger also did in SE Asia.

In the case of the present sought-after war with Iraq there is all the more reason for democratic mistrust derived from the more recent history of the Gulf War, and especially because the same personnel, bar the President who is the son of the father, are involved on the American side. What kind of people they are, how that war came about and even more how it ended, and with what net results, can only make any reasonable person have no faith at all in their good intentions.

FRANKENSTEIN

As ex-General Noriega can testify, it can be as dangerous to have once been a tolerated Third World ally of the USA, as to have directly opposed it. He was expendable, the wiseguys say. In order to survive, stupidity is not an option for survival requires an understanding as to what kind of light is being shown at any given time by the dominant 'partner'. Whether Saddam was given a green, amber or red light by the Americans to invade Kuwait, or how far he could invade if there was at the least an amber light; and whether he was 'set up' by them to do it, this will be looked at later, but either way he did not read the signals correctly. That for example the Cold War was really over, declared by Mikhail Gorbachev in his famous 1988 UN speech and signalled in the Middle East by the USSR's changed attitude to Syria, and that this in turn changed the nature of American power. Or that Saudi Arabia, though itself displeased with the Kuwaitis' unnecessary increase in daily oil production and the consequent price fall, as well as having been part financier of Iraq in the Iraq-Iran war, would be thoroughly alarmed by the invasion of Kuwait, since at least rhetorically, Saddam was talking about greater regional distribution of oil revenues; and that in turn, Saudi alarm must instantly produce a US response.

The close relationship between the USA and Saddam over the last 25 odd years has been described in detail elsewhere, but we can say that it starts with him as a Ba'ath party goon at the time when the Ba'ath Party was being encouraged by the USA in its campaigns to kill leftists and union militants. It becomes more serious when Saddam's concentration of power ends up with him as President in 1979, and the consequent war with Iran which also involved a military and terror campaign against Iraqi army deserters. It is this which begins to attract serious support from the USA, the West as a whole (its arms industry doing well throughout), and the Gulf states. There is the famous picture of December 20th 1983 showing present day chickenhawk Donald Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam in which as a 'private citizen' envoy of President Reagan, he begins the process that lead the next year to the restoration of official

diplomatic relations between the two countries, the supply of US intelligence satellite photos of Iranian deployments, and of dirty weapons tackle.

There was some urgency to this as Iran's "human wave attacks" were threatening to overrun the Iraqi army. During the course of the war there is evidence of secret arms deals; the USA allowing Saddam to import 'dual-use' equipment from American suppliers, evidence which has only recently become available; and numerous shipments of chemical weapons equipment; helicopters; surveillance equipment.

In December 2002 the reporter Andreas Zumach revealed some of the Iraqi 12,000 page report for the UN which showed the involvement of a wide range of Western (mostly US) blue-chip corporations in supplying Iraq with equipment that would support biological weapon and missile technology. When an Iraqi Exocet missile hit the *USS Stark* the US excused it as an unintentional mistake and instead accused Iran of escalating the war in the Gulf. And it knew about its use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops and its own Kurdish citizens, the latter being first blamed again on Iran by the Reagan Administration. When forced to admit it was Saddam's forces there was only a token official protest.

These points are being made and have to be made. The present-day moralizing about Iraq using chemical weapons against its own citizens by Blair and Bush really does stick in the throat when it is 15 years too late, and when it was connived at by the same Republican Party apparatchiks now doing the moral thing. Even when Saddam did make his mistake, the invasion of Kuwait with whose additional oil revenues he hoped to get out of the debt crisis he had made in the pursuit of an 8 year war, even then, as Marion Suglett predicted, and as he perhaps knew, he stayed in power and has done so until the sudden out-of-the-blue-now war.

If even *NewsWeek* can describe Saddam as a Frankenstein, a creation of the West, it raises questions not just about US-UK motivation now, but its whole attitude to the past. In early 1991 the 'liberal' elitist Michael Ignatieff, who changed from anti-War in late 1990 to pro-war in early '91, wrote: "Our own errors of judgement stretching back over a generation leave us no other choice but to stop Saddam Hussein by force." The bare verb 'stop' leaves things rather open and Saddam is still there 12 years later. This time Bush and Blair say nothing themselves about past errors of judgement, but seem to be clearer about stop, while leaving their more sophisticated media supporters to allow that perhaps mistakes were made, but made in a different and previous era and therefore of no importance. It is the whole tone of Ignatieff which grates as much as that of the brazen. Are we to be permanently faced with the *fait accompli* of the power elite's errors, and then sit mutely as they aim to remedy their own errors by yet worse errors that will in turn present us with still worse *fait accompli*. His tone, which we have heard again recently, is like that of the many prison governors in the UK who after a horrendous report on conditions in their prisons say, governor by governor, Ah that report was done x number of weeks or months ago, you should see us now.

CHICKENHAWKS AND CARPETBAGGERS

The personnel of the present George W. Bush regime is more or less the same as that of his father's, the same people who planned and executed the Gulf War but did not remove the tyrant. It is as if their bogymen, their own Frankenstein has been kept on ice for 12 years: first time around so that the US could gain a range of military bases in the region; now for full-scale occupation in case it needs to take direct control of oil production quantities in the event of Saudi Arabia ceasing to be 'sound', as well as bolstering the Bush regime's image with an easy victory, and showing the rest of the world just how powerful is its military.

In C. Wright Mills' remarkably prescient "The Power Elite" (written 1956) he describes in detail the meshing together of the elites of the political, corporate and military worlds in the USA which he saw clearly undermining the practice of democracy in any real sense. Even then

the political power and influence of the US military stands out; it is both cause and result of the defence budget which dwarfs that of all other countries. This by itself makes it different to any of its Western allies. In the present Bush regime as pointed out by Chalmers Johnson 'partly as a reaction to the defeat in Vietnam, partly as a result of the Reagan Presidency, the United States now has a cadre of neo-conservative war-lovers.' These are the chickenhawks, 'men and women with an abstract knowledge of war who have never come under attack of any sort,' and are finding a counterpart in New Labour types like Geoff Hoon and Jack Straw who are wholly seduced by the power and brazen style of the present Bush regime.

Brazen is its everyday style: facts on the ground and apologize for nothing. This was their style in Florida when they pushed through the coup in the Presidential election. Never mind the chads, what about all the black voters illegally taken off the register? The Bush camp simply ignored the question. Their man was in, everything else was whinging and unpatriotic nit-picking. (The take on the Bush regime from the British media was breathtaking in its wishful thinking, how given the 'narrowness of the race' he would be a consensual, centrist President.) Brazen now in their Stalinist-toned "with us or against us"; its contempt for international agreements; and the way Bush and Cheney have simply shrugged off the evidence that they have been Enron-type carpetbaggers themselves. The fact of the matter is that the President made his money by selling stock in Harken oil just before its share price collapsed, making over \$800,000 in the process, and that before this Harken had bought his own sinking Spectrum 7 oil company and given him a consultant's salary. Cheney has been with Halliburton, a carpet-bagger on a larger scale. The only self-knowledge shown by them at all, has been that they need Colin Powell for the big presentations, because he's the only one who isn't a chickenhawk; the only one who does not come across as a goon organising death-squads, or the baddies in that rash of Hollywood domestic conspiracy films they used to make. Instead he is the most PR-trained of them all, the man who made his name in the US military by directing the cover-up of the My Lai massacre.

It is the abstract nature of their knowledge of war that is so frightening. They have never suffered and are sure they never will given the armaments they have at their disposal; but instead play geo-political war games in which the victims are also abstractions. Like all the worst gung-ho merchants they have shown themselves to be cowards. Just to remind ourselves who they are, here is the list provided by Chalmers Johnson (*LRB* 6/2/03). "The President himself avoided combat during the Vietnam War by wangling a commission as a second lieutenant in the Texas Air National Guard, then failing to report for duty between May 1972 and May 1973. Vice-President Dick Cheney has said that he 'had other priorities in the 1960s than military service' (very probably the 58,202 people whose names are inscribed on the Vietnam War Memorial also had other 'priorities'). Neither the Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, nor the Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, Richard Perle, has ever worn a uniform. The Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, had a university deferment at Princeton during the Korean War (he later joined the peacetime Navy)..."

"STERN WHITE MEN"

Despite being packed with chickenhawks and carpetbaggers and despite the two black faces it contains, the Bush regime sees and presents itself more overtly than any other, as the bastion of a white world which is morally entitled to dominate the world in its self-interest, a self-interest which by happy coincidence is for the ultimate good of the world. There is this crucial racial psychic element to imperialism. It is the white world militant: militaristic and in modern times, English speaking. This is shown by the constituent membership of Echelon, the project of unified global communications surveillance: the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. This membership does not correspond with NATO, or any normal global

hierarchy of power, but is regarded at the psychic level to be 'sound' by the guardians of the white world. Since the Gulf War Israel has become part of the club both practically, as a partner with the US in the field of military and repressive hi-tech, and psychically. Christian fundamentalists and other neo-conservatives in the US who have in the past been classically anti-semitic, are now militantly pro-Zionist. This in part reflects that difference between anti-semitism and anti-Zionism which Zionists and the political Right like to deny, and also derives from a shared appeal from fundamentalist Christians and Jews to biblical geography which is seen as justifying Zionist expansionism. Guy Debord's description of fascism as "archaism presented with the most modern technological means available" rings true, as it is also true of morbid symptoms in the Islamic world. This unholy alliance of Zionists and white American Christianity appeals to archaism and yet are dab hands on the internet; it is also glued by the militaristic nature of Zionism, and especially because Israel is on one of the most tense front-lines between the rich and poor worlds, when for them poor people in general are at best inadequate, and at worst dangerous, devious and immoral.

Given that the democratic instinct mistrusts the stated motives for the sought-after war, that is the disarming of a relatively poor country with low-tech weaponry whether chemical or not, then what is its motive? The standard argument is that it is about oil. It is of course, the mid-east is a fault line between the rich and poor worlds in which there happen to be by far the most important oil reserves in the world, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was prompted by a demand from Iraq for a greater share of regional oil wealth. Right now Rupert Murdoch has welcomed the sought-after war in the belief that it will result in a lower oil price, and that this will be a big boost to Western economies in recession; a recession potentially dangerous in that it followed on from the triumphalist rhetoric of capitalism for which recessions were a thing of the past, and because of the losses suffered by the wider investor class often to the benefit of carpetbaggers. But it is still reductionist to say that it is 'just' or 'only' about oil. True, there is an obvious resentment in the white West that this crucial natural resource should be under the land of people it regards as intrinsically inferior but which it cannot do without. As the *Sunday Times* put it without sentiment (13/1/91): "There is a need to protect the prosperity of the West from dangerous hands". This went, and still goes, with an elitist racist view of Arabs. As Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan complained at the time,^v they were tired of Westerners like Douglas Hurd, coming and telling them what to do like a headmaster and not listening.^{vi} But as Edward Said pointed out the attitude is more universal: "Arabs are only an attenuated recent example of others who have incurred the wrath of a stern white man, a kind of Puritan super-ego."^{vii}

For the stern white man there is a more universal fear of the resentment which the poorer world feels towards it; that allied to a fear of decadence in its own societies. It is the fear of elites towards their own people, a fear which also self-justifies its own superiority. It is a fear that lurked behind the Gulf War; it lurks now both in Western policy; in Tony Blair's image projection as the brave hero resisting the weakness of the British public; and in the cut-and-paste nonsense of 'Clash of Civilizations' theorists. Such fears were widely expressed during the Gulf War, especially as the war coincided with, and was a final proof of, the end of the USSR as a superpower and with it the Cold War which had been essentially a war comfortable for elites. Such feelings indicating a fear of decadence within, were expressed not just in the English-speaking, but right across the white Western world. Thus in early February of '91 that murkiest of politicians President Mitterrand, in insisting that France became involved in the land battle against Iraq having once opposed it, said: "It was necessary to assume the responsibilities of France, its history and its forty generations which have preceded us, and not only the pre-occupations of our generation."

This kind of concern, that the consumer capitalism the power elite promised would make people too comfortable and soft (a promise that grated against its social-Darwinist ideology),

has re-appeared, articulated by various gurus of the neo-conservatives and done so especially after the attacks of September 11th. Within days of that event an unnamed CIA guy was estimating that the chances of the organisation having someone willing and capable of infiltrating the bin Laden organisation were nil. “These guys have families and live in the suburbs of Virginia,” he said.^{viii}

THE GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

At the time of the Gulf War these elite worries were centred on its own public’s capacity for patience and acceptance of casualty numbers. The key word in its vocabulary was “appeasement”. The elitist view, understanding that most ordinary folk are more compassionate than they (certainly about their own soldiers) was seen as a softness in democracies about such casualties. But the elite were solving this problem:, the preliminary and protracted bombing from the air was to be so intensive that there would be few ‘coalition’ casualties whatever those of Iraqis. The build-up to the Gulf War was also protracted, the violence when it came, sudden and massive. Kuwait had been invaded in August. By November the ultra-conservative American columnist William Safire was writing “If America slips into a ‘phoney war’ resolution will dissolve in the acid of commentary chat shows.” This concern with the ‘resoluteness’ over time was ironically mirrored by Michael Ignatieff, an elitist of different background who began as a sceptic and ended up as a supporter of the war, who thought originally that impatience and boredom fuelled by TV “was itself accelerating the momentum of the juggernaut in the desert.”

The rhetoric of impatience was in fact used by the Bush Senior administration. Thus in a speech crafted for its audience as early as late September 1990, Colin Powell, then the General who chaired the JCS, said to the crew of the battleship *Wisconsin*: “We can’t take this kind of crap any longer...If someone wants to fight with us then don’t play around, kick butt.” In this case that’s what it was, rhetoric because General Powell, for whom there must never be another Vietnam, was building up over time, the massive force from which at the end of the Gulf War there would be 147 ‘coalition’ deaths as against an estimated 350,000 Iraqi ones.

The same rhetoric used this time around says something different. When the present President Bush (19/1/03) said the he was running out of patience, this was the unadulterated voice of the stern white man. They were, as a few embarrassed journalists pointed out, the words of Hitler addressed to ‘inferior’ Slavs and Poles. Things are different militarily too. This time, after years of sanctions and air raids under the no-fly zone provision, they are absolutely confident that Iraq is an easy target, and that this time the logistics are easier since the USA did gain the bases in the region that Marion Suglett predicted.

‘Appeasement’ however is the word being used now in exactly the same way that it was then, that is to define any opposition to a full-scale military attack on Iraq. Even supporters of the Gulf War like the conspiracy-novelist Robert Harris found this hard to stomach on the grounds that there is not even a remote equivalence between the relative power of Iraq, and that of Nazi Germany. It is also used quite deliberately by the Bush-Blair axis to bolster the myth of the special relationship. It does so to such an extent that Mr Blair seems unaware that the USA was still assuming a neutralist (and in today’s language appeasement) position until it was attacked by Japan at Pearl Harbour. We should have immense respect for the many thousands of young and often idealistic Americans who fought and died in Europe in World War II, but it sticks in the throat to hear this from George W. Bush who used his elitist family connections to avoid going to Vietnam. Or from Tony Blair unaware that the Blitz preceded Pearl Harbour; or that the Bush family had dealings with pro-Nazi companies; and who has suffered nothing worse in life than someone perhaps beating him to the position of head prefect.

If analogies are to be used, then World War I would better serve. Then the militarization of

Europe and the timetables of Generals developed a momentum of their own to make war 'inevitable'. Already now the build-up of American and British military in the Gulf has cost a great deal and has become a 'fact on the ground' as the Zionists call the building of each new illegal settlement in the Occupied Territories. 'Peace processes' drag on while they create irreversible 'facts on the ground'. Unfortunately the Grand Old Duke of York who 'marched his troops to the top of the hill and marched them down again', has for ever been a figure of fun.

"THIS IS WHAT AMERICA CAN DO TO HER ENEMIES"

The attacks of September 11th were a severe blow to the development of the Movement for Global Justice (that which the media continues to call Anti-Globalization). Within days a *Herald Tribune* article was headlined **TERRORISTS EXPLOIT ANTI-GLOBALIZATION**^{ix} In a brazen smear it said that it was the 'anti-globalizers' who had made places like the World Trade Centre into icons of oppressive domination of the world economy; that the terrorists had achieved some of the movement's 'dearest objectives' in getting the cancellation of the IMF/World Bank meeting due for later in the month; and that both the movement and the terrorists believed 'the ends justified the means.'

At the same time it was a shock to the USA (apart from the real grieving for real people) because it was a massive undercover operation undetected by its security services, and worse, was done by Arabs. As for the Israelis too, that an inferior race, in their eyes, one that is normally infiltrated, divided and ruled and so on, that Arabs could pull this off was an outrage. It has prompted an open-ended war against terrorism, one which gave yet more impetus to the repressive and militarist character of the Bush regime. Within days old war criminals like Oliver North and Henry Kissinger were spoken to as neutral experts by the BBC. It prompted the attack on Afghanistan and yet stronger ties with Israel as a bastion of non-decadence, crucial for its Spartan example as well geographical position. This was then followed by George W. Bush's 'axis of evil' speech.

That Iraq should be top of the list in practical terms is to do with oil, oil in the long term that is, and American geo-political aims for its continued role as solo superpower. But it was also convenient for two other reasons. It meant that the Bush regime could put the spotlight on the Clinton years on its terms: that Clinton had gone slack on Iraq, taken his eye off it and allowed the expulsion of weapons inspectors after their many years there,^x something which may explain why the Democrat Party has been especially feeble in saying anything against the sought-after war.

More importantly a template for Iraq already existed and the chickenhawks of the Bush regime and ex-General Powell knew it well, it was their template, one which in their terms, had been very successful. The massive scale of devastation, deaths, and displacement were not theirs. Instead as many of them said openly, Desert Storm exorcised the memory of the defeat in Vietnam, a war they had all, with the exception of Gen Powell, successfully avoided and yet seem to have been traumatized by at some psychic-political level. As George Bush Sr put it: "This will put paid to the Vietnam syndrome once and for all." The Gulf War, Desert Storm, had been easy and involved very 'few' Coalition' casualties.^{xi} The Iraqi army, despite Saddam's rhetoric, had never been up against the Israelis, and even with weapons superiority had not defeated Iran. In the Gulf War there was no weapons superiority for Iraq, instead as one US military guy put it: "It's a First World War force under Third World War attack."^{xii}

What it also did by its relentless bombing of the civilian infrastructure and then the 'duck shoot' massacre of many thousands of Iraqi conscripts on the Kuwait-Basra highway—"the highway of death"/ "ambush alley" most of whom were burned or buried alive, was to show the region and the world just how nasty the stern white man could be. When it released the first hi-tech video of ground fighting it showed "terrified Iraqi soldiers shot to pieces by US

Apache helicopters. In a truly ghastly piece of recent gung-ho reporting Patrick Bishop, returning to the place and seeing US soldiers training in the same place wrote:- “No one knows how many died in the massacre. The sad tangle of metal in the desert junkyard is their only memorial. It should serve as a terrible lesson to any Iraqi soldiers rash enough to consider obeying Saddam’s exhortations to show fight to any invaders. This is what America can do to her enemies. The last war was a walkover. The next one, even American soldiers who are conditioned to overestimate the enemy concede, will be even more one-sided.”^{xiii} The temptation both for the military, and the chickenhawks of the Bush regime are immense. They can show just how nasty they can be which all imperial powers need to do sometimes to give force to the threats they make, threats which will normally suffice of themselves but need the occasional reminder against the well-chosen opponent.

This point of view has been both theorized, and at the same time rationalized, by one of the various might-is-right ideologists of present day America, Robert D. Kaplan. Writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* of November 2002 in an essay entitled (with embedded hubris) “A Post-Saddam Scenario” he says:-“Keep in mind that the Middle East is a laboratory of pure power politics. For example, nothing impressed the Iranians so much as our accidental shooting down of an Iranian civilian airliner in 1988, which they believed was not an accident. Iran’s subsequent cease-fire with Iraq was partly a result of that belief.” In this ‘scenario’ American innocence is maintained while the rationale for showing ‘just how nasty we can be’ is established. An infinitely more real response came from the American poet June Jordan just after the massacre on ‘the highway of death’: “People in this country have been feeling profoundly demoralized and overwhelmed and if somebody presents something manageable, we can do it...it’s a boost...I suggest to you it’s a hit the same way crack cocaine is, and it doesn’t last long.”

“WE SHALL CUT THEM OFF AND THEN KILL THEM”

As if to remind the world of just how nasty they can be, the present use of the sand dunes of Mutla Ridge on the “highway of death” for training and preparation by American forces is not the first return to the scene of the crime. As reported by Robert Fisk^{xiv} the US 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit put on another media event there in October 1994 when Saddam played his own theatre with a troop build-up in Southern Iraq.

The real-time massacre occurred following the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait which had been announced on Baghdad Radio on 26th February 1991. This withdrawal offer was virtually ignored by the network news bulletins in the USA^{xv} President Bush said this order for withdrawal was “an outrage, trying to claim victory in the midst of a rout.” Outrage? Here is the voice of the stern white man addressing the cheating bounder, Frankenstein as Flashman, the public-school cad. The real-time outrage had already happened. On the highway.

In the lead up to the war various experts and analysts had emphasized the difference between the large conscript army and their lack of motivation, telling the world that many of them did not want to be there at all; and the Republican Guard, Saddam’s elite force who were the real enemy. the best trained fighting force, acting also as commissars to the conscript troops. And yet, as was then seen when the Iraqi peoples’ uprising against Saddam was betrayed by the West, this Republican Guard were in full order to massacre the people of that uprising after the American/Coalition victory. They appear to have avoided the ‘duck-shoot’ on the highway which occurred at night when the convoy of tanks, APCs and cars was trapped on the road by US-Allied Tanks. These were then attacked by Apache helicopter gunships and most of all by A6 Intruder bombers. A Lieut Kasperbauer was quoted as saying that the retreating trucks and armoured vehicles were “easy prey for the Intruder’s lethal anti-armour and anti-personnel Rockeye cluster bombs.” The ghastly Patrick Bishop describes how it was at

the time. “When I went there (Mutla Ridge) shortly after the attack the jam of burnt and smashed up vehicles was more than a mile long. Hundreds of lorries, pick-ups trucks and looted civilian cars were stuck in the sand on the right of the road, some with their engines still running. Charred skulls grinned from the wreckage.” Stephen Sackur, another eye-witness wrote: “In many instances the human form has been reduced to nothing more than a shapeless black lump, the colour of coal, the texture of ash.”^{xvi}

The ‘tactic’ can hardly have come as a surprise. The then General Colin Powell had announced it in advance on television. “We shall cut them off and then kill them,” he said, waving an arm to reveal how his land forces would outflank theirs from the back. But as has been pointed out many times, legalisms and violence co-exist comfortably for imperial powers like the USA. In the same speech in which President Bush had ticked Saddam off for cheek, he went on to say “We will not attack unarmed soldiers in retreat. We have no choice but to consider retreating combat units as a threat and respond accordingly.”

It was this rationalization they stuck with, that under military rules these troops even if they were offering no resistance and were a ‘duck shoot’, should have surrendered rather than attempting to escape. But as the journalist Colin Hughes noted, the reality of war is different: “Iraqi officers who have surrendered have made it clear that they did not know what to do to save their soldiers’ skins. They had no authority from Baghdad to give themselves up.”^{xvii} There was concern, he said that the allies had failed to provide the Iraqis with a clear opportunity to surrender, and that there was no evidence that allied warnings had been given before the ‘duck shoot’. He talked of a level of disquiet, especially when hearing the glee of some of the pilots who had done the killing, or at the least their lack of concern.^{xviii} The pilots themselves, lawyers all, said they were in the right because the fleeing conscripts could have been regrouping for an attack.

Already by March 1st there were disputes as to how many Iraqis had been killed. The estimate ranged from 40-150,000. On March 2nd *The Sunday Telegraph* War Supplement said “The number of Iraqi deaths is so high that nobody yet dares put a figure on it; the number of coalition forces is put at 147...Much of the devastation had been inflicted by allied cluster bombing when the convoy of vehicles was blocked by allied tanks astride the road.” By March 2nd it was reported that the Pentagon was talking of 200,000 killed based on the number of Iraqi soldiers not accounted for. However no official figures were to be issued and no formal study to produce the figures. Instead, the report said the allies intend to keep the statistics as vague as possible because the true picture is so horrifying.^{xix} Kept vague for us, but the message would have been clear to the peoples of the region.

FROM THE VAGUE TO THE MURKY

The horror of the ‘highway of death’ was amplified by what was to follow, the encouragement from the USA for the people of Iraq to rise against Saddam’s regime followed by the betrayal of those who did. They should obviously have been reading *The Guardian* in Basra and seen the headline on the 27th February 1991, “US SEES FEW ALTERNATIVES TO BA’ATH RULE” over an article Tim Phelps, and simply not bothered. In the USA the heaviest criticism came from the ‘populist’ right wing politician Pat Buchanan “The President who took us on a moral crusade to rid the world of a monster has reverted to balance-of-power politics where people are coldly used like pawns.” Years before in an early novel of Don deLillo, *The Names*, a character says: “The Americans choose strategy over principle every time and yet keep on believing in their own innocence.” Mediahawks of a more liberal hue than Buchanan were unable to live with the discomfort of a bad conscience and embarrassment as to their wishful thinking about the Iraqi democracy which would result from the war. By the 4th March Sarah Helms was writing in *The Independent*: “The US administration has been criticized for failing to speak out

for democracy in Iraq, amid fears that it a democratic vote might lead to an elected government equally unfavourable to the US.” Instead the mediahawks implied that it was somehow the fault of ‘the left’, as if ‘the left’ had had any say on what happened. “The left’ they said, would have been the first to scream foul if the Coalition had moved on to topple Saddam; that it would have been beyond the UN mandate (even though Mikhail Gorbachev had said the land war itself had of itself gone beyond the mandate) or (this was from the elitist Michael Ignatieff) that there was no reason to believe to suppose a post-sanctions Iraq would have been better; easy to say if there was no chance of you getting hit by rockets from helicopters. The novelist Robert Harris went so far as to say that the Kurds were “paying the price of our tender consciences of the last two months.” What the Kurds paid for was being encouraged to rise against Saddam and then smeared (spun against) as being separatists and on this basis left to suffer a terrible defeat by Saddam’s forces with a range of weapons he had been allowed to keep by ceasefire terms which were not those they were publicized to be.

In his speech of February 26th 1991, President Bush, (the one in which he talked of Saddam’s withdrawal order as an outrage), went on to say that the USA would not accept any arrangement that left Saddam Hussein in power. On the 1st March, when a provisional ceasefire had been in operation for two days, he backtracked on a scheme for a Regional Bank of Reconstruction and Development which had been proposed by his Secretary of State James Baker and went on to say; “I don’t want to see a single dime of taxpayer’s money go into the reconstruction of Iraq. They should topple their President and learn to use their oil wealth once he has gone.” There is nothing vague here.

A spontaneous uprising in Basra as Iraqi forces were temporarily constrained by the ceasefire began on March 2nd. Almost immediately it was described in the Western press as “muslim fundamentalist.” *The Daily Telegraph* talked of Basra being under “fundamentalist” rule. Even though the Daawa Party said it had opted for parliamentary government and rejected rule by mullahs, the uprising as a whole was characterized as having Iranian involvement and as wanting Khomeini-type rule. The broadcast media behaved as usual, not listening to the oppressed and then parroting the words of the powerful. They ignored frequent Kurds and Shi’as saying in interviews that they wanted a democratic and united Iraq. Later, when it mattered and these same people were being ‘necklaced’ in Basra, the same interviewers simply disregarded what had been said to them, and told the world that the West feared the Lebanization of Iraq, but not that the British had created Iraq as a state with the potential to be Lebanized at any time it suited their interests. The attack on the uprising was not long in coming. As Karl Waldron reported in *The Independent* on 6th March “Now Saddam Hussein’s forces were redeploying against them its superior weaponry seemingly allowed to pass through allied lines from the north, re-asserting the dictator’s grip on Iraq’s second city.” The forces were the Republican Guards with tanks and artillery. An estimated 1000 people died in the first hour of RG shelling. Where had they come from, the tanks, the artillery and the Republican Guards? Hadn’t the whole point of the land war been to disarm them in particular? A Brigadier General Neal on the Kuwait-Iraqi border had been quoted as saying that “he could not be sure that all Republican Guard units with the most advanced T-72 tanks, BMP APCs and the best artillery had been destroyed.” The events of the next month suggested that far from all, very little had been destroyed. Later, with that awareness that always seems to come too late, Martin Woollacott in Kurdistan was to say, “Saddam Hussein proved to have more resources of men and equipment than was believed.”^{xx} In Basra the ‘first world war force’ that had been no match for a Third World War attack was too well equipped for the insurgents with their rifles. Those who tried to escape were being turned back at the Kuwaiti border by allied forces.

Already by the 8th March the opposition leader Talib Sahib was accusing the West of selling

out the rebels. The next day a headline in *The Independent* above an eye-witness account by Harvey Morris read: BUSH SHUNS REBELS TO AVERT A SHI'A REGIME IN BAGHDAD. He described how the Republican Guards were now crushing the revolt "with impunity." All the evidence he said was that it had been a spontaneous rising in Basra but that the USA was sticking to its rationalization that it was 'engineered from Iran. "Given that the US effectively entered the Iran-Iraq war to prevent Saddam Hussein falling to Iran's fundamentalism, it would be a pitiful irony if that now won." He, Anneka Savill and other journalists on the ground refuted the notion that the insurgents wanted a fundamentalist state; unfortunately it is the nature of the elitist, of the stern white man, not to listen. It is in the nature of the massively-funded 'spin machines' of elitists to say, when it suits them, that 'listening' is 'pandering' to opinion polls, or in the present situation that not listening is what men of principle do. What does tell a story is the similarity of the messages from President Bush and Saddam Hussein. On March 14th 1991 Bush made a major contribution to murkiness when he warned Iran against taking any Iraqi territory, which it was not doing. On the 16th March Saddam made his first TV appearance since the war had begun, and accused Iran of formenting trouble in Iraq before going on to vow that he would crush the Kurds.

At around this time an uprising began in the predominantly Kurdish area of northern Iraq. It too arose spontaneously when, as Martin Woollacott put it, a tentative push at the structure of oppression in a town called Rania was so successful that it set off a chain reaction. This would have been encouraged by the words of President and the rhetoric of the West. Barzani of the KDP was cautious about the uprising; perhaps because as part of a political class which had negotiated with Saddam in the past, this was how he continued to want things done and did not like the role of the poorest Kurdish refugees in the uprising, preferring a military coup in Baghdad; or perhaps because he was experienced enough to be wary of Western rhetoric.

Within a week Kurdish forces had captured the frontier town of Zakho and at that moment President Bush, modelling himself on Pontius Pilate, said he did not want to get involved in a civil war. Within the space of two weeks the call for the Iraqi people to get rid of Saddam has become "a civil war". This followed the collapse of a previous rationalization, that support for the Kurds would alienate Turkey, when Prime Minister Ozal announced on the 11th March that Turkey gave its blessing to Kurdish autonomy in Iraq.

There are many accounts of what followed: the brutality of Saddam's forces on smashing resistance in the north, terrible pictures of Kurdish refugees on the mountains trying to reach Turkey, which finally prompted the creation of a Kurdish autonomous safe haven in the north of Iraq. For many Kurds this must have been the one positive results of the Gulf War but given how things were before, it hardly justifies the deaths, displacement and impoverishment that lead to it, all of which the Western powers allowed to happen.

The ceasefire agreement that ended the war (that part of the war defined as such by the West) it transpired, involved the return of Iraqi deserters to Iraq and, one would guess, their deaths. The triumphant USA went legalistic and kept to it even though some of its soldiers were said to be unhappy at doing it. It was however publicly understood to be clear on at least one thing, that Saddam was forbidden to use military helicopters. Almost immediately afterwards refugees, observers and journalists had noted their use in the repression against the anti-Saddam uprising. On the 11th March the US warned Iraq of military action if it didn't stop using helicopter gunships in the north. But their use continued as Saddam launched the attack to regain Kirkuk and the oilfields there which were so essential to him given the destruction of oil export facilities in the south. On 25th March *The Daily Telegraph* noted that "The White House has mysteriously backed away from its earlier warnings that Saddam Hussein must not use attack helicopters. In response to a question on this point Presidential Press Secretary Fitzwater says, "There's an element of murkiness that we want to preserve." The only light cast

on this murkiness came on the 28th March when the commander of US forces General Schwarzkopf said that in the ceasefire deal he had been suckered into giving them verbal permission to use helicopter flights. Suckered? The victorious general? The cynicism alluded to by Pat Buchanan showed no limits. On the 3rd April as *The Daily Telegraph* reported helicopters firing rockets at stranded civilians trying to get away from Arbil the US State Department spokesperson, Margaret Tutweiler, brushed off criticism of US non-activity on the matter by saying that “if you shoot down helicopters, why not tanks and then where would it end?” And the rationalization for this betrayal? It was given by the super-hawk of then and now, Paul Wolfowitz. “If we could identify a democratic faction in Iraq, I think we’d look at it differently.”^{xxiii}

So one has to ask, have they somehow now identified such a ‘faction’. Perhaps the USA has done it by satellite? Since 1991 and in great part as a consequence of the Gulf War, there have been morbid symptoms in the region and beyond like Osama bin Laden and the Taliban; but ‘fundamentalist’ to describe populations and political groupings has often been used to exclude them from participating in the democratic process by ruling elites and military mafias. Algeria is the classic case where a not-fundamentalist Islamic party with a social-democratic agenda won free elections a year after the Gulf War in 1992. The corrupt Algerian military-political elite dismissed the election, and the President, Chadli Benjadid, who was pragmatic enough to accept the result, was coupé out of power and the election winners smeared as fundamentalist. This suppression created the morbid symptom of ruthless Islamic groupings and an ever more brutal state response supported almost without question by the West. The smearing of the Shi’as of Iraq, the majority population in ‘91 reflects also a distaste for and fear of the poor of the region by the West. It was no coincidence that Presidents Bush and Saddam should have both used the chimera of Iranian influence to have them crushed at this time, just as in Baghdad Saddam has always concentrated his repression on the poor suburbs of the city.

ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF CONFLICT

For years and years there have been peace processes and shuttle diplomacy in the middle east. The newzak media living in a permanent present dutifully reports them all and — unless they are intra-Arab — takes them all seriously even when they must know that they are not. Dennis Ross, US envoy in the area for many years, perhaps got dizzy from the Damascus-Jerusalem-Amman-Tel Aviv roundabout he flew while achieving nothing but the perpetuation of a fairly static and acceptable level of conflict in the region. This perpetual instability is not exclusively about Israel and the Palestinians though other dictatorships in the region including Saddam’s would like to have it so. Western colonialism long precedes the formation of Israel, with the British playing the psychopathically stern white man. In Iraq itself in the early years of the 20th century, the RAF excelled itself under both Conservative and Labour governments of the 20’s in bombing Iraqis and Kurds, all this to back up its power to draw boundaries, smash strikes, kill strikers and mount coups. Since World War II the British have become very much secondary to the US in financial, then military and diplomatic muscle. The key event in this period along with the creation of the state of Israel, was the UK/USA operation of destabilisation and then coup against the essentially social-democratic government of Dr Mossadeq in Iran. This was about the control of oil in the region but went further than that. The imperialist undermining of any secular progressive politics in the region becomes self-fulfilling. To the stern white man it proves that the peoples of the region are incapable of such politics, while at the same time fully supporting the archaic and dictatorial regimes of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. And in the process the stern white man, in the shape of the guru of ‘Clash of Civilizations’ nonsense Samuel Huntington, re-writes the history. He talks of the mass illiteracy of Iranians at that time and says that because of this “Kermit Roosevelt and a few CIA operatives rather easily suppressed

an insurgency and restored the Shah to the throne.” (*Clash of Civilizations*, Touchstone Books). Huntington’s slapdash generalizations are notorious, but this takes the biscuit. The overthrow of a legitimate government becomes the suppression of ‘an insurgency’.

The destabilising of any attempts at progressive secular politics meant that such politics had nothing to show for itself. A consequence has been the politicization of Islam, progressive if given the chance in Algeria but sometimes morbidly fundamentalist. As in the case of Iran the bravery of many people shows the possibility of how what was fundamentalist can change as we are seeing now. The Iranian revolution of 1979 shocked the Western world and led to support for Saddam’s war against it from the West and fearful Saudi and Kuwait, even though this revolution initially ensured the wiping out of the generation of progressive Iranians either as cannon-fodder in that war, or as victims of the Ayatollah’s secret police. It is inspiring now to see a young generation acting to re-create that democracy after a wasted fifty years since the coup against Mossadeq. Perhaps it is precisely for this reason that it is on the axis of evil list, a declaration from the USA which can only have strengthened the position of the hardline Khomeinists. Just as the Gulf War itself certainly strengthened the hand of the real ‘fundamentalists’.

Until September 11th, and perhaps still now despite earlier indications to the contrary, the stern white man prefers to have the ‘fundamentalist’ in place, either as tool or enemy, or, as in Algeria going along with the demonisation of the opposition as such. There is evidence for example of both Israeli and Saudi support in the creation of Hamas as an organisation to weaken the PLO.^{xxiii} The evidence of US training and supplying arms to those who became al-Qaida is well-known. Above all there is the ambiguous nature of Saudi Arabia, the monarcho-theocracy that has been with Israel the most important prop of Western interests in the region. Ambiguous because its own Wahabbi version of Sunni Islam is ‘fundamentalist’, that is to say intolerant; because of its financing of a variety of fundamentalist Sunni organisations; and most of all because it both wants and does not want the large US military presence there, the presence which is said to have inspired Osama bin Laden and most of those who suicide bombed not just the WTC but the Pentagon.

In late 1990 and early 91, the USA with various bribes, arm-twisting and because of a fear and dislike of Saddam in the region, built a coalition to pursue the war, a very different situation to the present. There were as part of this coalition-building, hints and nudges from the Bush administration then that the war would be part of a general mid-east deal. But the circular traveller Dennis Ross said that the Israelis would only trust any treaties with the US’s new Arab friends if they made a decisive movement towards democratization. Ignoring for the moment how much Israel’s own policies of ‘facts on the ground’— settlement expansion and the possession of nuclear weapons make it easier for non-democrats to stay in power, it is clear that the USA and Western allies have no interest in the development of democracy in the region. The actions of the personnel of the present Bush regime back in 1991 in which the majority of Iraqis were deemed to be not suitable for democracy; the support for Saudi Arabia; the inaction in the face of Zionist expansionism while constantly referring to ‘plucky little’ Israel with its war criminal prime minister as the only democracy in the region, all these show not just how Panglossian is Blair’s wish for democracy in Iraq via bombing, but non-colonial democracy is not something the stern white man wants in the region at all. Nawal Al Saadawi put it clearly in April 1991: “One of the tragedies of the war is that the Arab world’s struggle for democracy including women’s rights is inevitably shelved...in what is perceived as a fight against an outside threat.” The tragedy will be repeated if the sought after war now begins. Given that Iran has been placed on the ‘axis of evil’ just when the power of the mullahs is being weakened by popular action, it may be that such a tragedy would be welcomed by the chickenhawks; at the least they will shed no tears.

KUWAIT: WHOSE LIBERATION?

The invasion of Kuwait was seen as an unacceptable level of conflict though there are conflicting stories as to whether the USA had shown Saddam a red, amber or green light for this move, a question to be considered later. It is also the case that the massive disparities of wealth in the region, and into the Asian continent, have made for a very large migrant workforce with few if any rights in the Gulf states and in Iraq. Crises, and especially wars reveal global interconnections that are normally kept hidden. In Kuwait there was at the time of the invasion an ethnic hierarchy of labour with Palestinians often in middle-management positions, with Filipino house servants and Bangladeshi and Yemeni labourers at the bottom of the pile. One of the consequences of the Gulf War, which within Iraq had created hundreds of thousands of refugees, was the ethnic cleansing of the migrant working class in the Gulf states and Kuwait in particular. Their fate, especially that of Palestinians who had been in Kuwait for many years, the second largest and wealthiest such community in the mid-east and who had no legal right to be anywhere else on the planet (just as the Kurdish refugees on the mountains towards Turkey did not know where they were going or what lay in store), is real 'collateral damage'. It also had a severe impact on their countries of origin and their own families in those countries dependent on remittances from Kuwaiti level wages.^{xxiv} All this even though without such migrant labour Kuwait and the oil-rich countries could never have translated the oil revenues into better standards of living for their own citizens nor diversified their economies.^{xxv}

The country became independent in 1961 but Britain soon sent its troops back there because of a previous threat from the more radical General Kassem who claimed it to be part of Iraq. It was and is ruled by a 'royal' family, the Sabahs, headed by an Emir. Up until 1986, and the feeling of crisis caused by the collapse in the oil price, there had been a Kuwaiti National Assembly with the backing of the majority of voters, though those with the right to vote were very few. It was indefinitely dissolved in that year, press freedom curtailed, and nationalist forces shown up as powerless.

The murkiness surrounding Saddam's invasion is highlighted by how the Emir and the rest of the Sabah family got away in plenty of time. When Kuwaiti prisoners of war started to return in March '91 many senior officers expressed bitterness that the Emir had not employed them effectively against the August invasion. They, and those who stayed during a typically brutal Iraqi occupation seemed determined not to return to the autocracy that had preceded the invasion. In early February '91 there were press reports of pro-democracy Kuwaitis giving up on forming any kind of unity government with the royals and being determined to go it alone. Robert Fisk (*The Independent* 6/3/91) talked of Kuwaitis who had not left saying, "We who stayed and suffered will not tolerate being told that we cannot have a proper say in the running of the country."

At the time of the invasion Yassir Arafat had declared himself and the PLO to be behind Iraq.^{xxvi} Naturally enough this was disastrous for the most well established and middle class section of the migrant workforce in Kuwait. Almost immediately after the invasion some were being accused of being collaborators with Iraq, especially by those Kuwaitis who had not been there during the Iraqi occupation including soldiers with the allies/coalition. Many wanted to flee then, but could not go to Israel or the West Bank as they did not have residence permits. The evidence is that many were however heavily involved in the resistance to Iraq. On the return of the royals and their entourage, this was to make no difference. Back at the end of February having suffered nothing themselves, they immediately imposed martial law. The complaining POWs and other opposition figures were, by 10th March when there was still no electricity or water, talking of the betrayal of the country by the royal Sabahs. They retaliated by organising hit squads against the opposition with the Palestinians picked out.^{xxvii} By the

13th, government officials were talking of the need to 'clean out' Palestinian suburbs. In fact they'd already started, on the 11th journalist Bob Dognin wrote that in Kuwait he couldn't "forget the Palestinian I found under the highway bridge. He'd been beaten, tied up and gagged and then shot three times and left sitting up against the blue wall for drivers to see." That champion of the rich and powerful, George H. Bush helped the process by choosing this day to denounce the PLO. The dirty business continued and on 9th April it was reported that the Palestinian intellectual Sallen Mulkar, a dentist, had been shot five times as if killed by a mafia.

The resistance, formed into local committees, had worked as a parallel government for 7 months and were proud of it. From this experience, reported Shyan Bhatia, had come a common determination to make the liberated Kuwait a better place for its people. There had been recognition within it of the role of the so-called lower-castes of the country and of the 'bidun' the right-less migrant workers, how they had formed the backbone of the resistance.

The royals confronted this movement in two ways, by smears and by ethnic cleansing. They began by hiring an American PR company to help with its own image. The resistance, when it expressed anger at the prime minister's vague reform rhetoric, and at the involvement of them in the killing of Palestinians, were described as splittists; that it was their demands which had encouraged Saddam to invade. And the brazen nature of the smear came because they were confident of equally brazen Western support. This is a *Times* (London) leader of 22nd March 1991: "But in the case of Kuwait, the West should not seek to forcibly re-make the mid-east in its own image. Whatever the temptations, Western statesmen must show that imperialism really is dead." Breathtaking, how it would be the encouragement of democracy, the dice loaded already in their argument with the word 'forcibly', as if the West were going to impose it (though this is now said to be a legitimate aim in Iraq); that it would be the encouragement or pressure for democracy which was imperialist.

Already by 22nd March, the Kuwait government was threatening to halve the non-Kuwaiti population which would mean renouncing for plans to diversify the economy into aluminium production for example. Mostly though it was an attack on migrant labour. On the 16th March there were reports of thousands of would-be Turkish 'guestworkers' laying siege to re-employment offices with its cheap and skilled construction workers to be sub-contractors to American corporations with re-building contracts. The British firm AMEC were given different instructions, no Islamic labour. Consequently Polish and Czech workers were being contracted by the company. Remarking on it on 28th March John Willcock wrote:- "Before the invasion the Palestinians performed the role of middle management in Kuwait's economy supervising other Arab workers like Yemenis. The Kuwaitis now envisage a structure headed by European management with possibly Turkish or Egyptian middle management supervising workers from E. Europe, Turkey, or possibly the Philippines."

NO LINKAGE

One function of newzak is to take seriously a variety of political processes which are not being seriously pursued as in the case of the Middle East 'peace process'. It has others. It will for example dwell on the minutiae of conflicts between political parties or personalities who have more or less identical policies as with the Labour and Likud parties in Israel, both bastions of what Ilan Pappé calls 'traditional Zionism', which has accommodated and in the case of Likud, encouraged the 'neo-Zionism' of the settlers. It does something similar with what is in effect realpolitik theatre, as was the case with threats from Israel to attack Iraq in 1990-1, or at least be part of a 'coalition' attack. This theatre had real consequences in that Israel gained in a variety of ways from not doing anything when the attack on its territory did come, and having the US defend it with its Patriot missiles against Saddam's gestural Scuds. This situation was

reported on a daily basis for weeks, but in this case it was not so much making sure we did not see the wood for the trees as providing realism to a wood which did not exist. In reality Israel performed the part of the guy in the non-brawl shouting, 'Hold me back or I'll kill him.'

In the very long lead-up to the Gulf War (which as in the present situation, was a grim theatre of its own but which contained real conflicts of interest) there was much talk of a 'linkage' of the Iraq-Kuwaiti situation with that of the Palestinians and Israel, and efforts to make it. It is a dispiriting reality that the talk at least was stronger then than now, dispiriting needless to say for the Palestinians when the intervening period has seen ever more Israeli Facts on the Ground and an ever-stronger US-Israeli alliance. Even though George H. Bush and his Secretary of State James Baker have been described as the least sympathetic-to-Israeli US administration,^{xxviii} this 'linkage' had no real consequences. One of the most foolish comments of the many foolish comments made at the time came from Martin Woollacott not as reporter on the spot but in his role as professional opinionist. Despite denial of the 'linkage' he said, it had been implicitly recognized. "Israel has been transformed from a strategic ally of the USA into a diplomatic and military liability."

For the non-brawl to have some credibility as a possible brawl there was, as they say of such things, some history. At the beginning of the '80s Israel had knocked out any potential for the development of nuclear capability by Iraq by bombing the French-provided civil nuclear energy plant and assassinating the country's top atomic scientist in Paris. But at the same time Saddam had started his Western-backed and appallingly wasteful war with Iran, a war which showed just how empty was his anti-Zionism. In the case of Saddam and other Arab dictators, another example of how they and unreconstructed Zionists need each other's existence. At the end of the Iran war this was even more the case. 250,000 Iraqis had been killed, one million injured and debt of \$80 to 200 billion accrued with nothing to show for it. In the Occupied Territories the Israeli state brutalized itself in face of the first intifada, an uprising which owed nothing in its tenacity to any Arab state. If anything, it shamed Arab states, this Palestinian uprising that tried to contest Zionist 'facts on the ground', the strategy of settlements that appeals so much to the American story of its own pioneering, the tough white man taking over a continent.

So it was that almost as soon as Saddam had either misread the signals, or taken a reckless gamble in invading Kuwait, he cranked up the anti-Zionist rhetoric: Ah, the poor Palestinians. And the Israelis could shrug off A Save the Children/Ford Foundation report on the number of deaths of Palestinian children in the Intifada and blame them, as they still do, on "those who incite them." In October they could shrug off, as they did with a whitewash inquiry, the Temple Mount massacre of Palestinians by the fundamentalist Baruch Goldstein, refusing to make a 'linkage' between him and the brutalized strategy of the Israeli state against the intifada, or its either de facto promotion of settlements peopled by such ethnic cleansers.^{xxix}

The most important person trying to make 'linkage' between such events (involving as they often did Israeli flouting of UN resolutions) and the need to reverse the invasion of Kuwait, implicitly arguing that one injustice could not be rectified in isolation from others close by, was Mikhail Gorbachev. One month after the Kuwait invasion George H. Bush clearly resisted such a linkage, or as he put it, "to some other unresolved dispute" whereas Gorbachev thought that there was such a thing and that it bore on the 'acuteness' of the crisis. This is not to sentimentalize USSR realpolitik in the area, its interests in Iraq, but Gorbachev was finally one of the victims of the war. The war took place, coincided with, the demise of the USSR as a superpower and the forceful way in which the USA pursued it, in addition to its specific financial meanness to the USSR however, further undermined Gorbachev as a leader, and made way for vicious buffoon Boris Yeltsin.

It maybe that there were real differences in the Bush Administration of the time and that

the State Department like diplomacy ministries are supposed to do, played the 'traditional conservative' role of wanting to restore the status quo without disturbing the larger status quo. Certainly James Baker was at various times accused of being anti-Israeli, too friendly with the Soviets, and too keen to negotiate a resolution to the invasion of Kuwait. In the short run Israel was said to be furious that Syria had won tacit US acceptance of its sway over Lebanon and that this came from Baker-Shevednadze deals. And then on 21st December the US did not support Israel on a UN Resolution that called for an international monitoring of the treatment of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. This happened, but it had no consequences and the net result was a rejection of all Gorbachev's initiatives; the rejection of financial aid to the USSR on the grounds of American budget difficulties; and the almost simultaneous announcement of US aid to help resettle Soviet Jews in Israel and relieving it of some \$3bn of debt.

If there were along the way such divisions, then the Israelis as 'militarists of the enlightenment' had, as they have to an even greater degree now, the ear of the Pentagon, and especially Paul Wolfowitz, then, as now, Deputy Secretary of Defence, and the truly creepy Richard Perle who asserted throughout that diplomacy is not better than war and despite any lack of evidence, that Saddam wanted the destruction of Israel. Via an almost universally sympathetic Western press, and, (as if it were a conspiracy movie, 'legendary' oilman and fixer Armand Hammer), Israel's leader Yitzhak Shamir made it known that if the US did not cripple Iraq militarily, then Israel would. By the end of 1990 there were constant media hints to this effect. This was not a groundless threat in that a BASIC report at the time described Israel's nuclear capability — the only one in the region — as having a 1500Km range from the Negev desert. But it was one that was never going to be carried out. While on the one hand Jewish Israelis are insulated from reality by knowing that in the last resort they will always be protected by the USA whatever their own actions, it's also the case that since the Suez debacle the Israelis, in the last resort, and however right wing the government, have never gone explicitly beyond what the USA has allowed. Meanwhile the usual media made regular reports of 'frantic' US diplomatic efforts 'pulling out all the stops to hold back' the Israelis.

The result was described by a headline of 25th January 1991: "ISRAEL BASKS IN THE WARMTH OF INTERNATIONAL APPROVAL". They had not responded to Saddam's gestural Scuds (yet another miscalculation by Saddam) and allowed Americans and Patriots to defend them 'on their own soil'; had done what the Americans wanted in the expectation of substantial quid pro quo. This involved no check on its methods in dealing with the intifada; accelerated settlement building; further financial and military aid. In his final attempt at mediation before the land war, even Gorbachev left out the 'linkage'. The 'peace process' that did begin later in the year with the Madrid Conference (precursor to the Oslo accords), the US pressure for which made Baker hated not just in Israel but by the Pentagon chickenhawks, proceeded however on exactly those lines the PLO had said it would not follow, that is an 'open-ended' peace process. "Any transitional steps or arrangements," they said, "will have to be structured within a comprehensive, inter-connected and coherent plan with a specific time frame for implementation leading to Palestinian statehood." Which is more exactly what they did not get and have not got. Obviously aware that when dealing with the Third World the West likes to keep things ad hoc, a little vague and if necessary murky, the Palestinians knew what they didn't want. They did not have the power however to avoid what they did not want.

**"OIL IS TOO IMPORTANT TO BE TREATED
AS JUST ANOTHER COMMODITY"^{xxx}**

The massive disparities of wealth in the region perpetuate what seem to be permanently 'acceptable levels' of conflict. These are determined in part by the geography of oil; by the boundaries drawn by colonialism, mostly British colonialism; but equally by the nature of the regimes where it is most plentiful, and by where, and on what the income is spent. After the war was over, an unnamed Egyptian diplomat described it thus: "Some countries have big banks accounts and some countries are rich in human resources." He went on to criticize the Gulf states for having concentrated financial investment in the West and "showing little understanding of the destabilising effects of regional disparities of wealth and economic development."^{xxx} Of course Egypt was receiving and was in expectation of further financial reward for having been part of the coalition in the face of violently repressed demonstrations against the war, and in part to make up for the loss of remittances from its emigrant workers, but he was looking for something further on the back of proposals from both Baker and Douglas Hurd which he must have known were not going to be realized. Hurd's cynicism in talking of an institution to promote regional economic stability and a more equal distribution of oil wealth and revenues is breathtaking even by the standards of this repulsive elitist. Not only would this fly in the face of decades of Western foreign policy, but also its hostility to such economic institutions, given that they would involve negotiation and immediately open a political can of worms around themes of fairness.

The creation of OPEC and the oil price hike of 1973-4 was a shock to the West but one it was able to use to its own ends: the disciplining of the working class of the Western world, Britain and Italy especially, and control over the use of much of the revenue. This was achieved through arms sales to the Gulf states and the investment of a large part of OPEC revenue in the American financial system as 'petro-dollars'. Attempts through UNCTAD to use it to make other commodity price agreements to the benefit of the Third World were unsuccessful, sabotaged by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Instead the 're-cycled' petro-dollars boosted world liquidity, created the basis for financial "liberalization", accelerated the dominance of finance capital, and created a Third world debt crisis in the longer term. In this re-cycling process even the notoriously pro-Western IMF was excluded because of the possible political negotiating that might become involved simply because it was an institution. It would make its comeback only to manage the ensuing debt crises. At the time of the invasion, Kuwait alone had \$100bn invested in Europe and North America and Japan, the Saudis an estimated one trillion. At the same time the West through the OECD set up the International Energy Agency which was to build up consumer country defences against oil producers with stockpiles, which could also dampen speculative trading on the increasingly important oil 'spot' market.

The armaments and oil industries are the open dirty secrets of free-market capitalism, their business determined by state interventions both military and otherwise, and by various forms of corruption; their prices not determined by the 'fundamentals' of competition or costs of production. Given their significance, they make a mockery of neo-liberal economics and show its ideological nature, one which does not correspond to reality. One of the first things revealed by the Gulf War was the sheer waste of the billions spent on armaments by Saudi and the Gulf states. When faced by what they perceived as a threat from Iraq with its First World War military, the Saudi's immediate instinct was to call for the Americans.

This waste continued through the 1980s when for a variety of reasons the price of oil, the most basic of commodities entering the production-process of almost every other commodity, fell sharply, the Iraq-Iran war (a war despite their both being members of OPEC) having very little impact on supply or price. It had collapsed in 1981 in the face of continuing Saudi overproduction, and then that of the antagonists themselves, a self-defeating policy they

pursued in order to fund the wastage of resources and lives in their war. By 1986 OPEC's share of world oil production had fallen to 29%; total OPEC revenues down to a quarter of what they had been in 1980; and the spot price (even in devalued dollars) a fraction of what they had been. From this low point demand for oil did begin to rise, with some encouragement from George H. Bush, but slowly and to nothing like where it had been, and not enough to stop the imposition of IMF austerity policies in lesser producing countries. Such austerity policies are invariably designed to discipline and impoverish the working class and poor. They did so to such a degree that between 1988 and 1990 there were serious anti-IMF riots in Algeria, Nigeria and Venezuela as well as indirectly affected Jordan and Palestine. Just one week before the invasion of Iraq, these peaked with an insurrection in oil-producing Trinidad following on from a year of strikes and riots.

On the consumer side, the interests of 'the West' were not homogenous, given that the USA and to a lesser extent the UK were themselves non-OPEC oil producers. During the course of the Gulf War, its long 'phoney' period, bombing campaign and the brief land war — Japan and Germany were arm-twisted to make large-scale financial contributions to the costs of the war on the grounds that it was more in their interests that oil supplied be assured than anyone else's. In some circumstances, as evidenced by the unrealistic 'Project Independence', a relatively high oil price is seen to be in the USA's interests, revitalising oil profits by making domestic production profitable. In 1986 George H. Bush, then Vice President, went to Saudi to persuade them to cut production and helped raise the price up from its bottom level of \$10. ^{xxxii} According to *The Observer* of 21 October 1990, the same George H. had encouraged Iraq to pursue a policy of higher prices, given that it had debts to repay and the US oil states needed a revitalizing shot. What matters to the USA and the West is the ability to have a fair deal of control over its price, something usually managed through the offices of Saudi Arabia and, to the US alone, the continued pricing of oil in \$US, which is itself both cause and result of its all-round superpower position. ^{xxxiii} The US's own need for oil imported oil was not going to go away, and this made its ability to control price of crucial importance. A Rupert Murdoch counsellor and neo-liberal hardhat Irwin Stelzer put it in his *Sunday Times* column of 17.3.91 Saudi Arabia was so important to the USA because although they didn't want the prices too low, they want the insurance that "they can turn on the spigot if the price hawks get unruly". One high-ranking economist at the US Treasury, Anthony Lawrence, denounced the war as "an imperialist attempt to wrest control of the oil sources of the region."

Having accumulated huge debts in the tragic waste of the Iraq-Iran war, Saddam commissioned a report from the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies. Henry Schuler, its Energy Security Program Director gave an indication of what it concluded, that Arab oil producers could get \$25 a barrel without consumers looking for alternative energy resources, and that the stability and 'popularity' of their regimes demanded it. ^{xxxiv} \$25 was also given as the 'equilibrium' price at a Brussels Club symposium by Elf Aquitaine's director of relations with International Organizations, A. Terrenoire, in December. The unity of the Iraqi, Iranian and Saudi governments in agreeing an OPEC price hike in July from \$18 to \$21 was not then some outrageous hike, far from it and had the USA's stamp of approval.

CONSPIRACY THEORY

Men, sitting down in rooms that were until recently always 'smoke-filled', and secretly putting in motion A in order that an apparently unconnected result B be obtained, this classic version of conspiracy theory is usually a waste of time for the people pursuing it. It is in itself a morbid symptom of secrecy, the secrecy that is so characteristic of the power elite, and as Daniel Ellsberg describes, so addictive to those in the know and fascinating to some people outside the loop. It allows for endless speculation because nothing can ever be proved, or if it is, it is usually

too late for proof of the conspiracy to have any impact in the present. This is not to say that such things do not happen. Not at all. Plans are made and carried out in secret and have effects that seem contrary to the publicly stated aims of those who make the plans. Weapons for example have been sold to a public enemy, and the proceeds then used to arm another illegal group as in the Iran-Contra affair.

During the Gulf War and again now, ‘conspiracy theory’ has been used as an accusation against people asking about discrepancies between stated aims and what seems to be happening in fact. It became a standard response to criticism from anti-imperialists, a response which caricatured conspiracy as ‘dastardly plotting’. But it does not have to be like this, a ‘nod and a wink’ will do; a green light can be given to new parameters of what is permissible; or ambiguous signals given. In the Gulf War all this arose about the Iraqi-US relationship over a limited period before the invasion of Kuwait, and in particular what was said by US Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie in a meeting with Saddam Hussein on the 25th July 1990, just days before the invasion.

The agreement to raise the price of oil with apparent American blessing appears to have been undermined by Kuwait increasing production. Saddam would have been aware of how this would make the Saudis as furious as himself. In addition Kuwait would not write-off Iraq’s war debt of an estimated \$22bn, and was insisting on immediate repayment even when it knew there was no money to do this; there were historical Iraqi claims to Kuwait, and not least an invasion would cover Saddam’s impending concession to Iran of the Shat-al-Arab waters, one which meant nothing had been gained, not even for Saddam, from that terrible war. He did declare the concession on 15th August just two weeks after the invasion. All this gives plenty of reason for the invasion to cover the loss of face involved, but it is still mysterious. Why for example the Kuwaitis should have acted so provocatively, a question raised by the radical and acute Arab journalist Said Aburish early in September. It seems too conspiratorial that it was encouraged in this by the same USA government as suggested by Sami Yousif. But a contention made at the time and subsequently, was that the US led Saddam into a trap by giving an amber light at minimum for the invasion, and that it was given by April Glaspie as instructed by the State Department. If indeed there was such a go-ahead it can only have been a trap, an excuse to turn on the Frankenstein, because a combined Iraq-Kuwaiti oil production would undermine Saudi’s domination of OPEC which would not be in American interests, though, looked at conspiratorially, it would have the effect of making Saudi still more the pliant state and accepting of the long-term stationing of American military in the country, which is what did happen exactly as had been predicted by Marion Sluglett.

The text of the Saddam-Glaspie meeting was released in Arabic by the Iraqi regime and therefore cannot be taken at face value. It was however printed almost in full by the *New York Times*. They agreed that a price of \$25 a barrel was reasonable and then Glaspie is alleged to have said that the US ‘has no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border dispute with Kuwait.’ In a *New York Times* interview in September, she came on naïve and said “Obviously I didn’t think — and nobody else did — that the Iraqis were going to take all of Kuwait.”^{xxxv} She did not surface officially until the war was over in late March when she gave her account of the lead-up to the invasion to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The transcript released by the Iraqis was disinformation she said, in that for one thing it excluded her warning that the US insisted that the dispute with Kuwait be settled peacefully; that she didn’t get any specific instructions from Bush or Baker; and that Saddam was too stupid to understand what she was saying.

It sounds credible —that Saddam is stupid, that there may have been some gloss on the Iraqi transcript — but as *The Observer* asked at the time, why had the State Department kept her under wraps for 6 months before allowing her to refute this ‘disinformation’ that had been

in circulation for so long, and had the Baker-Bush axis really had their eye so much off the ball. To establish whether Saddam really had been suckered into the invasion is fruitless. It will always be ‘conspiracy theory’ because what was said will always be murky, even if the Iraqi exile journalist Falig’abd al-Jabbar said at the time that many exiles believed it was used to “destroy Iraq as a military power.” Better to concentrate on the net result of what happened when the gains made by the USA and the white world are clear to see. It is though worth mentioning some surrounding facts and to leave it at that:-

The CIA was blamed (its incompetence is fast becoming legendary) for not foreseeing the invasion and, as in subsequent cases, it in turn blamed too much technology and data and not enough men on the ground. Which may be true but the Emir of Kuwait and his clan had plenty of time to get away and not bother with even token resistance.

Several months before the invasion General Schwarzkopf and his fellow generals played a serious war game at his HQ in Tampa, Florida with Iraq as the target as reported by the Washington Post with input from the General himself. “During the annual staff war-gaming last year General Schwarzkopf developed a scenario in which Iraq was preparing to attack Kuwait. Even before the paper-and-computer exercise ended in August the hot line rang with a call from General Colin Powell...’Well they have crossed’, Powell said. And I said ‘I’m not surprised you know. Now it’s going to be interesting to see what they do.’... In the build-up to the initial wave of 240,000 troops, he said, there were few deviations from the war-game plan.”^{xxxvi}

BUSINESS AS USUAL

In August 1990 soon after the invasion another 34 oil rigs went to work in Texas. During the phoney war period the spot and futures price of oil was volatile, the latter rising to \$39 a barrel in October when George H. said there was no justification for unwarranted speculation. At the same time Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan complained not just of Douglas Hurd’s lecturing tone, but that its own suggestion of an oil price stabilisation plan (at \$21) was ignored. Oil is never the ‘free market’ of neo-liberal ideologues, but whatever else happened or was going to happen, no such institutional agreement was going to be made by the West given that it immediately implies negotiation, politics and in however deformed a manner, a grain of democratic control.

January 10th 1991 was the high point of the speculative price. A James Baker-Tariq Aziz last of the last-chance meetings got nowhere, and the oil price soared by \$8 in ten minutes to \$30, a price far higher than Saddam had wanted in the first place (though to put this into perspective, it would have to have been around \$80 to be at 1973-4 levels.) Perverse, but *The Times* complained of oil having replaced gold as ‘funk money’. Given that the dollar, as the currency of the world’s military superpower had already replaced gold in this function, and that oil was and is priced in that currency, it was hardly surprising. And as a form of ‘funk money’ it was open only to a certain class of people. In Diyakbir from close to where US planes flew, people having no access to derivatives or hedge funds, “besieged goldsmiths to exchange Turkish lira for gold.” *The Times*, having no interest in such people outlined its complaint as follows: “This malign development enabled by the much-enhanced sophistication of oil markets means that the price of one of the world’s most basic commodities is likely to remain a volatile mirror to troubles anywhere in the world.” In all other circumstances the paper is all for sophisticated free markets, but then neo-liberal ideology is of the pick ‘n mix variety. Its sister paper the *Sunday Times* on the subject of oil was even more blunt in expressing imperialist interest. “There is a need to protect the prosperity of the West from dangerous hands.”

One beneficial effect of the oil price panic for the USA was that it enabled further arm-twisting of Germany and Japan to pay for the war, a bill which also involved recompense to

countries losing out from the economic sanctions put in place on Iraq. Anti-war politicians in America talked of war serving the interests of those two countries more than the USA, a point which could only function as leverage. Besides as soon as the war began on 17th January, that is to say massive aerial bombardment of Iraq began, the price of oil fell by \$9 along with a fall in the price of gold. This was because the IEA was ready to release 2 million barrels a day from its stockpile, but also as a manifestation of what is called '*market confidence*' which, in the final resort, is the reassurance that the West dominates the world on its own terms. By the 21st, non-OPEC oil production and the planned release of IEA stocks was pushing the price down further. At the end of the month it was still putting out 2.5m barrels a day despite protests from OPEC that its support for the West in covering for the non-production of Iraq and Kuwait, was being poorly rewarded. On the 19th February Saudi Arabia was forced to borrow money for the first time in 30 years to cover the spiraling war costs, it having no choice but to be the biggest contributor, and at a time of falling oil revenues. No reciprocal sentiment was shown with the \$1.9bn loan led by Morgan Guaranty, it was charged at one half a percent above London inter-bank rates.

What matters in all this is, that although there were differences of interest within the West, the USA and Japan for example, there was to be no resurrection of OPEC power however many oilfields might be destroyed, and that Saudi Arabia became even more dependent on the USA. As Dr R. Masbro of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies was to put it "Post-war Saudi will deliver the US what it wants."^{xxxvi} A price not too high, and not too low. Not too high because the USA economy was entering a recession: not too low because money was needed by Kuwait for example to rebuild and because of America's domestic oil industry. On the 21st February when a triumphalist President Bush was ditching 'the Vietnam syndrome', his energy plan was also announced by his Energy Secretary James Watkins. Apart from some wishful thinking about cutting consumption it was all about production, the opening up of 1.5 million the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration (brazen global hooliganism which can only have assumed the price not going too low), and the build up of reserves with the aid of producers which would mean Saudi.

THE WORLD'S FIRST MICROCHIP WAR

For the West, oil and the arms industry, those open dirty secrets that give the lie to capitalism's claim to modernity, are mutually dependent. Armaments are needed to impose the security of oil supplies and to repress demands for more equal distribution of oil wealth. At the same time arms sales have recouped a good percentage of the costs of that oil, in the case of Saddam Hussein a bonus on top of his role as buffer to Iran. The arms industry in particular is tied to the nation-state in a unique fashion. It is not some small stain inside the West's claim to modernity as against the archaisms of other parts of the world. It is the biggest manufacturing industry in Cool Britannia; is integral to the French economy; and the military-industrial complex of the USA is central to its economy. To speak of it thus — military-industrial complex — is not idle rhetoric. Its existence, its relatively huge budget jacked up by the Reagan rearmament programme, that is to say public money, punctures neo-liberalism's self-mythologizing, given that so many of the innovations of the USA's infotech boom originated from it as well as from NASA. On the other side, the arms manufacturers themselves had it easy on government contracts. Raytheon who manufactured the Patriot missiles have made all their profits on Pentagon contracts whereas its Calorific stove and Speed Queen washer and drier businesses struggled. This company with its powerful US state connections (once again C. Wright Mills was amazingly prescient on how this worked) were quickly in at the end of the war to get the contract for the electrical work at Kuwait airport. Bechtel, a corporation with even greater connections were to be in charge of re-building the country's oil sector.

There are such things as arms trade fairs which are held in major exhibition halls complete

with demonstrations, mock-ups and brochures with photographs that are pornographic in their sheen, but as the sports clichés tell us, there's nothing quite like the real thing. Despite Argentina's defeat, the Falklands War prompted increased sales for Exocets. There are of course limits on what those countries with the most advanced technology will sell and, in the case of the Gulf War, sales were secondary to the need to show just how nasty they could be. *The Sunday Times* which was always the most realistic about weaponry, and which was eventually to crow with with the grim relish of those who are proved right against wishful thinkers like Paul Rogers, had as a headline on January 13th, before the bombing began, 'THE WORLD'S FIRST MICROCHIP WAR: NASTY, PAINFUL AND VERY BLOODY'. In the following article James Adams wrote, "For the five months since the invasion, allied military planners have been extending the frontiers of computerized war-gaming...and the arms industry has equipped them with hi-tech killing machines of unprecedented ferocity." There were the Apache helicopters, scary for those being fired at because they couldn't see them; instant communication from battlefield to HQ and back again, co-ordinates locked on; and fuel-air explosive bombs pornographically described as "spraying a mist of propane-like fuel that is ignited, creating a fireball that sucks up oxygen and incinerates everything close by; close by like the conscripts in 'ambush alley'.

All this didn't stop Saudi putting in another \$2bn arms request early on in the 'phoney war' period for weapons it was, as David Hirst said, afraid to use. Perhaps, scared of a coup by young Turk officers, they were not for use. As *The Sunday Times* put it in the same issue, "Saudi Arabia bought all the most sophisticated equipment on offer from the 70s on, but had to call on the West to defend it from Iraq." At the time Saudi 'defence spending' was four times that of Iran and Iraq combined. The war too involved theatre, gestures, and at certain moments the US High Command was keen to see Arab forces in the coalition highlighted. Robert Fisk reported that in the early days, of what the war really consisted of, that is aerial bombing of the military and civilian infrastructure of Iraq, 12 Saudi fighter bombers took off under orders from the king to attack Iraq using British-made Tornados. Eleven he said, returned with their bombs. Meanwhile the British Foreign Office was reported to be encouraging the media to give greater coverage to the Saudi airforce (see *The Times* 23/1/91). This was to show that it really was a coalition, but also to make sure that it was known that Saudi hands were bloody too, thereby tying it even closer to the West when they had been originally deceived into thinking that sanctions would be given longer to work and that Saudi Arabia itself would not be used as a launching pad for attacks. On the 2nd March the Sunday Times reported how the US had disingenuously said that it had no intention of stationing US ground forces permanently, but would "discuss a plan for pre-positioning a large amount of military equipment in Saudi so that US ground forces could go in quickly if needed."

That the best, the latest, the most information-rich weapons might not be for sale did not prevent the British being open about how they would be looking to the Gulf for increased arms sales. The same *The Sunday Times* (January 13th) had as a headline 'VICKERS IN LINE TO REAP THE WAR DIVIDEND'; how the Challenger tank performed it said, would be crucial to the company's future, the company as organism as newzak would have it, as if its only function were to provide employment. In fact tanks did not come out of the war so well. There had been, as there were then to be when it came to the Serbian assault on Bosnia, a debate about the efficacy of air attacks only. The shameful response of the West to the attack of tinpot ethnic cleansers in that situation, is extraordinary when airpower had been so decisive in the Gulf War. And this airpower bought into question the role of tanks per se. As *The Times* put it "Once the war is over, military analysts will again have to ponder whether the tank is reaching the end of its 75 year reign as the leviathan of battlefields." That is, when faced with missiles fired from helicopters and slow flying A10 and Harrier jet aircraft. If there was air cover however

then it clearly was not a leviathan as witnessed by the “good performance” of the Challenger itself, saved in the nick of time when it came to sales. Besides it had been easy for those A10 tank-busters because the Iraqi used obsolete tactics learned from the USSR.

Obsolete tactics, obsolete equipment, the war was a great advert for built-in obsolescence in the arms business. And in all this the loser was the USSR, the implied analogy with lumbering dinosaurs implicit in nearly all Western reports of the war. If not just plain obsolescence. There were exceptions, T-72 tanks from the USSR proved very effective in Saddam's brutal post-war repression and there was said to be Western ‘interest in and admiration for the Mig-29 Fulkrim plane. By and large however they did not do well in this real-time arms fair. One of the reasons for the ease of US air superiority was that “Soviet anti-aircraft missiles were largely brushed aside by planes whose electronic counter-measures were at least one technological generation ahead of Iraqi defences.”

THE BEAR'S DESPAIR

A classic Gulf War track came early on from Hank Williams called “Don't Give us a Reason”. After singing “You can take your poison gas and stick it up your sassafras,” he goes on to a line that puts the seal on the end of the Cold War, “The Eagle and the bear make a mighty strong pair.” In an interview for an archival history of the Cold War from the American perspective (1997) James Baker referred to the USSR's joining with the US to unambiguously condemn the invasion of Iraq in August 1990 as a decisive moment, giving substance to Gorbachev's 1988 speech to the UN, evidence that the Cold War was over. By February it was a different story. The hostility to him personally in the Western press which had begun earlier with his attempt to link the situation of the Palestinians to getting Saddam out of Kuwait, reached the point where he was ‘not to be trusted’; was ‘reverting to the old style cynical power politics of the Stalin era’. This because he had presented a plan accepted by Iraq for withdrawal from Kuwait to prevent the final land war part of the Gulf War.

This is not to romanticize Mr Gorbachev or to pretend that the USSR as it still was, did not have its own strategic interests in the region, or that it was not worried that its power in the region was to be wholly undermined by the display of American military power. However anyone old enough to be aware of what was happening in the world at the time, anyone that is without some fanatical axe to grind, appreciates that the process begun by the Solidarity movement in Poland in the early eighties ended without a reckless militarist response from the USSR, and that Gorbachev and those around him are those who did most to ensure this was the case, an end to the cold war that was not bloody, still less apocalyptic. Sneered at by cold war chickenhawks in the US and cold-war leftists alike, he was coupé out of power a few months later to make way for Boris Yeltsin, the buffoon supported by the West through thick and thin, the great democrat who ringed the Russian parliament with tanks. Given the realities of global power the very possibility of a Russian social democracy might be seen as wishful thinking on Gorbachev's part, but the conduct of the Gulf War did not help, confirming as it did to the military and those described as ‘conservatives’ in the USSR that, as *Pravda* put it, the war was being fought “first of all for the ambitions of the US for sole leadership of the world.

The original UN resolution in August 1990, supported by the USSR, condemned the invasion and called for economic sanctions. Almost from the beginning the USA and UK took a ‘flexible’ attitude to these sanctions, they were working and they were not working, a contradiction in practice, even in the one person of Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, which could only be kept afloat by the lickspittle media of the two countries. Almost as soon as the sanctions were in place and said by both to be working, the US-UK axis of militarism was creating facts on the ground, troops, equipment and bases in the region. As early as 1st September Gorbachev called for a summit, expressing fears about this build-up which could

only strengthen the hand of the USSR military against glasnost. In the summit that did follow on September 9th, he emphasised the interdependence of the world, the role of the UN and the USSR's new 'civilized' role in it.

Over the next three months the USSR continued to insist that Saddam be not rewarded for his aggression while attempting to link this to the position of the Palestinians and to greater democracy in Kuwait. It argued that in the modern world, a military solution was unacceptable. It suggested Algeria's Chadli Benjadid (the pragmatic Algerian President who was willing to accept the election victory of Islamic social democrats in 1992) to negotiate a settlement on the basis of what was said to be an agreement by Iraq and Saudi Arabia to negotiate under his auspices. That these carried no weight as against military facts on the ground or the bellicose stupidity of Saddam, was indicated mostly clearly by the resignation of the 'pro-Western' Shevednadze as USSR Foreign Minister on the 12th December 1990, some 13 days after UN Security Council Resolution 678 which allowed for 'allied' troops to attack Iraqi forces if they were to stay in Kuwait beyond a January 15th deadline.

When Saddam's stupidity continued beyond this cut-off date (him and his dangerous, adventurous team, as Gorbachev was to put it years later) and the biggest aerial bombardment in history began on the 17th, Gorbachev had no choice but to endorse it. His misgivings as this bombardment continued for several weeks, targeting the civilian as well as military infrastructure (with virtually every power station in the country put out of action and a headline reading 'CRIPPLED IRAQ BOMBED BACK TO LAST CENTURY'), were obvious, a realisation of the loss of Soviet influence in the region an appreciation of the power of American non-nuclear military power, and a belief that this went beyond what had been authorized by the UN.

In early February the US was determined to prevent the UN Security Council from holding a public debate on the course of the war (the war as aerial bombardment) and it is at this very moment (just after German Foreign Minister Genscher had called on support for Gorbachev and glasnost), that Cheney and Powell chose to 'express worries' about the USSR, with Powell reminding an American audience that the USSR was still and would continue to be, "the one country capable of destroying the USA in less than thirty minutes." This may have been a manifestation of conflicts within the Bush administration with Secretary of State Baker being assigned the role of appeaser of the USSR. Whether such a conflict was real or not, the net result was that Gorbachev remained powerless in the affair. Despite the usual Western lectures on the need for free speech, the Security Council meeting was held in private. It coincided with the al-Amirah bunker bombing. Even though the Russian responses was 'restrained' Peter Stothard was able to write in *The Times* of 14th February: "The White House has long feared that Mr Gorbachev would like to engineer an international diplomatic coup to end the Gulf conflict, hoping to divert attention from his virtual civil war at home and back to his reputation as a Nobel Prize winner."

These casual sneers became de rigeur in all Murdoch newspapers and the broadcast media in the lead-up to the land war. Either he was a villain himself, or a prisoner of 'conservative' generals. In fact the Soviet media right across the political spectrum, and including the 'liberal' *Komsomolskaya*, accused the West of war-mongering in this period when the offer to withdraw was made by Saddam without pre-conditions according to the BBC listening post at Caversham, and rejected. When a package on this basis was put together by Gorbachev it was also rejected.

The original offer to withdraw was made on the 16th February. While there was some talk of negotiations Baghdad came under one of the heaviest bombardments of the war on the night of 18th/19th. In *The Times* of the 19th the headline read 'MOSCOW'S PEACE PLAN FAILS TO HALT ALLIED PUSH' and its correspondent Michael Evans noted that the momentum of the

allied ground campaign had gone too far for such peace plans. Then as now, the First World War and not appeasement rhetoric is the more accurate analogy, the military machine having its own dynamics. On the 23rd Bush formally rejected the Russian-Iraqi peace proposals while thanking Gorbachev for his efforts. On the 25th Gorbachev talked of his 'disillusion' with the USA and India complained of manipulation of the Security Council, all this to fight a land war whose net result was to change little, but give only a demonstration of just how nasty the US military could be. On the 15th March James Baker arrived in Moscow for the first post-war meeting at which the USSR pushed for an international peace conference. The US response? That they hadn't ruled it out but that it must be "at a sensible time," leaving Gorbachev nothing to show domestically except the weakness of the USSR for which he was blamed. When acceptable levels of conflict are the name of the game in the Middle East, an International Peace Conference is the last thing Western powers want. By the time Baker did exert some pressure on Israel, Gorbachev was gone and this limited pressure led only to the Madrid Conference, years of Bantustan offers to the Palestinians, and more Israeli facts on the ground.

WAR: SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

As if to humiliate Gorbachev that final mile, the Americans said they could not offer financial assistance to a USSR trying to reform itself from within because of their own budgetary restraints, this after all sorts of optimistic talk of investment in Russian oil fields and the like. This did not stop their aid package to Israel which was in large part to help the integration of Russian Jewish emigrants. The 'budgetary restraints' did have some real basis however. The US was going into recession with a structural budget deficit of nearly 5% of its GNP. A perceived American economic weakness was commented on after the G7 meeting in Texas in September 1990 some weeks after the invasion of Kuwait and the UN resolution condemning it. This was because President Bush did not oppose a largely independently managed Japanese loan to China; and did not oppose Chancellor Kohl negotiating German unification with Gorbachev directly, nor an independent German aid package to the USSR.

It is tempting to see the diplomatic moves towards war, a war in which the American leadership of 'the West' would be re-asserted, as a response to this situation. What that diplomatic process gave its usual sheen to was a reminder that Germany and Japan, given a degree of autonomy at the G7 meeting, were more dependent on imported oil than the US-UK axis. It is hard to remember now just how much Japan was the model economy of the time. In fact the war co-incided with the start of its long-term relative economic stagnation which followed the back-to-earth revaluation of its property and equity markets.

The Americans pushed hard regardless. As early as 31 August 1990 when sanctions had just been imposed and war an apparently distant prospect, Japan's \$1bn package offer was sneered at. It was made clear that South Korea and Taiwan were also expected to contribute as oil importers. This when a \$10billion package had already been arranged from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE and Germany. The British began with diffidence, fearing that by asking for money for their military role from Germany for example, they would weaken their position on the UN Security Council. By January '91 such diffidence was a luxury. On the 21st January it was reported that they too would ask the 'richer' nations for financial assistance. By the 28th it was clear. When the German Foreign Minister Genscher came to London, he was told that it must contribute more to the costs of war. At the same time a Gulf Crisis Co-ordinating Group set up by the G7 to channel aid to Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and Syria on the grounds that they had suffered financially from the crisis came into being with contributions from 26 countries "overseen by the US Treasury even though the US doesn't provide any of the cash."^{xxxvii} All this after the Pentagon had made reassuring noises to the effect that the USA's coalition partners would pay 89% of the war costs, all of which meant Bush senior could still put in a typically

brazen budget request, which involved more money for Star Wars type defence spending and large scale rescues of the wiseguys of the Savings&Loans scandal.

In the event, *Pravda's* bitter comment after the land war (the 'turkey shoot), that the US would improve its economy "through the transfusion from the Gulf countries of many millions for military action," was not so far wide of the mark. Except it was not just the Gulf states but Germany and Japan who paid.^{xxxviii} In the event the US made a profit on the war. This is not leftist conspiracy theory but the right wing *Daily Telegraph* (21/3/91) which estimated that the war had cost \$42bn and that \$54.5bn had been pledged in cash and donations. These from Kuwait, Saudi, Germany and Japan. This time around, the US will have to find other methods to finance its sought-after war with only Kuwait as a guaranteed supporter. It will have to do so in another period of low economic growth, a weak stock market and the usual Republican budget deficit augmented this time by massive tax-cuts for the very rich. Stand by for things to get even tougher for America's poor.

NOTES

i Andrew Rawnsley painting a heroic picture of Tony Blair (26.1.03) standing firm in his support for George W. Bush says he is refusing to "pander" to public opinion. This is a loaded word which could be better expressed as 'not listening', a dangerous state of affairs in that a function of democracy is to prevent elites from doing foolish and dangerous things.

ii Flim-flam and propaganda are now called spin. The desperate recklessness of the UK government now, and its sheer bloody cheek, is shown by how they said that it was 'just spin' when people pointed out that their up-to-date intelligence dossier on Saddam's weapons programme had been plagiarized from various out-of-date sources including several pages from a student thesis.

iii One thing all these mistakes have in common is that they are denied at the time, usually with that level of aggression that is common with people in the wrong. If the truth ever does come out it is usually far too late to have any effect and has often gone through a process of being muddled. All this at a time when the present day power elites emphasize our personal responsibilities as individuals, and insidiously say that rights, often described as a namby-pamby notion of the chattering classes, do not come without responsibilities. The elite on the other hand refuses to take any personal responsibility for its actions unless they can be deemed a success.

iv Looking back at his courageous decision to put into the open the secret Pentagon papers which revealed the dreadful lies told by US administrations during the Vietnam War, ex-power elite insider Daniel Ellsberg describes the temptation thus:- "After you've started reading all this daily intelligence input and become used to using what amounts to whole libraries of hidden information, which is much more closely held than mere top secret data, you will forget that there was ever a time when you didn't have it, and you'll be aware only of the fact that you have it now and most others don't...and that all those other people are fools... You'll be thinking...'What would this man be telling me if he knew what I know?' After a while you just stop listening.

v Interview. *The Independent* 22.10.90

vi Douglas Hurd, the Eton prefect who enjoyed giving canings. As the de facto supporter in chief of Milosevic he simply would not listen to Bosnians and their government. From the outset he regarded them as devious whingers. As with the Kurds he is an expert in victim blame. Lecturing and not listening is a particular characteristic of the USA and UK and of the elitist attitude.

vii *The Guardian* 12/1/91. In the same piece he gave examples of debates within the West on the issue, whether there should be war, or economic sanctions 'given a chance' and how neither side in the argument 'mentioned the Arabs have anything to do with it.'

viii *The Observer* 16/9/01

ix Reginald Dale. *International Herald Tribune* 22-3/9/01.

x All this despite the attacks on Iraq in the Clinton period under the no-fly zone conditions and the attack of winter 1998. The visceral hatred for Clinton among the present administration is hard to understand given how successful his Presidency was for American capitalism at a global level. It seems to have to do with him being a 'sixties guy'

and with the high level of black American support for him.

xi This did not stop a lot of wishful thinking from a variety of journalists and academics not sympathetic to the USA about the military problems that would face the USA and its allies, and the number of casualties they would suffer. Paul Rogers and Robert Fisk for example.

xii One result of the Reagan years defence spending surge were developments communications in which “real time information travels from spy satellites to communications satellites to intelligence gatherers to military leaders to programmers and “without data overload” pictures taken by satellite are screened automatically to display only the changes between consecutive images as each comes through.”

xiii *The Daily Telegraph*: 10/12/02

xiv “Marines riddle sand dunes in ‘media event’ loud enough to wake the dead: *Vancouver Sun*: 14/10/94

xv See *The Times*, London: 27/2/91

xvi “The charred bodies at Mutla Ridge”: *London Review of Books* 4/4/91

xvii *The Guardian* 27/2/91

xviii A recent article headlined “A pill to help you kill without guilt“ makes chilling reading. (*Village Voice* 22-8/1/03: reprinted *The Guardian* Editor section, 8/2/03. In it Erik Baard describes how research into Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is closing in on the neural pathways of fear. These pathways are very similar to those of the feelings of guilt and regret. Some researchers have qualms about where they’ve got already, knowing that the US military would covet techniques that could inhibit remorse: others come up with the usual rationalizations for their work which is all too tempting to the abstract war movers and shakers of the Bush regime.

xix The ‘lies, damned lies, and statistics’ phrase is awfully smug. It’s a cliché used by power-elites when it suits them. Sure, statistics can be manipulated but such manipulation by changing criteria is usually obvious. But as we’ve seen the elite does not like for example the statistics that show unequivocally the relationship between life-expectancy and poverty because in such instances they prefer the equivocal. It is entirely appropriate that the hero of Thomas Pynchon’s “Gravity’s Rainbow” (a prescient novel as regards the world of military secrecy and manipulation) should be a statistician.

xx *The Guardian* 3/4/91

xxi Recently he has ‘come out’ with an unambiguously pro-Zionist position.

xxii Most of the Iraqi opposition had anyway opposed the US war arguing that they would lose the moral right to oppose Saddam if they didn’t side with Iraq against the war. This included the KDP, the Communist Party and al-Hakim of the Islamic Revolution group whose family had been executed by Saddam.

xxiii On 17 March 1991, as Palestinians were being murdered in Kuwait by goon squads of the Emir, Marie Colvin reported that the “Gulf states are said to be offering large sums of money to Hamas in the West Bank.”

xxiv For their own countries Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan these remittances from the oil rich countries helped offset the greater price they were paying for oil after 1973. They continued to be importance to the Philippines with its high level of unemployment and to the non-oil rich Arab world where the effects of an economic recession had eroded living standards since the mid-’80s. The lack of rights of such migrant workers became more acute when the price of oil dropped as it first did in the early ‘80s. This lack of rights meant the power of the state to deport without question and, in the case of Kuwait, to deport families as well.

xxv In November 1990 the Saudis had already expelled Palestinian and Yemeni workers. Yemen turned away from its pro-Saddam position when 500,000 of its citizens were expelled with the threat of another 500,000 to follow..

xxvi At the time this seemed like a disastrously stupid move, but on the carousel on which the Arab states have played with the PLO and the Palestinian issue it may well have been that the organisation was for that time especially dependent on secular Iraq when the Saudis were seeking to finance religious based Palestinian groups.

xxvii I am wary of historical analogies but it has happened before, Western-supported rulers who have had a comfortable time sitting outside their occupied countries, have returned when the occupation is finished and then started to execute those who stayed and resisted. Post-war Greece comes to mind, chickenhawks of a previous era.

xxviii It has even been suggested that Bush senior lost the 1992 election because of this. Other explanations point to the state of the economy and Bill Clinton being the best electioneer of his time.

xxix Goldstein’s act had the desired effect, it brutalized the opposition and almost literally gave fresh blood to the

acceptable level of conflict. His pioneering suicide attack was taken up by Hamas who, at the end of the 40 day mourning period for those killed in the Temple Mount massacre, carried out their first ever suicide attack.

xxx *The Times* 21/1/91

xxxi *The Independent* 6/3/91

xxxii It has been reported that veteran Saudi oil minister and OPEC prime mover Yammani had proposed a strategy of deliberate over-production in order to drop the price to such a point that it would wipe out non-OPEC producers like those in the North Sea in order to re-establish the power of OPEC and for a long-term higher price.

xxxiii As James A Baker put it in response to talk of the faltering US economy and the invasion of Kuwait: "We remain the one nation that has the necessary political, economic and military instruments at our disposal to catalyze a successful collective response by the international community." On the mutual dependence of military strength and the position of the dollar see also John Barker "Korea Inc: Wiseguys at the Calamity Bazaar" at www.heise.de/tp/english/default.html (archive)

xxxiv *Arab Oil and Gas Journal* 1/3/90

xxxv The article reprinted in the *International Herald Tribune* 20/9/90

xxxvi Reprinted in the *IHT* 12.2.91

xxxvi *The Guardian* 22.2.91

xxxvii *The Independent* 26/1/91

xxxviii The Italians stood up to the US's request for cash, saying that it had already committed 4 warships and 10 Tornados to the war. (*The Independent* 12/2/91)

Frankenstein and the Chickenhawks: Then and Now — II

NOW

THE ULTIMATUM AND START OF THE INVASION

“The Iraqi force today is a third of what it was in 1991, and it is the same third, 11 years closer to obsolescence.” Richard Perle (chairman Pentagon Advisory Board). *Daily Telegraph* 9th August 2002

THE LONG LEAD up to this sought-after war has often been all too familiar, a Gulf War re-run: the period of phoney war in relation to the timing of military preparations; the movements in the oil priceⁱ; questioning the role of the UN; the context of global economic slowdown and large US deficits; the constant use of ‘appeasement’ as a misleading analogy; media talk of the cost of keeping troops in the region for too long, costs both of morale and finance; the use of ‘conspiracy theory’ against those opposing the war; the propaganda role of the broadcast media; a US veto of a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli actions in the Occupied Territories; and, most of all, the voice of the stern white man.

There are many differences too: the silence of Japan and the relative quiet of Russia; the absence of active Arab military support in ‘the coalition’; the shift from questioning to undermining the United Nations; the constant repetition of the phrase ‘weapons of mass destruction’ (WMD) as if cluster bombs and the like were on a different moral plane; and most of all, this time around, post September 11th, the stern white man speaks more sternly, with more arrogance and ambition revealing the colonialist mentality at the heart of modern globalization. Saddam cannot prove his compliance to UN resolutions because compliance is an ad hoc notion to be determined by the stern white man; whatever he does is ‘playing games’. What it comes down to, as New Labour acolytes of the stern white man keep saying, is that Saddam has to change his ‘attitude’. It’s the voice of the stern white man as head boy with Saddam the real fascist turned into Saddam the school bouncer, Flashman. ‘Attitude’, that characteristic they so dislike in young black people, has the great merit for transatlantic chickenhawks in that it cannot be measured: the onus is on Iraq to change this immeasurable because for them, as the British dossier of September 2002 asserts, Iraq has WMD, and has the capability to use them over unspecified distances.

This war is not about “weapons of mass destruction” (that rhetorical UN phrase applied exclusively to Iraq), certainly not ones posing a threat to those seeking it, the evidence on this from experienced weapons inspector Scott Ritter is rather more convincing than the non-proofs coming from the USA and UK. Attitude is different, since it cannot be measured it is wholly suited to what is really different to the Gulf War: this time it will demonstrate in practice the idea of a pre-emptive war of invasion. In this instance pre-emption means the right to attack Iraq on the grounds that it might, at some unidentified point in the future, use potentially produced WMD (despite all the surveillance and embargos) via vaguely defined third parties — “terrorists”— against anyone within the range that they might potentially be delivered.

That it was the West which supplied the technology for such biological and chemical weapons as once existed and which are now the pretext for invasion and occupation, this is shrugged off as old leftist whinging. ‘That was then, this is now, things are different’, that is the line, as if the present power elite were more ethical than those that went before. This is

never actually said, instead we are presented with one *fait accompli* after another, with the previous one—the provision of such technology and de facto support for Saddam — now having to be dealt with by yet another *fait accompli*, the sought-after war. Afghanistan was similar, the country bombed and 4000 civilians killed while the West talked of the liberation of women. They had been ‘liberated’ years earlier by a progressive modernist government bitterly opposed by the mullahs, and which the West helped bring down just because it happened to be supported by the USSR.

The Gulf War was occasioned by the invasion of one country by another which, whatever the whys and wherefores, is a clear breach of international law: the one sought for now, dependent on interpretations of attitude and compliance, has far less justification for war, and yet party political opposition in the USA to the Gulf War was far greater then. Worries expressed by experienced conservative geo-politicians like James Baker and Brent Scowcroft about unilateral action surfaced early — August 2002— but came to nothing in the face of the pro-war momentum. The massive and active opposition of citizens around the globe this time around has, on the other hand, been unprecedented.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

There came a point in the long lead up to the war of invasion when half the country was going to scream if they heard that phrase one more time, weapons of mass destruction. The phrase appears in the UN resolution at the end of the Gulf War calling on Iraq to get rid of them. The UN, that’s OK then. Or not, because the phrase distorts the scale of what is being talked about, and one can be pretty sure that it was worked into the resolution by wiseguys from the UK-US axis. The only weapons we know of that have the capacity for ‘mass’ destruction are nuclear bombs such as were dropped on Hiroshima.

Whatever weapons Iraq may or may not have, they are not these.

Indeed it seems doubtful what, if any, effective biological, chemical let alone nuclear weapons Iraq does have, not just because of the reckless flimsiness of the ‘evidence’ presented by the UK-US axis, but because people with a fair claim to be in the know, think it very unlikely. The best known of these, and the most smeared (‘traitor’ and so on) is Scott Ritter, ex-US marine and intelligence officer who was a weapons inspector on the ground in Iraq in the 90s. At no point does Ritter make out the Iraqi state to be innocents, and he freely admits to using CIA people in his teams because of their ability. He did however think that the use of a signals intelligence programme he ran for general spying to be wrong and blames Richard Butler, who replaced Rolf Ekeus as head of UNSCOM, for precipitating the crisis that led to its withdrawal at the end of ‘98 by reneging on the Ekeus agreement called “Modalities for Sensitive Site Inspections.” This piece of history is worth mentioning because when it came round to smearing Hans Blix in the build-up to this sought-after war, Ekeus, whose agreement had been seen as too soft on the Iraqis, was the name mentioned as being far preferable to Blix. Thus works the roundabout of assertion and expediency.

In nuclear weapons, Ritter says the UN inspectors of the 90s eliminated the programme and that moves to re-start it would be detectable. Gas centrifuge set-ups are detectable because of the heat of gamma radiation. On the chemical and biological weapons — the very sound of which fits so well with both cinematic nightmare and Saddam Hussein’s role as Frankenstein — Ritter goes through them one by one. One thing many chemical and biological toxins have in common is what is now called ‘a limited shelf-life’, in the case of Sarin and Tabun nerve agents, one of five years. Its manufacturing base in the Muthana state facility was bombed in the Gulf War and then finished off by the weapons inspectors who destroyed thousands of tons of chemical agents. He points out that it is simply no good to say that more had been hidden because stocks from then would no longer be effective, and that they could not be produced

elsewhere. The Iraqis lied about it but the inspectors found the production facility and destroyed it. There would be no such factory now he argues because if they re-started such production it would be detected by the highly sophisticated detection equipment available. The no-fly zone has allowed continuous surveillance of Iraq, but on the roundabout of expediency, ex-General Powell was able to say early in 2003 that the US had picked up on calls and signals indicating the Iraqis knew in advance of every weapons inspector moves, they — the expendable inspectors — were detecting nothing.

On biological weapons both anthrax and botulinum degenerate. They were made in liquid form but were destroyed by the inspectors on 1995 but that after that, Dick Spertzel, another American in the UN team, would not do sampling in Iraq because he didn't give them the benefit of a negative reading, so that it can always be said this is a black hole, a grey area, despite the sophistication of surveillance. Most important of all, he argues that Iraq does not have the capability to do truly long-range ballistic missiles.

Ritter, as we know has been smeared repeatedly, with Richard Butler to the fore. An analysis by an Israeli military historian, Martin van Creveld (who is later to advise US troops on the use of militarized bulldozers by occupying forces, no soft hearted liberal he) entitled "The Threat Presented by Saddam is Much Exaggerated" which appeared in the *Washington Post* 15/3/99 after the Operation Desert Storm bombing of Iraq, has not been attacked or smeared, it has simply been ignored, an increasingly-used elitist tactic.

He begins by saying "the threat that Saddam Hussein presents today has been vastly exaggerated both in the United States and here in Israel. With his military force still weakened by the 1991 Gulf War and his economy crippled by seven years of sanctions, the Iraqi president is incapable of mounting a serious assault on anyone by air, land or sea." He describes Iraq's lack of an arms industry, the 1950s crudeness of its Scud missiles; of the inability to develop the sophisticated electronics needed to guide weapons to their targets. On WMD, he talks of the success of the UN inspectors and that even if he has any such weapons it is hard to believe he possesses the command-and-control infrastructure to use them to any effect. And even if any were to exist, and able to reach targets, they would be 'no match for even the least powerful of America's 10,000 nuclear weapons.' He argues shrewdly that it is Saddam's very weakness in the matter of possessing useful weapons that has made him reluctant to allow inspection to be simple and unopposed. More recently (27/8/02) the new Israeli chief of staff Yaalon said, while calling for a decisive victory to destroy the 'cancer-like threats posed by the Palestinians, "The Iraqi threat does not keep me awake at night."

FULL SPECTRUM DOMINANCE

In a typically sharp piece of knockabout, Slavoj Zizek argues that there are almost too many reasons for this sought-after war. They should, however, be dragged out of their dark corners to see what we are dealing with. The September 11th attacks in which some extreme Islamists showed just how nasty they could be, would appear to have removed any political and legal restraints to the supremacist ideas, intentions and actions of the present Bush administration which, as has been documented, pre-existed September 11th, and had Iraq lined up as a prime target years ago. Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle were targeting it in 1996 when acting as consultants to Binyamin Netanyahu's Israeli election campaign. It was articulated more openly by the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) set up as a Republican assault on the Clinton Presidency and which included the usual chickenhawks, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Perle and Wolfowitz as well as Jeb Bush and Zalmay Khlizad who is now the White House's "special envoy and ambassador at large for free Iraqis". In 1998, these people with their notion of 'full spectrum dominance', wrote an open letter to President Clinton urging "the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime from power. Otherwise the safety of American troops in the region, of our

friends and allies like Israel and the moderate Arab states and a significant portion of the world's supply of oil will be put at hazard." Others signing the letter include ex-CIA director James Woolsey, Elliot Abrams, Caspar Weinberger and other participants in the Iran-Contra weapons illegalities; and ex-Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci, now chairman of the Carlyle Group.ⁱⁱ

It may be that President Bush himself did not fully support this position until after September 11th and some commentators have referred to his more diplomatic approach in the affair of the downed spy-plane in China, though it is hard to see how else he could have behaved. Either way he had appointed many of the other chickenhawks of the Project for the New American Century from the beginning as mostly 'solid guys' from his father's administration who fitted into the coalition of whiteman Christianity, big money and aggressive resentment, that was most securely based in Texas. Whether Cheney, in his role leading the Administration team pre-the Presidency, was the determining factor here, makes little odds.

As we know, these are very much the same people as last time around. What has made them so much more aggressively confident? For one thing, they are expert re-writers of history and apportioners of blame. Their own failure to finish off Saddam in 1991 is blamed on unnamed others like the UN, or 'the Soviets and implicitly on James Bakerⁱⁱⁱ and the wily wimps of the State Department who, as they would have it, paid far too much respect to the UN and Mr Gorbachev even if the war itself helped bring the latter down.^{iv} Looking at this narrative of the chickenhawk supremacists, it seems almost impertinent to point out that it was one of their very own, the then-and-now Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz who said of their betrayal of the Iraqi uprising, "If we could identify a democratic faction in Iraq I think we'd look at it differently." This time, whatever else happens there will be no Russians or United Nations to humour or blame. The license for Russia to do whatever it likes in Chechenya has been their pay-off for doing little to oppose the sought-after war, and the acceptance of a build up of US military bases in some of its former southern republics.

Most of all the chickenhawks are confident as beneficiaries of still greater military power. As they say in crime dramas, it is the opportunity as much as the motive that matters. In the introduction to *Shock and Awe-Achieving Rapid Dominance* which encapsulates present US military strategy, it says: "In designing its defence posture, the US has adopted the doctrine of employing a decisive or overwhelming force...It will be years, if not decades before potential adversaries will be able to deploy systems with a full panoply of capabilities that are equivalent to or better than the aggregate strength of the ships, aircraft, armoured vehicles and weapons systems in our inventories." The PNAC called for full spectrum dominance and the establishment of US hegemony for the next 100 years, a goal that on the face of it is more realistic than the thousand year Reich, though the 'realist' military academic Andrew Bacevich has outdone Hitler in an article in *The National Interest*: "In all of American public life, there is hardly a single prominent figure who finds fault with the notion of the United States remaining the world's sole military superpower until the end of time." The end of time! Save us from prominent figures! To do so is the most basic function of democracy.

From this point of view, Saddam is once again the perfect target both as fascistic tyrant, and because while US weapon technology has advanced yet further, Iraq's is no better than in 1991, and can therefore only be worse. Then his was a 'First World War army facing a Third World War force', now the rhetoric would surely talk of the Fourth. Small wonder that Richard Perle, Chairman of the Pentagon Advisory Board, while talking of Saddam as a dangerous menace should say "the Iraq force today is one third of what it was in 1991, and it is the same third 11 years closer to obsolescence."^v

This US weaponry is also reaching new levels of abstraction as shown by the assassination

of an individual in the Yemen by means of a pilot-less plane. As Alan Little put it^{vi} such planes can carry out bombings in the Gulf region “piloted by a man sitting in the Pentagon working shifts and going home to his wife and kids at the end of the day.” It continues the possibilities that began with the Tomahawk precision-guided cruise missile which despite its expense, \$600,000 a go (much to the benefit of the Raytheon Corporation), has, as William Arkin, a former army intelligence analyst puts it, “Made the use of force politically palatable” because of its strike range, which “avoids the political implications of losing a pilot.” Such a capability to administer pain without feeling it oneself or seeing its consequences has moved to a new level, one which solves the political problem of aggressor casualties and greatly increases the temptation to be aggressive. Tailor-made for chickenhawks who have never seen or experienced the pain and mess of war, it is a temptation to which there is little resistance in the Bush administration or among the callow apparatchiks of New Labour. In World War II the bomber crewman of Randall Jarrell’s poem “Losses” talked of “The people we had killed and never seen.” Now it is the perpetrators and not just the spectators (the spectators so distasteful to fastidious pro-war elitists) who can see war as a game on a screen.

Whether the British military feel the same is another matter. In the same article Alan Little talks of how Donald Rumsfeld came to the Pentagon promising ‘transformation’ including integration of all the US armed services, but that the ‘allies’ would not be integrated. On this matter he quotes a former aide to Rumsfeld:

“There will come a time soon when the allies presence on the battlefield will not just be useless, but positively dangerous. They’ll be in the way. There is of course one exception to this, Israel.”

Recent evidence for this point of view came when Defence Secretary Rumsfeld said that if New Labour had too many difficulties with democratic opposition when it came to war, the US could do it alone, without the British. More significant is the explicit recognition of the ever closer relationship between Zionist Israel and this Administration, one which makes the targeting of Iraq as Number One enemy even less unexpected, a target that long pre-dates September 11th or even the Bush coup d’etat.

This does not have to do with who is, or is not, Jewish in the Administration, just as it is absurd to say it was the Zionists on their own who brought about this sought-after war, rather it is about a shared, white-man militarist ethos and the ties that have grown up in the mutual development of military and repressive technology. The Israelis will not be in the way of hi-tech war because they designed a lot of its tools. This ever-closer relationship has been given ideological support by ex-Trotskyists who found favour with Reagan and are enthusiasts for their notion of democracy out of the barrel of a gun^{vii}. They are called neo-conservatives. Their main media voice is Bill Kristol who chaired the PNAC, and who, in characteristic American dynastic style, is the son of veteran neo-con ideologue and ex-Trotskyist Irving Kristol. By themselves they are cheerleaders, but are represented in the administration by Wolfowitz and others who themselves have found soulmates in an especially nasty Texan variety of Republican politics. However it is these neo-cons who are attracting the blame for US policy from the anti-war broadsheet newspapers, but though they and their policies are violently nasty, they by themselves do not determine government policy. Perle and Wolfowitz especially have been singled out by the anti-war media such as it is. Not that Perle for example has been a wallflower in the matter of selling the war, so arrogant in tone that EU Foreign Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten spent much of his media time emphasizing that Perle was not an Administration official. But these two are not alone as can be seen from the membership of the PNAC. Their views and policies are also shared by ideologists of militarist archaism like Samuel Huntington, Philip Bobbit and Robert Kaplan who have great influence among the chickenhawks, the former two coming from the geo-political wing of government. Other

government men like James Woolsey, pro-Zionists, mainstream politicians of the southern USA, Christian fundamentalists, elements in the military itself, as well corporate oil 'n armaments business have all joined in the push for this invasion of Iraq. They all share two classically Stalinist views of the world: that the ends justify the means; and that 'you are either with us or against us', both of which views are also shared by Mr Blair and his anti-democratic christian bolshevism.

The Pentagon and its military-industrial complex was not exactly sleeping during the Clinton Presidency. That President's own embarrassment at not having served in the armed forces (one not shared by the chickenhawks) did not prevent massive if controlled budgets which stabilized military spending for a full two terms at what amounted to Cold War levels. It was keen, as a report from Defence Secretary Cohen put it, "not to miss the opportunity provided by the present lack of a global peer to experiment with information technologies" At the same time it developed a strategy with the aim of being able to fight war on two fronts with Iraq and North Korea as the models though it has been suggested they were codes for Russia and China. This administration has inherited all this but its obsessive hatred of sexually busy Clinton as man and symbol of the hated 1960s counter-culture, and because of his overwhelming support from black Americans, also made Iraq not just code but prime target, a direct repudiation of his policy of containment, though this containment policy involved child-death causing sanctions; the non-stop patrolling of no-fly zones; and the bombardment of 1998, all of which have established more or less total US air dominance in advance of the sought-after war. More significantly at a wider instinctive level the chickenhawks have understood that the huge global gains made for American finance capital during the Clinton Presidency — the 'liberalisation' of trade, privatisation, intellectual property rights revenues, and growing inequalities in the world-would need more active displays of military might.

The unashamed articulation of this point of view has come from the ideologues of militarist archaism like Kaplan who also represent what is called the 'realist' school in US foreign policy thinking. As if to distinguish themselves from the Irving Kristol brand of neo-conservatism, their journal is called *The National Interest* as opposed to his long-running *The Public Interest*. And there is a difference: Kristol sees established religion as the key to social discipline; whereas the 'realists' have re-invented 'paganism' as an amoral, might-is-right view of the world. They understand that underneath the flim-flam, globalization as it is, is set to increase global inequality. What they deduce from this is that the world will be peopled with impoverished angry mobs with possible access to cheap and nasty WMD. These 'mobs', they say, must be dealt with ruthlessly and that 'democracy' which is the rhetoric of militant neo-cons is a dangerous luxury.

Less dramatically but symbolic of the change from the Clinton era is that on December 23rd 1997 at the key moment in the South East Asia financial crisis — from which US finance capital was to gain so much — a moment when the *Washington Post* talked of the possibility of "a global financial meltdown on a scale that has never been seen", an emergency meeting of American crony capitalists was held to resolve the matter and was held in the Situations Room of the White House. It was in this room that the tactics and strategy of militarized geo-politics had been determined for years. The State and Defense Departments were represented at this meeting on what had once been their exclusive turf, but in a secondary role. Now, as the US Treasury and the corporate bankers have the less glamorous job of managing the dramatic fall in asset values and pleading the fifth on the type of scandals that enriched President and Vice President, the Pentagon in particular has reclaimed its turf. The Confederate values of a military aristocracy re-asserted against the 'merchant' values of the Clinton era in order to consolidate the gains made for US capital in that era.

It is then worth trying to get a grip on the various strands and inter-connections of the neo-

conservatives lest they remain as an alien species who have somehow hi-jacked America, which is the line taken by liberal newspapers in Europe who are skeptical about the war but afraid to see its implications. Ideologists are only relevant if they articulate the interests of the strongest in the current balance of forces within the power elite. These particular ideologists and their political representatives are now in a strong position following the Bush coup, September 11th and the present state of the American political economy, one which is well described in a cogent essay by Melinda Cooper, 'The Catastrophic Enemy':

"The war on terror can be interpreted as a pre-emptive response to the fragility of the New Economy, an attempt to divert looming crisis by turning the beleaguered information sector to defence purposes and tightening the strong-hold on oil reserves in order to insure the future of the 'asset-light' multinational."

What follows will attempt to keep an eye on the ideologists and such realities.

OIL NECESSITIES

This sought-after war is certainly not about "weapons of mass destruction", neither is it 'just' or 'only' about oil, but there is plenty of it in Iraq which makes it loom large in the assemblage of motivation and purpose for this war. As Larry Goldstein, President of the Petroleum Research Foundation put it: "If we go to war, it's not about oil. But the day war ends it has everything to do with oil." Mr Blair's assertion that it was our old friend 'conspiracy theory' to talk of the sought-after war being to do with oil is typical of his pre-emptive and aggressive style, when its importance is hardly a secret. The PNAC letter to Clinton was quite explicit, arguing that if Saddam Hussein were to remain in power, "a significant portion of the world's supply of oil will be put at hazard." In its document of 2000 called *Rebuilding America's Defences*, it discussed the global positioning of US forces and called for a larger and permanent presence in the Persian Gulf, the need for which would "endure even should Saddam Hussein pass from the scene," and this because of "longstanding American interests in the region." As Greg Rech asks, what other interests are there than oil? Israel? It is in part an adjunct of those US forces in the region. Additional evidence comes from war cheerleader Richard Perle. In a BBC World Service interview (21/11/01) he said, "The US can't be responsible for the future of Afghanistan." He has not said this about Iraq.

At the level of solely American interests and its own political system, there are many oilmen in the Bush administration with favours to call and it is brazen enough to at least think of rewards from a privatised Iraqi oil industry. But one of the successes of the anti-war movement has been to force the US-UK axis to at least talk of, and in the British case commit itself to, oil revenues to be a fund for Iraqis and the re-development of Iraq. The greatest immediate profits to be made will be by construction and infrastructural firms, including Dick Cheney's Halliburton, which are likely to be exclusively American. After the war the anti-war movement must continue to question the terms of such contracts given that the customer will not get the best deal if those who can tender have been restricted, and in this case restricted to corporations of the conquering nation. It will also question how much of those revenues will be used to pay for the war itself, something now floated by the Bush Administration as they see that unlike the Gulf War they will not succeed in getting Saudi Arabia, Japan and Germany to pay for it. In Britain most of all, the sordid nature of all this will be highlighted by the anti-war movement in the face of continued moralizing rationalisations from Mr Blair.

Looked at strategically, the invasion of Iraq is about the continued security of oil supply from the Middle East at the price which suits the interests of the West at any given time, that is a West led by the USA, on its terms, whether they are liked or not. This is especially important now. For one thing, as Rupert Murdoch has said openly, cheap and/or cheaper oil would be very welcome in the present recession, one that is potentially dangerous to the power

elite, given its boasts about the New Economy making recessions a thing of the past, and the losses of 'small investors'. On the supply and demand side, US oil consumption is projected to increase by one third over the next 20 years in which time US oil production will fall by 12%; when despite conservation technologies and alternative energy forms, oil imports even in the USA itself will increase from one third of consumption in 1985, to two thirds in 2020; and when there is evidence that the Caspian Sea oil bonanza has involved a great deal of geological wishful thinking. The director of Exxon Mobil, Harry Longwell, in an article in *World Energy* last year admitted that the discovery of oil peaked in the 1960s, while demand is growing by 2% a year. Commenting on the Cheney report of May 2002, into energy policy which assumed an ever-growing consumption of oil, Michael Renner commented:

"There is no escaping the fact that the Middle East and specifically the Persian Gulf region remains the world's prime oil province, for the US and other importers. Indeed the Cheney report confirms that by any estimation, Middle East oil producers will remain central to world oil security. The Middle East currently accounts for about 30% of global oil production and more than 40% of oil exports. With about 65% of the planet's known reserves, it is the only region able to satisfy the substantial rise in world oil demand predicted by the Bush administration."^{viii}

The Cheney report leant in turn on a paper from the James A. Baker Institute of Public Policy at Rice University (yes, the James Baker which perhaps explains a little the disappearance of his original scepticism about an invasion of Iraq) with additional advice from former Enron chief Kenneth Lay, which concluded that "the United States remains a prisoner of its energy dilemma," the dilemma of a widening gap between domestic production and consumption. In dealing with this it specifically labelled Iraq as a "destabilising influence to...the flow of oil from the Middle East to international markets." According to the *Sunday Herald* of Scotland, a Bush Cabinet meeting in April 2001 (before September 11th) agreed that this destabilising influence was "unacceptable."

The stockbroker Mark Tinker was cold-eye clear on this strategic policy in his piece for the *Independent on Sunday* Business News 2/3/03 "With the US as a de facto member of OPEC, any risk to stability from a fall of the house of Saud (and lets not pretend that is not at least a possibility) is neutered. Meanwhile, the US, with hundreds of thousands of troops 'peacekeeping' in the region, can ensure that any new regime in Saudi Arabia acts in Western interests." This is not even to mention the more ideological members and/or cheerleaders of the Bush administration who do not trust or even like Saudi Arabia, people like Daniel Pipes whose position can only have been strengthened by September 11th and the nationality of most of its perpetrators. Whatever way, direct control of Iraq would mean that Saudi was no longer the sole dominant producer, given that Iraq is second only to that kingdom in its oil reserves.

The sought-after war is a 21st century return to colonialism and Tinker is surely right to talk of "Western interests". It is not just the USA which does not like OPEC as a producer's group which has at least theoretical autonomy; not just the USA that both wants and fears the development of China and India or rather would like to control the nature of that development, and which, with oil have the means to do so given their growing dependence on oil imports, China's for example, having risen 15% last year. Until now the West in general has supported the US's global policeman role. The USA-Europe split over this sought-after war may or may not change that. One can only assume it might change so long as the Bush chickenhawks are in power and there is the perception that are real differences of interest on the matter of oil. It is for example quite possible that the chickenhawks will be brazen enough to muscle US oil companies in on pre-existing Iraqi contracts with French and Russian oil firms and begin to use their power to Americanize OPEC. As early as September 2002 former CIA director James Woolsey was saying:

“It’s pretty straightforward...France and Russia have oil companies and interests in Iraq. They should be told that if they are of assistance in moving Iraq towards decent government, we’ll do the best we can to ensure that the new government and American companies work closely with them...If they throw in their lot with Saddam it will be difficult to the point of impossible to persuade the new Iraqi government to work with them.”^{ix}

R. JAMES WOOLSEY

Woolsey’s is the classic voice of the stern white man, the English speaking white man as can be heard in “They should be told that”. It is also both coy and cocky, talking of an Iraqi government but one which is clearly controlled by the Americans. He himself is also an archetypical member of the power elite as described by Wright Mills, and one of the most enthusiastic and long-running promoters of the sought-after war. At the same time, his self-mythology, like that of many Ayn Rand-reading American right wingers, is that of a hero battling a lonely furrow against ‘the establishment’, just like the factory line of ‘rebel cop’ clones coming out of Hollywood. In Woolsey’s case an establishment very much identified with the Clinton Administration for whom he was for a time head of the CIA. He appears to have felt immense pique at not having been more important during this period, and at the ‘politics’ of the CIA. After resigning, his next big step in the self-mythology was to take on the establishment of which he was a member, this time in the form of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the FBI and the CIA itself. This was in 1998 when he defended six Iraqis who had been members of a CIA-backed group in the country but were then in US jails awaiting deportation.

In fact the case against them does appear to have been expediency based on prejudice and supposition, rather like Woolsey’s own case for attacking Iraq, and initially he, an ex-director of the CIA, was not allowed to see the evidence. This slight was the moment when he saw the light and “suddenly growled ‘God, this is such a fascist country’.” (Andrew Cockburn in the *New York Times* magazine, July 23 2000). In order to combat this fascism and get to see the evidence papers he had recourse to the most fascistic Senators in the USA, Jesse Helms, Orrin Hatch and the now notorious Trent Lott whose racism was reluctantly picked up by the US media after an overt outburst. Cockburn’s hagiographic feature on Woolsey and the case itself has recourse to the rebel hero template. “For some in Washington, Woolsey is now ‘radioactive’, to quote a former Clinton administration official” and he goes on to quote Under Secretary of Defence Walter Slocombe to the effect that though his attacks on Clinton might earn him a place with a Bush government, “no administration likes people who are too independent-minded. There’s the fear that ‘he might do it again’.”

It didn’t take long for this independent-minded man to be on board the new Bush team as chief American aggressor in defence of Echelon, the universal spying system, when an investigation by the European Parliament showed it to be engaged in economic and financial spying on its supposed allies in Europe. His pre-emptive attack on Russia and France cited above, which presumed in the autumn of 2002 that a US invasion of Iraq was a certainty to be followed by US control, has form. Despite his subsequent attacks on the Clinton era, it was he who prioritized economic intelligence during his period as CIA chief in that era when the Treasury Secretary had a place on the National Security Council and an Advocacy Centre was established which meshed Echelon intelligence with the US Department of Commerce.

The European Parliament investigation estimated billions of dollars worth of orders to have been lost due to Echelon intelligence being passed in an ad hoc manner to American corporations. Woolsey’s response is worth quoting in full (*Wall St Journal* 17th March 2000). “Yes, my continental friends, we have spied on you. And it’s true we use computers to sort through data using keywords. The European Parliament’s recent report on Echelon has sparked angry accusations from continental Europe that US intelligence is stealing advanced technology from

European competitors so that we can-get this-give it to American companies and help them compete. My European friends, get real...Most European technology just isn't worth stealing. Why then, have we spied on you; because you bribe...Stop blaming us and reform your own statist economic policies. Then your companies can become more efficient and innovative, and then they won't need to resort to bribery to compete. And then we won't need to spy on you."

Brazen? Here the arrogance is breathtaking, and as usual it is that murderous mix of arrogance and the moral high ground, the innocent American of Cold War Hollywood having to get tough in the face of the perfidy of 'the other.' The other here being 'continental Europe.' It will be remembered that Echelon is the preserve of the truly sound stern white man, that is English-speaking. At the time of the Echelon revelations, Britain was confronted by the European Union on its involvement. A comment at the time that "It will alarm British ministers concerned about the image of an either-or choice between the US and Europe," (Ian Black: *The Guardian* 31.3/00) now looks laughable. Britain in fact chose the American method of high-handedness. In the event for all Echelon's capability of accessing an enormous range of communications globally, it proved to be useless in the case of September 11th when the excuse of 'information overload' was wheeled out again.

This 'independent-minded' man is a \$440 an hour corporate lawyer whose practice has become increasingly international in line with the practice of the corporate world. Yes indeed. His law firm of Shea & Gardner is also registered as a 'foreign agent' for the Iraqi National Congress. It is also the law firm of Lockheed Martin and a former partner, Stephen J. Hadley was appointed Deputy Director of the National Security Council by Bush, the power elite flaunting itself. Woolsey's government role began as an advisor on Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) in 1969. He has been involved at a high level of weapons geo-politics continually under both Democrat and Republican Administrations, as Ambassador to some subsequent Arms talks and as Under-Secretary of the Navy. At the same time the corporate world he has acted for and the corporations for whom he was or is a director, has been mostly that of armaments and weaponry like Dyn Corp, Fairchild Industries and British Aerospace. This interconnected role in the government and corporate worlds is one more case of how the power elite, as described by Wright Mills, works. But more than that, his attack on 'statist economic policies' as European is brazen in its hypocrisy. The arms companies of whom he has been director are the greatest beneficiaries of 'statist economic policies' that is the publicly paid-for Defence budget, and the technology of which he boasts has largely come as a spin-off of state provided money, especially in the IT field.

This 'independent-minded' man is a member of the Defense Policy Board which until recently was chaired by Richard Perle (he is still a member), which contains the rehabilitated war criminal Henry Kissinger, and which has the ear of the Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz Pentagon. He is connected to various other think tanks and is on the board of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. He was a signatory to the letter to Clinton that formed the basis of the Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998 which he promoted in Congress along with all the usual suspects, and which has been described as bombastic anti-Saddam propaganda full of historical falsehoods. It was nevertheless signed by Clinton.

In a typically sycophantic PBS interview with Woolsey in October 2001 (www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/gunning/interviews/woolsey.html), we get a taste of this bombast, and of how the anti-Iraqi case from 1998 onwards has been based on assertion, rather than evidence and argument. He begins with the World Trade Centre bombing of 1993 which occurred when he was head of the CIA. From this point onwards he is determined to make a link between terrorist attacks and Iraq. Thus the man finally arrested, Ramzi Yousef is 'a sophisticated man' of whom Woolsey says, "I think he's someone's agent, and my best guess would be Iraq. But I can't prove that." He blames Clinton for leaving such things to law-

enforcement agencies and goes on to ridicule his response to the attempted assassination of Bush Senior, but at the same time keeps up the assertion-level, aided and abetted by the interviewer. On the Iraq-terrorism link he continually makes pre-emptive strikes against the need for facts and evidence. Thus we get: "I don't know how many pieces of evidence one needs in the case of someone like Saddam Hussein...It depends what you mean by conclusive evidence. Conclusive evidence is a phrase that most people think of in a law enforcement context, beyond a reasonable doubt. That's not the kind of evidence you get in intelligence." These pre-emptive strikes enable him to re-cycle all the discredited facts that have been used to make the subliminal al Qaida-Saddam link; like the non-meeting of Mohammad Atta in Prague and a rumour (spoon-fed by the interviewer) of Iraq's ambassador to Turkey meeting bin Laden in Afghanistan. Of that he says, "that, to me, would be yet another substantial piece of information suggesting that Saddam and not only Al Qaeda has been behind some of these terrorist incidents against us and indeed, that Saddam and Al Qaeda could quite well be working together."

It is in this same interview that he famously attacks Clinton for his "feckless" attitude to Iraq, and says the attempted assassination of Bush Senior was enough grounds for invasion, and remains so. Naturally he skirts over the fact that Bush Junior's cabinet of chickenhawks were the same ones who left Saddam in power and picks up on another spoon-fed question to the effect that no one wanted to offend the Saudis. He says yes, there are such people "because the Saudis sit on top of the world's largest supply of petroleum...I think that it is ridiculous for the United States not to have taken action long before this to move away from dependence on oil, and particularly Middle Eastern oil." This is wishful thinking, for the US has made little effort to move away from its dependence, and the wishful thinking of powerful men is especially dangerous. Despite his out-and-out support for the present Bush, he obviously hasn't looked at its energy strategy. What he does do is imply that US support for the Saudis is conditional, a view which has accompanied the build-up to the sought-after war, egged on by other far right voices of crony geo-politics like Daniel Pipes in *The National Interest* No 70 where he complains of American obsequiousness to Saudi cultural practices and says, "For decades, US government agencies have engaged in a consistent pattern of deference to Saudi wishes, making so many unwonted and unnecessary concessions that one gets the impression that a switch has taken place, with both sides forgetting which of them is the great power and which the minor one."

OIL AND THE DOLLAR

Woolsey's wishful thinking, that somehow the US was not dependent on Arab oil, has not, as we've seen, stopped him from asserting American rights to managing Iraq's oil. In this he has a useful client, Ahmed Chalabi leader of the exiled Iraqi National Congress, who was quoted as saying that he favoured the creation of a US-led consortium to develop Iraq's oil fields, which have deteriorated under more than a decade of sanctions. "Americans companies will have a big shot at Iraqi oil," he said. Renner also noted that "On 16th January 2003 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that officials from the White House, State Dept and Department of Defense have been meeting informally with executives from Halliburton, Schlumberger, Exxon/Mobil, ChevronTexaco and ConocoPhillips to plan the post-war expansion of oil production from Iraq (whose oil fields were largely held by US companies prior to their nationalization). The *Journal* story has since been denied by Administration officials; but as the *Guardian* noted on 27/1/03, 'It stretches incredulity somewhat to imagine the subject has never been broached.'" To which might be added that the *Wall St Journal*, is a friend to the chickenhawks and one of the most right-wing broadsheet newspapers in the world.

Here then is one possible continuation of conflict between the USA and other Western powers (excluding the UK which is surely now in a Clare Short-style No-Power situation). The

chickenhawk administration is brazen enough to go for it but will face real opposition from the global anti-war movement which includes, importantly, an under-estimated American contingent. The other source of potential conflict is perhaps more far-reaching and has been ascribed by William Clark and others as also being the chief cause of the present invasion, that is the currency denomination of oil prices.^x In November 2000 the Iraqi government made a decision to change the pricing of its oil (that which it was allowed to sell under the UN sanctions oil-for-food deal) from dollars to the newly formed Euro. Later it also converted its \$10bn reserve fund at the UN to Euros. The decision may have been political but it has also been financially advantageous. The Euro has gained almost 25% against the dollar since late 2001. In a report from *IranExpert* of August 23 2002, and quoted by Clark, Iran was said to be considering a similar switch for economic reasons. Clark and others argue that this is a trend the US simply has to stop because of the massive damage it would do to the dollar as a reserve currency.

It is always going to be difficult to give due relative weight to the different motivational factors in plans such as that of the US-UK axis to invade Iraq, one which has existed for some time, especially when they are made so secretly. Difficult too to ascribe it to one single motive. The chickenhawks had picked out Iraq before the shift from dollars to euros in Iraq's oil pricing policy. However it is right that we should consider the possible implications of this becoming a trend as Clark does. For one thing the role of the dollar as both cause and manifestation of US global power has been mostly — and wrongly-ignored, there is a two-way relationship between the power of the dollar and US military strength.^{xi} The dollar has been, and still is, a self-perpetuating *fait accompli* as the post-war international reserve currency “without any backing other than the credibility and coercive political force of the country” as Fidel Castro put it.^{xii} We must of course add to this the sheer scale of its economy but that since the events of the early 1970s — the breaking of the dollar-gold tie and the success of Kissinger in turning much of OPEC's success into petro dollars, which in turn gave a platform for the massively increased power of American finance capital, this relationship to the USA's real economy is greatly lessened. This power of the dollar has, as Clark shows, enabled the USA to run huge Budget and Balance of Payments deficits when it wishes, in fact when the Republican Party is in power, favouring tax cuts for the rich and massively disproportionate military spending. On the matter of the overseas deficit the grotesque nature of global capitalism is revealed by the USA as “consumer of last resort” having developed from hip remark to serious phrase in recent years, and meaning, as it does, that it is good for the world that the USA consumes things on a large scale which it does not pay for. The whole situation (which also encapsulates one side of the dollar — US military power interdependence) has been brutally described by Professor Thomas Barnett of the US Naval War College thus: “We trade little pieces of paper (our currency, in the form of trade deficit) for Asia's amazing array of products and services. We are smart enough to know this is a patently unfair deal unless we offer something of great value along with those little pieces of paper. That product is a strong US Pacific Fleet, which squares the transaction nicely.” To which it should be added that spending on said Fleet, and thus its efficacy, is also enhanced by those pieces of paper, and that it implies the US having an interest in acceptable levels of conflict in Asia

Clark is right to point to the impact a worldwide shift in oil pricing to Euros would make; how the self-perpetuating nature of the dollar's power would go into reverse as oil consumers no longer had to hold them, while producers invested their revenues in the new currency. It is then quite possible that concern on this matter might have given some old realpolitik substance to the ambitions of the neo-conservative chickenhawks given that, were Saddam's example to become a trend, the US's deficits might become unbridgeable, the rest of the worlds less inclined to pay for them. If the invasion and the occupation that is likely to follow produces some kind of government that prices Iraqi oil in dollars, it would indicate that there was such a concern at the heart of the invasion decision.

SOME NEO-CONSERVATIVES

A main operational method of the American right, neo-Conservatives and all, is the corporate-financed 'Institute', think-tank or other unaccountable advisory and pressure groupings with frequently grandiose titles. As a pro-Zionist lobbyist put it, "Unorganized sentiment means nothing in Washington." One such is the Defense Policy Board of which Richard Perle was until recently chairman and is still, despite his resignation, a member. Of this board he says, with a pleased-with-himself elitist voice, "It's simply a way by which the Secretary of Defense can come together with a group of people who have interesting things to say." Those with interesting things to say include Newt Gingrich, James Slessinger and the war criminal Henry Kissinger. Another such ad hoc group existing outside what exists of an official democracy is the PNAC itself, of which Perle is also a member. Busy man that he is, he is also a 'resident fellow' of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), one of the longest established of what might be called centers of crony ideology.

Another of its mainstays is Irving Kristol. He is of a different generation and specialization, but together with other 'fellows' has created the assemblage of resentment and prejudice which is called neo-conservatism and of which he was an ideological pioneer, though it is in many ways a re-hash of the ideas of the Pareto Club which in the Great Depression had sought to rescue capitalism from its economic failings by ignoring them and instead theorizing loyalty to the system with norms and values. Kristol's own smug self-definition, cited approvingly by Perle, is that neo-cons are "liberals who have been mugged by reality." They both have an absolute abhorrence of the 'counter culture' and New Left of the 1960s, something they share with Samuel Huntington of the 'realist' tendency.

Kristol, the neo-conservative pioneer, is quite open about the fact that in his youth at New York City College he was a Trotskyist. This strand of the assemblage of pro-war movers and shakers has had a particular explanatory function for commentators like *The Guardian's* Ian Buruma (14/1/03). At the AEI he sees them dismissing anti-war argument as being for 'aesthetic' reasons and hears their call for the US imposition of democracy everywhere as revealing the "now distant but still unmistakably Trotskyist antecedents of their dogmatism". Perhaps so, but what they say only matters because it is needed for the moment by the power elite, just as monetarism was pulled out of a dusty cupboard to give some ideological substance to the promotion of inequality within the West.

The move from Bolshevik-type leftism to the extreme right is hardly new. In the 1920s and 30s it was common and is well described by Erich Auerbach in his wonderful *Mimesis*. "The spread of publicity and the crowding of mankind on a shrinking globe sharpened awareness of the differences in ways of life and attitudes, and mobilized the interests and forms of existence which the new changes either furthered or threatened...it undermined even the new revolutionary forces of socialism, whose origins did not go back beyond the heyday of the capitalist system. They lost their unity and clear definition through the formation of numerous mutually hostile groups, through strange alliances which some of these groups effected with non-socialist ideologies, through the capitulation of most of them during the first World War, and finally through the propensity on the part of many of the most radical advocates for changing over into the camp of their most extreme enemies."

Kristol's trajectory is similar to other followers of the Trotskyist Max Schachtman who ended up as the Social Democrats USA, and who found a degree of power and influence in the Reagan Administration to organize anti-Sandinista and anti-ANC projects all in the name of democracy. To see their anti-Stalinist starting point as being the first step of a then irreversible move to the right is itself a Stalinist narrative. They were it is true, all too keen to brand all opposition to American interests as Stalinist, but what Schachtman and Kristol hated most — as did the Stalinists themselves — was the New left anti-war movement of the 1960s for reasons

which are mimicked in the present day by the hostile or patronizing attitude of the Cold War left to the politics represented by the World Social Forum.

In his 'Memoirs of a Trotskyist', Kristol has a bolshevik contempt for the New Left calling it, in ironically Stalinist fashion, "a psychological rather than political phenomenon," and going on to say: "It would never have occurred to denounce anyone or anything as elitist. The elite was us — 'the happy few' — who had been chosen to guide our fellow creatures towards a secular redemption." The attitude has not changed with the politics except for the 'secular'. On that score he adopted the usual Ayn Rand psychological template and became the beleaguered rebel against the secular-liberal establishment. In his *American Conservatism*, it is "militant liberalism and militant secularism," which in the post war years "came to dominate the Democratic Party, the educational establishment, the media, the law schools, the judiciary. The major schools of divinity, the bishops of the Catholic Church, and the bureaucracies of the 'mainline Protestant denominations...parents discovered that their authority over their own children had been subverted and usurped...They looked at our high schools and saw that gay and lesbian organizations were free to distribute their literature to the students but that religious organizations were not."

Irony is not a strong point with the neo-conservatives, perhaps for them it is a symptom of the decadence of 'old Europe'. Kristol's rant is eerily similar to that of the Islamic fundamentalists of the September 11th attacks. He was always he says, for capital punishment and against sexual promiscuity and gays, and one can only think that his liberalism did not take much of a mugging, and then again that 'mugging' was not chosen accidentally. His detestation of the Great Society program and Community Action for the poor is unashamed, and in it he highlights 'the black poor.' Like Samuel Huntington it is a resentful conservatism he gives.

His one difficulty is that which he articulates as between the free market ideology of conservatism and the social conservatism he espouses. He is nostalgic for a picture of a decent and respectful America much in the same way as British politicians like John Major and David Blunkett; like them too he steamrollers the contradiction with a politics of being tough on the poor. Despite his problem with a free market ideology which allows pornography for example, it is in fact implicit in his restatement of the American Dream. Thus in 'Two Cheers for Capitalism', he writes that "Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions, it only guarantees equality of opportunity." This could be the Third Way, or any other variety of the same illogical nonsense. It is also patently untrue. For one thing the dynastic element in the USA is pervasive. In a recent case Senator Murkowski of Alaska, on becoming Governor Murkowski of Alaska had the job of selecting his replacement as Senator. He chose his daughter. The Governor, as Gary Younge pointed out, is a veteran opponent of affirmative action on nominally meritocratic grounds. Irony is not a strong point with the neo-cons and affirmative action is one of their greatest bete noir. Younge goes on to cite a recent study by Professor Robert Perrucci of Purdue University showing a decrease in social mobility between 1970 and the 1990s, and that the increase in income inequality in the USA itself is phenomenal.

RICHARD PERLE

It is tempting to see neo-conservatism itself as a psychological rather than a political phenomenon. Perle too has characterized himself as the isolated hero battling the establishment in his piece of genre fiction. He too has no sense of irony. Interviewed in obsequious style by fellow AEI 'fellow' Ben Wattenburg for the PBS think tank series he talks of the word Chickenhawk as applied to himself as being 'an intimidating McCarthyite tactic.' This is the same Perle who responded to the report of his dubious meeting in Marseilles, the one that prompted him to resign as chairman of the Defense Policy Board while proclaiming his

innocence, by calling Seymour Hersh who broke the story as a terrorist, “the closest thing American journalism has to a terrorist.” At another point in the same interview he says: “Democracies don’t initiate wars of aggression. People who live in democratic societies don’t like to pay for massive military machines. Democratic societies don’t empower their executives to make unilateral decisions to plunge countries into war.” He says it of the USA in contrast to the USSR, but in the present it is a self-righteous self-description whereby the sought-after pre-emptive invasion of Iraq is not aggressive, in that it will prevent an abstract future aggression by the invaded, one which the invaders themselves assert is real. So it’s OK then. When it comes to the military machines, however, if Perle has any sense of reality, it would mean the USA is not a democracy in any real sense. Just to say it again, US military spending is greater than the next six largest military budgets put together, Russia and China included. ‘Executives plunging countries into war’, here too take Perle at his word and the USA has ceased to be a democratic society. Last year the US Congress, with leaders of both parties surrendered their warmaking powers to George W. Bush which Thomas Zummer has argued was itself unconstitutional.

As it happens ‘reality’, that most ideologically-loaded word, is one of Perle’s favourites. Rigor is another, just as it is for that patrician cold-war leftist Perry Anderson. Perle is all for rigor and he has it whereas anyone who was not a committed cold war warrior does not. He himself was so committed and worked for many years for the talismanic cold warrior of the Democratic Party, Henry ‘Scoop’ Jackson. This was a well-trodden path and was the first Washington berth for the Schachtman ex-Trotskyists before finding places in the sun with the Reagan administration. When it comes to Jackson, Perle is a hero-worshipper. He emphasizes Jackson’s working class background from that time of decency before the 1960s happened, his tough yet idealistic democratic principles and what was gained from them in harrying Kissinger and others in their detente policy with the USSR. But in defending Jackson’s, and implicitly his own attitude to anti-Soviet dictatorships he is forced to abandon rigour in favour of his view of what is realism. In a series of interviews with a wide variety of US officials involved with Cold War he says on this matter of dealing with “dictatorships that were anti-Soviet but nevertheless undesirable and there unlike President Carter, Scoop was capable of recognizing the sometimes tactical necessity to deal even with regimes we didn’t like very much. But he was never comfortable embracing these regimes...”

So that’s OK then. Jimmy Carter is patronized while Jackson and Perle are ‘capable’ of recognizing reality while clinging on to their virtue because they were ‘never comfortable.’ Never comfortable with what? On this, on these ‘undesirable... regimes that we didn’t like very much’, Perle is uncharacteristically coy despite the undisturbed tone of superiority. Why didn’t they like them very much? Because they tortured large numbers of their own citizens? Killed large numbers without trial? For having their cake and eating it, these cold war neo-conservatives take the biscuit too.

However, it happily turns out that in Perle’s own case Saddam Hussein was not one of the dictatorships to be uncomfortably embraced. It goes without saying that Perle was another who says that the USA should have dealt decisively with him in 1991, but there is no evidence that he has asked his ally-in-chief Paul Wolfowitz why it was Wolfowitz who provided the rationalization for not doing so: “If we had could identify a democratic faction in Iraq I think we’d have seen things differently.” Instead Perle goes even further and asserts that he for one was even against supporting Saddam against Iran which was the Reagan Administration’s policy. But once again he produces no evidence of what he did or said to this effect at the time.

To be a cold warrior was common to all neo-conservatives. Perle was a full-timer. In the short term its ending — managed by Gorbachev with massive support from the European Peace Movement in a not reckless manner — must have left them in shock, without a *raison d’être*.

However the attractions of hegemonic geo-politics must have soon been attractive, the war-gaming more open-ended, and then despite the success of the Gulf War, they were shocked again by the 1992 victory of 60s man Bill Clinton. Understanding that, as the man said, “unorganized sentiment means nothing in Washington”, they built up a network of ad hoc lobbying groups, put new life into existent think tank institutions and found that despite their own victimized rhetoric, that they had a sympathetic media.

NETWORKS OF ASSERTION AND BLUSTER

“There don’t appear to be any clear reasons for war. All we have are assertions, but little in the way of solid fact.” Keith Travis, Devon farmer 15/2/03

The mass critical intelligence shown by the anti-war movement is disliked by power elites everywhere. It is threatening to its mode of expression which is, more than ever, one of opinion instead of fact, assertion instead of proof, association in place of argument, all given weight by sheer repetition. It is a mode of expression we know from Woolsey and has been on display a great deal in the last few months, given plenty of space in the corporate media. All these traits are visible in the presentations aimed at showing Iraq has “weapons of mass destruction”: from the British government; the ideologues around the present day Pentagon; and the interconnected battery of right-wing institutions which have great influence on and in the Bush administration, and which command a disproportionate amount of media space and media time.

Perle has been, and is, a central figure in this network, one which has been especially weighted to the affairs of the Middle East . “Around him there is a cosy network of Middle East ‘experts’ who share his neo-conservative outlook and who pop up as talking heads on US television, in newspapers, books, testimonies to congressional committees, and at lunchtime gatherings in Washington,” as Brian Whittaker describes it.^{xiii} Perle himself, ‘resident fellow’ at the American Enterprise Institute, is also on the board of trustees of the Hudson Institute. There are similar links and personnel crossovers and a more or less shared agenda with the Washington Institute and the Middle East Forum, all of which are financed by a wide-range of American corporate capital.^{xiv} Their shared purpose is to influence government policy and as Whittaker says, “although these privately-funded organisations promote views from only one end of the political spectrum, the amount of exposure they get with their books, articles and TV appearances is extraordinary.” This says a lot about the nature of the media oligarchy. They naturally get lots of space in the *Wall Street Journal* (whose editor is one of their own), the Murdoch-owned Fox TV, syndicated radio and the PBS. This easy access to the media is in sharp contrast to the position of university middle-east specialists who get very little. These extreme-right institutions however mimic, or rather give themselves the aura of serious academic research by bestowing on themselves titles like ‘senior fellow’ and ‘adjunct scholar’, but then have the great advantage of being able to “publish books themselves without going through the academic refereeing processes required by university publishers,” as Whittaker points out. David Wurmser, head of the AEI’s “Middle East Studies Department” and signatory to the open letter on Iraq of 1998, issued a book called ‘Tyranny’s Ally: America’s Failure to Defeat Saddam Hussein’. It was given a glowing introduction by Perle. There is then, within this cosy world of crony geo-politics, no need to be scrupulous with the facts, repeated opinion will do, and instead they have, as Whittaker says, “launched a campaign to discredit university departments that specialize in the region, Martin Kramer of the Washington Institute, Middle East Forum and former director of the Moishe Dayan Centre at Tel Aviv University, produced a vitriolic book ‘Ivory Towers on Sand’, which criticized Middle East departments of universities in the US.”

We know how dangerous it is for leaders to hear only what they want to hear. As we’ve seen in the lead up to the sought-after war, its proponents have depended on the repetition of assertion

and opinion as well as a presentation of facts that would have been ripped apart in any university aspiring to scholarship. In the minds of people like Perle, rigor and scholarship are entirely separate qualities. It is this world in which there are no critical voices, no checking processes, that and an oligarchic media, which has allowed the leadership of the US/UK axis to believe they can present any old half-baked intelligence, forgeries and student theses as convincing evidence of the existence of useable WMD.

ARCHAISM CHIC

A key figure in making links in this world, and especially the media, has been and is Bill Kristol, son of Irving Kristol. Of him a friend commented, “Bill understood early on that to have a serious impact on conservative politics, you had to get yourself on the media,” something which must have been especially true during the Clinton era. Kristol is head of the PNAC, editor of the Rupert Murdoch-financed *Weekly Standard*, and highly paid beneficiary of Enron while on its advisory board, along with Murdoch hatchet man Irwin Seltzer. He also co-authored ‘The War over Iraq: Saddam’s Tyranny and America’s Mission’. Mission makes one expect the whole theme to be democracy out of the barrel of a gun, but it embraces the ‘realist’ strand of thinking by reducing the future of the world to two choices: either an “American foreign policy that is unapologetic, idealistic, assertive and well-funded;” or “a chaotic, Hobbesian world where there is no authority to thwart aggression. Ensure peace and security or enforce international norms...Those who suggest that...international resentments could somehow be eliminated by a more restrained foreign policy are deluding themselves.”

Chaos is a favourite word of these ‘realists’, as is the notion that anyone disagreeing with what they say is ‘deluding themselves.’ It is also the word (as view of the world) taken up by Tony Blair, even while ‘pursuing the UN route’. On the 16th February after London’s huge anti-war march he talked of ‘rogue states’ and terrorism as being “twins of chaos”. In the USA two academics and a cheerleader have given a spurious gravitas to this view of the world which directly or indirectly have the same consequences as those of the institutes even though they are not in the business of democracy export. They are also connected to Perle through Conrad Black on whose Hollinger company board Perle sits, while Black also finances their cheerleading journal, *The National Interest* and through the AEI, Robert Kaplan, a ‘senior fellow’ of the New America Foundation, Phillip Bobbitt government man and academic, and Samuel Huntington, Harvard man but also a member of the AEI’s Council of Academic Advisers and sometime government man^{xv}, have it in common to make a fetish of the military and militarism, and have a shared taste for archaism chic. The three of them, all players in the world of crony geo-politics, give glowing reviews to each others’ books. They are big on adjectives, grandiose titles and make a virtue out of generalization and assertion. Between them they have created an ideological mish-mash consisting of a global fear of ‘chaos’ and Islam, which then justifies their overt or implied militarism, and the demand that Western democracies be tough, even if that toughness demands a little less democracy. They are all prime movers in the sought-after war.

A fourth, Robert Kagan, has had his ‘Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order’ exhaustively reviewed elsewhere and its significance is probably only the huge puff it might have given to the vainglorious delusions of Tony Blair. It is worth noting here only certain similarities to the other books in addition to its convoluted rationale for the sought-after war against Iraq. For one, how both pretentious and full of contradictions is his drawn out argument that Europeans are Kantians and Americans Hobbesians: its disregard for the facts, for Kagan it was Blair, then just the shadow Home Secretary who pushed Clinton into action on Bosnia; its assertive assumptions, for example that if Al Gore had been President after September 11th, he too would have attacked Iraq; and the dodgy analogy he uses to argue that Europeans refuse to see Iraq as a threat because they don’t have the means to change the regime.

Kaplan, whose book “Warrior Politics: Why leadership demands a Pagan Ethos” was 77th on Amazon’s bestseller list in early 2002 and is endorsed by Henry Kissinger, and ex-Defense Secretaries William Perry and William Cohen, among others, makes a big play of being in the tradition of Thucydides, the aristocratic historian of the Peloponnesian War. That he was an aristocrat can be the only attraction for Kaplan, for it is doubtful if he has ever bothered to actually read the book. For one thing it is a hard-headed account of how Athenian imperial pretensions were its undoing; and for another, it is a scrupulous account. In the beginning section for example, Thucydides describes what Athenians and Spartans said they were fighting for (he gives us the speeches), and then what they were actually fighting for; exactly the kind of analysis that Kaplan does not give about the present sought-after war or indeed anything else. Instead he makes a list of assertions about the dangers of ‘non-state actors’ on the ‘global stage’ and the ‘reality’ of global ‘chaos’. This, after all, is the man we have met before, arguing that the Iranian belief that the Americans deliberately shot down a civilian Iranian plane, is what made them frightened enough to sign a peace deal with Iraq. On the basis of one unproved supposition about what the Iranians believed, another supposition is made on the strength of this supposed belief, that is, it frightened them enough to make the deal. All this to prove his point that ‘these people’ understand only ruthless force.

Kermit Snelson has done us all a favour by reading right through ‘Warrior Politics’ and bringing it to the attention of the world outside the loop of archaism chic. What emerges is a ‘pagan ethos’ that is like the lurid covers for ‘fantasy’ novels that feature gothic warriors and magicians. Kaplan sets up a notion of ‘an ancient code of honor’: “An alliance leader must play the role of barbarian chieftan. In theory, international law governs world politics; in practice, relations between great powers are regulated by a sort of Code Duello...designed to ritualize the struggle for power, not to end it...Such a code may not be Judeo-Christian, yet it is moral just the same.” He gets in a terrible tangle about ‘moral’ but this is hardly surprising given that he goes on to rationalize the killing of children and civilians who are ‘used’ by the enemy (a frequent Israeli rationalization), an enemy for whom “our moral values — our fear of collateral damage — represent our worst vulnerabilities. The most sincere and heartbreaking truth of the ancients is the vast gulf that separates political-military virtue from individual moral perfection. It is such a truth that may help define the 21st century, as we are forced to choose in the midst of high-tech war between what is right and what is unfortunately necessary.” It is a sentiment that gives credence to Hannah Arendt’s assertion that evil is essentially banal: “We are forced to choose...what is unfortunately necessary.”

Bobbitt’s book has a similarly grandiose title with a similarly archaic flavour: ‘The Shield of Achilles: War Peace, and the Course of History’. Reviews of it from outside the crony world question whether it really does require a thousand pages of repetitive assertion to establish the “heroic centrality” of war to civilization. It is a book full of generalizations, of analogy in place of argument, and an almost perverse pride in its lack of empirical evidence. And all this treacled in smugness. Of his own book Bobbitt says: “It is not a single idea, it is more about a methodology or a way of thinking about problems that are not usually integrated with each other.” On the basis of this he can be found on sycophantic media shows. A taste of his style of arguing can be got from his personal case for an attack on Iraq which appeared in the Murdoch-owned London *Times* of 10/1/03

“The matter of Iraqi WMD cannot be detached from the development of non-state, or even virtual state, actors like al-Qaeda, which are well-financed and global, but are of no fixed abode and therefore immune to threats of retaliation. Whether there has been any direct collaboration between al-Qaeda and Saddam, the very existence of a global terrorist network makes Iraq’s nuclear and WMD capacity so much more threatening...We must recognise that the demand for conclusive evidence of weapons acquisition is an inadequate requirement in the world we are

entering.” To get to this point he builds one conditional upon another beginning with the assertion by an unnamed former weapons inspector (Richard Butler, one assumes if there was such a person at all), that the current Iraqi leadership would eventually achieve a nuclear weapon. On this flimsy basis we then get a series of what this would then mean with statements like “most commentators ignore the impact of a nuclear-armed Iraq on its neighbours arsenals.” He leads up to the justification of invasion without evidence cited above and answers arguments against it by saying, “To answer these questions is to leave the world of the blackboard.” The world of the blackboard! A put-down of the tabloid variety.

Brazen, it is the whole style of the pro-war faction, but this quite conscious reversal of the prime importance of evidence in decision-making is breathtaking, and reminiscent of the Bush coup in Florida.

Huntington shares the taste for grandiose titles and has become famous/infamous with his book, ‘The Clash of Civilizations’. Making the crudest generalizations possible, he divides the world into eight/nine ‘civilizations’. To be so crude in this way is of itself, both offensive and reactionary: it denies subtlety and autonomy to individuals; denies the importance of class, inequality and exploitation; and denies the possibility of progressive change. His ideological re-packaging of facts is typically brazen. In this mode he describes the coup against the legitimate and progressive government of Mossadeq in Iraq as: “Kermit Roosevelt and a few CIA operatives rather easily suppressed an insurgency and restored the Shah to his throne.”^{xvi}

Kaplan, in a review of unashamed sycophancy, says “Sweeping and icy statements dominate Huntington’s books,” and it is said as a compliment.^{xvii} In fact, as the many critics of the book have pointed out, he is only interested in Western, Islamic and Sinic ‘civilizations’ in which religion and/or identity are the glue, the archaic glue. He lays it out this thesis and its implications right at the beginning of the book:

“People are discovering new but often old identities...One grim Weltanschauung for this new era was well expressed by the Venetian nationalist demagogue in Michael Dibdin’s novel, ‘Dead Lagoon’. ‘There can be no true friends without enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage, their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven.’ The unfortunate truth in these old truths cannot be ignored by statesmen and scholars. For peoples seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential, and the potentially most dangerous enmities occur across the fault lines between the world’s major civilizations.”^{xviii}

These are not weasel words, but a weasel paragraph. Huntington distances himself from ‘the demagogue’ who is expounding all the cliches of fascism/nazism just in case we should think he is himself that way inclined, and can then adopt the same arguments for himself, calling them ‘the unfortunate truth’ which ‘cannot be ignored by states. The weasel paragraph becomes a weasel book with a spuriously Olympian view of the world, these ‘unfortunate truths’ just happen to be true of many parts of the non-Western world, but at the same time in the sub-text, give justification for the West for it to ditch ‘sentimental cant’ and get tough. And in arguing this he twists the facts in the grossest manner.

His lead example from which the whole book follows is that “On April 18th, 1994 two thousand people rallied in Sarajevo waving the flags of Saudi Arabia and Turkey. By flying these banners, instead of UN, NATO, or American flags, these Sarajevans identified themselves with their fellow Muslims and told the world who were their real and not-so real friends.”^{xix}

The bad faith of this thesis proving example’ is breathtaking. Two thousand is a very small number of people in this city and what is truly amazing after nearly two years of betrayal by the Western powers, is how these least-of-all fanatical Muslims, fighting for a multi-ethnic city

were not tempted into the dead end of a religious-ethnic politics. Huntington's espousal of Serb propaganda continues throughout the book, arguing that "the war in Bosnia was a war of civilizations," when the ethnic differences between Serbs and Bosnians was an invention by Serb nationalists to justify conquest and murder.^{xx} But Huntington's real purpose — apart from seeing nasty Muslims round every corner — is to trash multiculturalism per se; to make out, with no awareness of the contradictions involved, that it is simultaneously both impossible and dangerous to the West and the USA specifically. This is an attitude shared by the 'institutions' like the American Enterprise Institute and others who have pushed hardest for an invasion of Iraq.

ARMCHAIR SPARTANS

All three of these sloppy scholars with their axes to grind, pride themselves on speaking "uncomfortable truths."^{xxi} Uncomfortable for whom? Not them for sure, but in their personal re-mixes of the view that most of the poorer world understands politics only as might is right, and that war is innate to human history, they still have a heroic self-image of themselves up against some mythical liberal establishment. This mirrors the extraordinary way that extreme right wing radio stations, TV channels like Fox and the media oligarchy in general of the USA, present themselves as heroic underdogs, Ayn Rand style, against a mythic liberal media establishment. Given what is in effect a media monologue in support of the sought-after war, it is only possible to read the following from Kaplan's *Warrior Politics* with grim mirth: "Another problem will be the unwitting collusion between the global media and our enemies," an irresponsible media concerned only with its own "moral perfectionism", and this because it is an "elite media...dominated by cosmopolitans who inhabit the wider world beyond the nation-state."

What we get from Huntington and Kaplan especially is standard racist paranoia centred on demography, of too many young men in "those places that fail to compete technologically" as Kaplan puts it, in equally banal social Darwinist terms, in 'The Return to Ancient Times' (*Atlantic Monthly* June 1 2000). In 'Warrior Politics' he comes out and uses the word: "Globalization is Darwinian," he says. Too many young men are being born in the wrong parts of the world, a view strongly shared by the AEI's Ben Wattenburg, Perle's obsequious interviewer. Huntington is especially concerned about birth rates in the 'Islamic world'. And these young men "in those places that fail to compete technologically" are unemployed and dangerous. Kaplan is especially concerned about this category of person when they are Palestinians, and then about Palestinian birth rates which, from a Kaplan point of view, might by itself, explain the phenomenon of suicide bombing as being an outlet for a surplus population. Huntington talks of Westerners constituting, "a steadily decreasing minority of the world's population." ('Clash of Civilizations'), and of "Muslim population growth" as a "destabilizing force." The large numbers of young people with secondary educations will continue to power the Islamic Resurgence and promote Muslim militancy, militarism and migration."

More generally in the poor world, these young men create chaos as they look to the tribal identities of their civilizations and bring about the disintegration of the state. Kaplan is very keen on Sierra Leone, he talks of it with grim relish as proving his point which is that these people don't understand negotiation, still less democracy, and that the only solution is to rediscover the "pagan ethos" and be ruthless with them. It does seem that in those countries underdeveloped except for the extraction of valuable raw materials, there is a tendency for corruption and violence, but Kaplan is not concerned with such a reality or with the increased powerlessness of nation states in the underdeveloped world. Bobbitt on the face of it is less extreme, but as he flatters himself as to the originality of his concept of the "market state", he

shows the same wilful denial about the realities which have changed the nature of the state, how most of all, given the massive inequalities of global trade and wealth and then the further pressure of Structural Adjustment policies, the state has nothing to offer its citizens and thus becomes powerless.

When it comes to policing this dangerous world of bandits, fundamentalists and their archaic symbols and loyalties which they have ideologized into existence, Bobbitt and Huntington are of one mind. The Western world must defend itself with vigour true, but the soundest of the 'stern white men' are the Anglo-Saxons. The membership of Echelon is powerful evidence of this and if the war goes ahead as a 'coalition' of the USA, UK and some Australians it will confirm it again. Huntington is in no doubt as to the sound Spartan qualities of these particular white men who came together in a previous Iraqi 'crisis' of winter 1998. "France, Russia and China opposed the use of force as did all the Arab countries, except Kuwait...Four countries were willing to join the American forces in the Gulf and they were our closest cultural cousins: Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This was an Anglo-Saxon posse, not a global one." (Speech to the AEO, published 11/5/98). 'Cultural' cousins he says, (militarist might be closer to the point), of those most aware of the white man's mission, or burden as they would have it in moments of self-pity. Their posse definitely not a hip-hop crew but rather ad hoc law enforcement with a free hand when chasing down those defined as the 'outlaw' or 'rogue state'.

With Bobbitt there is more flim-flam on the same score. "The United States and the United Kingdom ought to be the principal producers of collective goods for the society of states in the 21st century. Missile defence and extended deterrence for threatened states; intelligence sharing and even pre-emption against terrorism; a global, forward-looking environmental regime; and international system of health surveillance and disease prevention; and coalitions of humanitarian intervention." This is an aggregation of weasel words starting with 'collective goods for the society of states' (society?), and taking in a 'forward-looking environmental regime.' Really? And where is that to come from? No, their role as head prefects is to lecture the world regardless of what they do themselves, and police it as if somehow, disinterested parties. This focus on the role of this Anglo-Saxon core to the stern white man is not Huntingtonism, because the peoples of these countries can reject the role cherished by their elites. Australia with its 'respectable racist' government has been an enthusiastic supporter of the sought-after war. This time around however, New Zealand especially, and Canada would appear to have rejected the role, and in this country our foolish and reckless elite is having to use all the propaganda means it has to take the cowardly course and follow the US against the common sense of people.^{xxiii} Membership of the real stern white men club is also not ahistorically fixed, and it seems that Israel's role has taken on far greater importance as producer of war materials, repressive tactics and strategy and for its perceived Spartan qualities.

CONFEDERATE CARPETBAGGERS

It has been Huntington, who over the years, has been the most overt and consistent of the armchair Spartans. His first book 'The Soldier and the State', 1957 (according to Amazon.com the number two bestseller at the US Military Academy) has as its subject the civil-military relationship in the USA. He does not bother with any of the empirical evidence produced by Wright Mills as to the intermeshing of the military, corporate and political elites of the country in 'The Power Elite', published one year earlier. Instead, he theorizes a military professionalism under 'objective civilian control' as an absolute necessity in facing the USSR's unprecedented threat to the US, one which seems to have been finally realized by Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon and its crony hawks. In the book he describes how American officers became separated from society when professionalized on the late 19th century and how this "interjected steel into his

soul which was missing from that of the community.” In an extraordinary eulogy of the West Point elite military academy at the end of the book he goes further. “West Point is a gray island in a many coloured sea, a bit of Sparta in the midst of Babylon. Yet is it possible to deny that the military values — loyalty, duty, restraint, dedication — are the ones America needs most today? That the disciplined order of West Point has more to offer than the garish individualism of Main Street.” xxiii

Looked at now, it is “Sparta in the midst of Babylon” which stands out, as if he were Nostradamus and this were Israel and Iraq, the geographical space of Babylon. Taken as a whole, it is the pure voice of elitism, more specifically the imperial elite which acts tough to protect a society while seeing that same society as decadent; that the consumer capitalism (in which the notion of consumer choice becomes equated with freedom per se) it is defending, also produces soft people who must be defended from their own softness. Kermit Snelson talks of Huntington drawing upon the “intellectual, cultural and military traditions of the Confederacy.” If this is the case, the dangerous contradictions being lived out at most people’s expense by this American elite are doubled by the present situation in which these traditions are in the hands of carpet baggers.

Of ancient Sparta itself, Xenophon reported that its legendary law-giver, Lycurgus, banned the use of coin to free-born Spartans on the grounds that it would undermine the tight-knot military organization of the state. In the USA today, the Bush Administration itself and its murky involvement with Enron and insider trading in dodgy oil shares, as well as the intermeshing of military and Pentagon worlds with that of the profit-making military repression business is rather different. Huntington, the armchair Spartan, is himself a selective supporter of corruption as a component of modernization, arguing that it is better than violence. As Kaplan puts it in his hagiography, Huntington is saying that “Corruption in moderate doses can overcome unresponsive bureaucracy and be an instrument of progress.” It is like Irwin Stelzer, mouthpiece of the warmongering Rupert Murdoch telling us to be grateful to Enron for having introduced competition into the energy sector and making it more efficient while the state of California was being ripped off. It will be like the forthcoming award of contracts for the re-building of Iraq we are likely to see in what might be called militarized Keynesianism, you smash up a place and thereby generate economic activity in rebuilding it as well as in the re-stocking of the bombs that were used in the smash-up.

MILITANT GLOBALISERS

The re-mixes of militarist ideology described here have consequences when it comes to policy decisions, they have been part of the build-up to the sought-after war against Iraq. Bobbitt and Huntington are long term members of the USA’s defence and intelligence establishments, they are not ex-Trotskyist cheerleaders of neo-conservatism. Huntington’s long term friend from geo-political days is Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter’s National Security Advisor. Brzezinski’s 1997 book ‘The Great Chessboard’ (the very title indicative of geo-political elitism), argues in defence of the American empire on the grounds that the only alternative to it is “international anarchy”. xxiv Their views have percolated further through the inter-connected “institutes” and pressure groups referred to above, and into the military itself. It is not a maverick view of the world.

Before becoming Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld chaired a Commission on National Security Space Management and Organization known as the Space Commission. Apart from showing once again how the Power Elite works, it also shows the importance given to the evolving concept of Star Wars and Rumsfeld’s particular line in military bureaucracy streamlining, for it advocated raising the status of the US Space Command. The Commission’s own 2001 report was preceded by the Space Command’s Long Range Plan. It too looked for the

strengthening of US dominance in language similar to that of the ‘realists’. “Widespread communications will highlight disparities in resources and quality of life-contributing to unrest in developing countries.” It is unrest in what they clearly mean to say are underdeveloped countries, which might challenge US interests that concerns them. “The global economy will continue to become more interdependent,” they say. “Economic alliances as well as the growth and influence of transnational corporations will blur security agreements. The worldwide gap between have ‘have’ and ‘have not’ nations will widen, creating regional unrest.”

In the March 2003 issue of *Esquire* magazine, Thomas P.M. Barnett of the US Naval College (a Professor of Warfare Analysis who has been advising the Office of the Secretary of Defense) provided a mish-mash of Huntington-Kaplan-Bobbitt with an added twist in an article entitled ‘The Pentagon’s New Road Map’, with a sub-heading of why we’re going to war and will continue to do so. Barnett’s added twist is to overcome what some people have seen as the contradiction, opposition even, between “Confederate values” expressed as US militarist unilateralism, and the contemporary model of globalization depending on international laws and agreements.

The purpose of the article, he begins, is “Let me tell you why military engagement with Saddam Hussein’s regime in Baghdad is not only necessary and inevitable, but good.” He goes on to say that, when the US does finally go to war it will not be “just an enforced disarmament of illegal weapons...Our next war in the Gulf will mark the moment when Washington takes a real ownership of strategic security in the age of globalization.”

In his view the world is divided three ways: there is the Core, where globalization is “thick with network connectivity”, made up of financial transactions, liberal media flows and collective security”: the Gap, where there is disconnection, repressive regimes, poverty and disease; and then there are ‘seam’ states, via which the murderous Gap can infiltrate the pleasant Core, these include Greece, Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia. Saddam is, of course, classically and dangerously ‘disconnected from the globalizing world’, the Core, something reinforced by the sanctions imposed for the last twelve years by the rest of the world. But this world he is disconnected from is defined as one with its “set rules, its norms, and all the ties that bind countries together in mutually assured dependence.” In the case of the USA, however these rules and norms of globalization would seem to be distinctly flexible, to be adhered to only when it is convenient to its interests. Meanwhile its benefits are to be found where there are “strong or growing ties between local militaries and the US military”.

This talk of Core, Gap and porous Seam, is a re-mix of Huntington and Kaplan, containing the basic ingredients of imperialism; smugness, arrogance and paranoia. The globalization he talks of is, in reality, full of Export Processing Zones and the like, areas of maximum exploitation; of that ‘primitive accumulation’ on which the most sophisticated of financial derivatives still depend, and which are largely situated in Gap countries, like the Caribbean Rim, and much of Asia. These are areas, he says, where the demographics are ‘skewed very young’ but says so without mentioning the relationship between mortality rates and poverty. It is a globalization in which young workers die of overwork, and where the demand for health and safety regulations is revolutionary politics. It is a globalization which is still highly dependent on oil but with relatively underdeveloped and underfunded R&D into alternative energies, one in which armaments production is largely centred in Core countries and to whose economies it is often of great importance.

For Barnett, Israel is one of the anomalies, geographically speaking, a Core country isolated in ‘the Gap’. He is honest enough to point to how, it has ‘sadly become one the of the bullies’ in a ‘neighbourhood of bullies,’ implying that it has had little choice, and going on to say, as Wolfowitz and Tony Blair have done, that it will change once Saddam is brought down, but is disingenuous in not mentioning its uniquely close ties with the US, and especially in the field of war and repression technology.

DEMOCRACY FOR WHOM?

At the end of the Gulf War, the betrayal of the uprising was rationalized by Paul Wolfowitz on the grounds that they — the Americans — couldn't find any democratic factions in Iraq. Some commentators argued that it was more a case of the Americans believing that a democratically elected government might be more hostile to their interests than Saddam. This time the WMD rationale for an invasion of Iraq has looked dubious at the very least. In the face of this and because of the strength of the anti-war movement, the US-UK axis has talked more and more of liberating the Iraqi people — which is to be hoped for — and of democracy. There are enthusiasts for democracy out of the barrel of a gun, the ex-Trotskyists — the US Social Democrats — who have been useful propagandists for this shift in emphasis. Their January 2003 paper "For Democracy in Iraq and the Middle East"^{xxv} worries only that "Many in this Administration still do not comprehend the deep, direct and demonstrated link between the national security interests of the United States and the emergence of democracy on ground held by our opponents." However they prove themselves on side by relating their typically abstract notion of democracy not just to the absolute moral right of Israel, but to justification of the sought after war without reference to the United Nations. Their argument on both points became the staple diet of the compliant media of the Anglo-Saxon world. "If," they argue—beginning with a humble conditional soon to be abandoned — "this reckless, brutal and aggressive dictator acquires weapons that enable him to extend his power over the oil-rich, volatile, populous, democratically underdeveloped and strategically critical Middle East, the promise of democracy can be arrested and even turned back."

Here, the keepers of democracy as a holy grail are like all elitists, they do not listen, do not listen to Nawaal al Sadaawi, for example, imprisoned in Egypt for working for a rooted democracy growing from a free civil society, something set back by Western invasions which strengthen the Western allied dictators of the Middle East and their Arab nationalist rhetoric. For these monopolists of democracy, having long ditched the "If", "the US may still be justified in acting with an ad hoc group of allies, or even alone. The United Nations, a body still deeply compromised by the veto, power and influence of governments that are no friends to democracy, cannot be the ultimate arbiter of democracy's morality or interests."

These neo-conservative adolescents defending democracy as if it were a pure virgin against false friends and interlopers provided much needed rhetoric for the sought-after war without looking at the way forceful democracy export is matched by democracy cut backs in the USA itself. The 'realists' who are anyway democracy non-fans wonder if Iraqis are the right voters for a democracy. Robert Kaplan is one. In his article 'A Post-Saddam Scenario',^{xxvi} he is clear that what matters most about Iraq is that it is "the most logical place to relocate Middle Eastern bases in the twenty-first century." He goes on to talk of it being a 'thugocracy' and an 'ethnically riven country', and that therefore "we should forswear any evangelical lust to implement democracy overnight in a country with no tradition of it." He then forestalls any possible accusations of hypocrisy with a bold, analogical rationalisation. "The weakening of the brutal regime of Islam Karimov (The Uzbekistan tyrant President supported by the US) will not necessarily lead to a more enlightened alternative." It's another of those 'uncomfortable truths' he and Huntington are so keen on.

For his own part Huntington as an overt elitist is dubious about democracy altogether, in the USA as well as the 'chaotic' world. Democracy in the sense of political activity by citizens is only approved when it is for approved causes, thus Irving Kristol's enthusiasm for organizing against liberal secularism. In the 'Clash of Civilizations' Huntington shows admiration for the authoritarian structures of some East Asian countries (this written before the East Asian financial crisis), something innate of course to their 'culture' as he sees it. His worry about the decadence of the USA he is committed to defending pushed him towards the notion of

‘authoritarian democracy’. This did not come out of the blue, and he is even more explicit in his section of the book ‘The Crisis of Democracy’. Like elitists everywhere, Huntington was shaken up by the social movement of the 1960s. His response is to refer to an excess of democracy. Against this excess of democracy he makes a plea for cultivating “discouragement and apathy”, and calls for the reassertion of undemocratic authority. “Democracy,” he says sounding like Tony Blair’s New Labour, “is only one way of constituting authority, and it is not necessarily a universally applicable one. In many situations the claims of expertise, seniority, experience and special talents may override the claims of democracy as a way of constituting authority.” This would seem to be especially so when what is a ‘special talent’ is determined by a small world which monopolizes the definition of what is a special talent and who has it.

For Huntington, the democratic impulse of the 60s increased government spending and reduced its authority. In predictable fashion as elitist and spokesman for the rich and powerful, he blames the usual suspects like public sector unionization without mentioning the costs of the Vietnam War or the Cold War military-industrial complex. He does not give us these figures because the figures would be embarrassing. Instead, the very notion of government spending is associated exclusively with welfare payments and unionization. In typically brazen style he goes on to say, “a government which lacks authority and which is committed to substantial domestic programs will have little ability, short of a cataclysmic crisis, to impose on its people the sacrifices which may be necessary to deal with foreign policy problems and defense.” Bobbitt’s own anti-democratic argument mirrors this in the way he argues that the nation state’s ability to wage war is more important than any democratic norms or pretensions.

Democracy, then, has the poor and the working class living the life of Riley on welfare, and thereby endangering the fetish of necessary militarism in a threatening geo-political world they are, needless to say, incapable of understanding. For Kaplan it is one of his ‘uncomfortable’ truths that democracy just gets in the way. “Effective responses to the outrages of these warriors” (in the poor world) “are inconceivable without the element of surprise, making democratic consultation an afterthought.” Besides, Kaplan has already discarded it altogether: “going to war will be less and less a democratic decision...In the future...the decision to use force will be made autocratically by small groups of civilians and general officers, the differences fading as time goes on..” In the future? It sounds all to like the present-day Pentagon and the new powers of the President. Being Kaplan, he has to have recourse to his view of archaism for justification. “We are reverting to the ‘unified’ leaderships that characterized the ancient and early-modern worlds, reflecting what Socrates and Machiavelli recognized as the basic truth of all political systems: whatever the labels those systems claim for themselves, war and peace are two facets of the same process.” Socrates! Well that’s OK then.

Years later after expressing his distaste for a vigorous democracy, Huntington reveals his new real worry which is “multiculturalism” in the USA itself in *Clash of Civilizations*. “Western culture is challenged by groups within Western societies”, those who do not assimilate like “Hispanics in the United States.” The irony, as Jacob Heilbrunn points out (*TAP*: Vol 9, Issue 39) is that Hispanics are amongst the most patriotic Americans, not just among the most patriotic but constituting a significant part of the US military itself, often citizens of Central America recruited on the promise of US citizenship for their families. The more fastidious Philip Bobbitt talking New Labour-speak, says of his banal ‘market-state’ concept that “it plays itself in all sorts of policies: in welfare programmes, where you try and put people back to work rather than subsidise them for simple child-raising.” Apart from anything else, the word ‘simple’ is a dead giveaway of the rotten and smug elitism of its writer, as anyone who has brought up children with little money can tell. Besides, these are not ‘people’, they are the poor many, many of whom are not white.

What is even more extraordinary about this ghastly stuff, is that Bobbitt’s analysis, if that is

what it is, follows on from year after year of welfare cuts that started with Reagan, continued under Clinton and can only get worse under Bush. It is as if the elitists, the spokesmen for the rich and powerful, were struggling against the tide to put across their racist and militarist view of the world. The obverse reality is the prison-industrial complex of the USA, the American gulag with its population of 2 million weighted so heavily against Afro-Americans, more black men in prison than in higher education.

This elite from the school of geo-politics as aggressive paranoia have the usual fear of the decadence of their own people. This does not focus on obesity for example, unless presented as a phenomenon exclusively of the poor, and of the poor lacking self-control; or on low savings rates; or the increasing dependence of the US-UK axis economies on phenomenal levels of personal indebtedness: it is focused rather on the poor per se among whom there is an over-representation of Afro-Americans. It goes hand in hand with the latest re-mix of harsh 19th century notions of an 'underclass' and of the 'deserving and undeserving poor' which always has a racist and anti-democratic edge to it.^{xxvii} We, on the other hand, can only admire the Afro-American world, the one definable section of American society which is decisively against the sought-after war.

A straightforward expression of this anti-democratic racism comes from Robert Bork of the American Enterprise Institute. To smear is the automatic tactic of the power elite and it would be wrong to assume that Richard Perle, for example, shares Bork's views just because they both belong to the AEI, but there is no record of Perle speaking out against the views of Bork, Charles Murray, Dinesh D'Souza or come to that, his most obsequious interviewer and fellow AEI 'fellow' Ben Wattenberg, all AEI ideologues. Wattenberg mimics Huntington's fear of global demographics: "The West has been the driving force of modern civilization, inexorably pushing towards democratic values. Will that continue when its share of the total (global) population is only 11%." ^{xxviii} Domestically, he opposes "proportionalism", that is, affirmative action. D'Souza calls for a repeal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Charles Murray's notorious Bell Curve which asserts that blacks' intractable IQ deficiencies rather than racism are responsible for their disproportionate poverty and imprisonment rates, is still taken seriously despite having been comprehensively rubbished by geneticists.

Bork's own book has a typically archaic ring to its title, 'Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline'. It is as Deborah Toler says "an extended screed warning about the demise of 'bourgeois culture' and the rise of 'degenerate society'." In it he talks of the "collapse of the criminal justice system, which displays an inability to punish adequately and, often enough, an inability to convict the clearly guilty; of the rising rate of illegitimate births, the uninhibited display of sexuality..." before picking out rap music as what is especially 'sick' about Afro-American culture and "how debased it is." It is a racist call for more bodies in the American gulag, and such demands are likely to become more strident now that coy mentions of an American "Empire" are becoming more commonplace from elitists like Michael Ignatieff and geo-political heavyweights like Brzezinski.

THE ZIONIST LOBBY

To say it again, anti-semitism is as ugly and fascist as any other racism, and has had particularly genocidal consequences. It is also functional to — even necessary to — the modern, racist form of Zionism. It is no wonder that this Zionism is such a powerful political force in the USA despite its own history of anti-semitism exemplified by the place that Bush Senior and James Baker met for the first time which was, "the then whites-only, no-Jews Houston Country Club." Israel fits the bill at every level: a nation with the self-image of being both Spartan pioneers and democrats under siege, stern white men on the edge of the poor and anarchic world. And this even when the policies they pursue — their facts on the ground — create the

very circumstances — which, they say, puts them under siege, and which ensure that Palestine will remain economically backward. It also chimes with the US power structure in the close intermeshing of its military, political and business elites.

It is being pro-Israel that unites all the American components who have sought the invasion of Iraq. For the neo-con cheerleaders from US Social Democracy. “It is imperative to prevent Saddam from threatening his neighbours and the world with weapons of mass destruction. Such weapons will be surely used to challenge the US commitment to the security of the one democracy that now exists in the Middle East — Israel.” There is, here, the usual pyramid of suppositions and conditionals, but for these keepers of the Holy Grail, it is the Israeli electoral system which must be defended against toothless enemies which might, in an unlikely future, threaten it.

For Barnett, Israel is a Core state isolated in the Gap. For Kaplan and his even more hardline ‘pagan’ realpolitik the example of dangerous demographics is young Palestinians. There are too many of them and they are poor. Only by being hard, he says, will Israel keep respect and only then, and in this manner, will it be able to negotiate with the overpopulated and technologically backward Arab world. In turn, the deliberate fetishizing of the archaic by Kaplan, Bobbitt and Huntington is well suited to the unholy alliance of Christian and Jewish fundamentalist with their constant references to biblical Israel as an argument for it as a modern political goal to be achieved.

The lobbying for Israeli interests in the US is intense and massively organized, and is far bigger than anything done by Jewish Americans. This is not to say that their lobbying group AIPAC (American-Israel Public Affairs Committee) is not by far the most powerful foreign affairs lobbying group in Washington.^{xxix} It is especially powerful in the US Congress and at its recent annual jamboree had half the US Senate in attendance, including the very right-wing House majority leader Tom deLay who said there were no occupied territories, only Judea and Samaria. In April 2002, when the Israelis attacked the West Bank, destroying the governmental infrastructure of the Palestinians (destroying the records, hard drives of ministries), President Bush called on Israel to stop its incursions and withdraw. Israel did not withdraw and after five days Bush repeated his message to Sharon and sent Colin Powell to meet Yassir Arafat. AIPAC and the Christian fundamentalists weighed in, Netanyahu was invited by the Senate to tell them that the US was not being serious about terrorism. Two weeks later the Israelis were still in the West Bank and Bush retreated, saying that Sharon was ‘a man of peace.’

The media lobbying is most intense from that network of ‘institutes’ and think-tanks like the AEI which are all pro-Israeli and pro-war as described by Brian Whittaker.^{xxx} The wife of AEI’s David Wurmser, Meyrav, runs the Middle East section at another thinktank, The Hudson Institute (whose board of trustees was recently joined by Richard Perle), and is also co-founder of the Middle East Media Research Institute (Memri), along with Colonel Yigal Carmon, formerly of Israeli military intelligence. She also belongs to the Middle East Forum headed by the Saudi-hating Daniel Pipes who, like Huntington, actively dislikes American multiculturalism, and is a star turn on the Fox news channel. The Forum specializes in attacking university academics who do not share its own prejudices and has three prominent members from yet another Institute, the Washington Institute which, as Whittaker says, “makes no secret of its extensive links with Israel, which currently include the presence of two scholars from the Israeli armed forces.” Its director is Dennis Ross.

DENNIS B. ROSS

We know that Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz have advised the most right-wing Zionists, those who followed Binyamin Netanyahu, and that they are not ex-Trotskyist cheerleaders but men with power and influence. So is Dennis B. Ross who for 12 years under the previous

President Bush and then under Clinton “played a leading role in shaping U.S. involvement in the Middle East peace process.”^{xxxix} He is credited with being instrumental in the 1995 Interim Agreement, the Hebron accord, and the Israeli-Jordan peace treaty. He had posts in the National Security Council and the Pentagon in the Reagan administration too. It was he who should have dizzied from the roundabout of shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East that newzak reported so credulously. His career shows the degree of Republican-Democrat continuity in Mid East policy and the bad faith of that policy since this shuttle-diplomat has since come out as an unreconstructed Zionist with the concomitant role of ‘analyst’ for Fox News Channel, the Murdoch-owned affair which reached new levels of impartiality by actively mocking anti-war protesters.

In a recent article for *Foreign Policy* entitled “Think Again: Yasir Arafat,” Ross, the neutral negotiator has nothing good to say about the man he dealt with for so many years, and on whom he puts the entire blame for the breakdown of the “Oslo peace process”. He begins by noting that Arafat appeared to want peace with Israel, citing his recognition of it as a state, and his signing of five limited or interim agreements, but then says that every agreement was limited; that he ‘has never relinquished the terror card’; that “he is always quick to exaggerate his achievements, even while maintaining an ongoing sense of grievance.” Of the latter accusation it could be said it applies with even more force to the current Bush administration and, in his own inimitably humble style, Tony Blair.

He goes on to accuse Arafat of leading “the Palestinians to believe the peace process would produce everything they wanted — and he implicitly suggested a return to armed struggle if negotiations fell short of those unattainable goals.” In this context ‘implicit’ is a weasel word, but it raises the question of why Ross bothered at all, why all those nauseous air flights, Jerusalem one day, Damascus the next? Why, when he knew how it would be for so many years? “But from the start of the Oslo negotiations in 1993, Arafat focused only on what he was going to receive, not what he had to give.” In fact Ross’s self-image is very much in the Tony Blair style, a man who wears the scars of his efforts. Understanding the nature of the beast from the very beginning of the ‘peace process’, Ross nevertheless soldiered on, a real trouper. “Arafat never faced up to what he would have to do — even though we tried repeatedly to condition him. As a result, when he was finally put to the test with former President Bill Clinton’s proposal on December 2000, Arafat failed miserably.”

“Condition him?” For radical intellectuals like Edward Said that is exactly what had happened to Arafat with for example the Wye River Agreement at the end of ‘98. This is neither to condemn or praise Arafat, who is attacked from all sides, what does matter here is the attitude of the negotiator to one of the parties in a process that has gone on for years, and over the course of which there have been more Israeli facts on the ground, and which now involves a fence modeled on those of high security prisons, and the brutalisation of the conflict.^{xxxii} It could be reasonably argued that it is Israel which is particularly fond of the destructive ambiguity of open-ended negotiations for which Ross set the agenda over so many years.

In early 1999, Ross was quoted as saying that he characterized not Arafat but the Zionist settlements as the most serious threat to the peace process. No action accompanied this statement. At the same time despite UN resolutions against the settlements it was Dennis Ross who promised the Israeli government that it would not lose out from the USA’s annual aid of \$3bn, or the annual installments from the \$10bn promised in 1992 in the full knowledge that this money was financing the same settlements he declared to be an obstacle to peace.

The nub of his argument now (late 2002) is that the US cannot ‘impose’ a settlement on the Israelis. He concludes by saying — and rejecting the very possibility of “Clintonesque ideas” — that “An imposed solution will only delay the day when all sides, but especially the Palestinians, have to resume real responsibilities. Consequently an imposed solution would be

no solution at all.” This is now George W. Bush wisdom and yet, just a couple of paragraphs before, he says that “Arafat would certainly go along with an imposed outcome. He has always preferred such an option. It would relieve him of the responsibility of having to make a decision.” This is very much the language of Blair-Bush, the decision-makers for whom others — their own citizens included — must have responsibilities thrust upon them. In the case of Ross, what it marks is a shift from the attack on Arafat, which given accounts of corruption and autocracy will always carry some weight — to an attack on Palestinian aspirations per se, because if Arafat were to go along with it then “inevitably Palestinians will oppose at least part of an imposed outcome.”

It goes without saying that whenever “inevitably” pops up, we need all our democratic intelligence about us. The inevitable opposition will of course be spurious, as if Palestinians could endlessly spin out endless grievances. That is the view of the American peacemaker in chief for 12 years, and his view will solidify in the Blair-Bush world of easy privilege whose natural instinct is to blame the unprivileged. In an essay by Joanna Brenner^{xxxiii} she talks of how in post World War II America “affirmative actions like GI Bill and housing projects laid the basis for Jews and other previously excluded white ethnic groups to a better life. Black Americans were excluded from these programs of suburban ownership and college education. Thus the gains made by these groups of European origin were passed on to the next generation and used to sustain racist myths about the inferiority of black culture.” Ironies cease to be ironies when they are too painful and reveal themselves instead to be the maintenance of the contradictions of those in power by force, force that is sometimes brute, sometimes diffuse. The Palestinians as the Jews of the Arab world finding that in the ‘homeland’ they are in Kaplan’s world of stupid, racist Malthusianism, in one of those places “that fail to compete technologically.” Racism is perpetuated, and the lynching of two Israeli secret agents is a horror story — no abstraction here — as against the abstract violence developed by the military-industrial complexes of the USA and Israel with the British, Russians, French and Chinese tagging along behind.

SPARTAN HI-TECH

Why this emphasis on the US-Israeli relationship when looking at the lead-up to the sought-after war? Mostly because it is there. So many Americans who either support or have actually pushed for the war are pro-Israeli in actively political terms, and this, given that there is no evidence of any effective Iraqi WMD, is another reason to make us sceptical about the motivations for the war, and especially the idea of it as impartial anti-fascism, as a war of liberation. Enthusiasm for the war is reciprocated in Israel. As Aluf Benn put it in the Israeli paper *Ha’aretz*: “The army’s top brass yearn for a war in Iraq, seeing it as an opportunity to successfully wear down the Palestinians.”^{xxxiv} He cites Major General Amos Gilad (Coordinator of Government activities in the West Bank and Gaza) as saying that it would be held up as an example for “the removal of other dictators closer to us, that use violence and terror.” Citing National Security Advisor Ephraim Halevy he sees senior IDF and those close to Sharon envisioning “a domino effect in which the fall of Saddam Hussein will lead to the fall of other enemies of Israel: Arafat, Hassan Nasrallah, Bashar Assad, the ayatollah in Iran and maybe even Gadafi.”

Scepticism about the war’s motivations can only be further strengthened by any kind of look at the relationship between the US military and the Israeli military and their technologies. Rhetoric is easy enough and the phrase “military-industrial complex” was applied exclusively to the USSR and which did describe the privileged hi-tech but wasteful sector of its economy. In terms of the technological developments it made despite all the embargoes imposed by the West especially in the sphere of semi-conductors, quite remarkable. If it now applies as a

description of similar dominant politico-economic sectors, then it is the USA and Israel that most fit the bill, and in the case of Israel, emigres from the USSR version have helped it on its way. In both instances it might be better described as the military-hi-tech-industrial complex which is creating techniques of war and repression which, as Alan Little suggested, only their two militaries would be competent to fight.

In the USA the power elite linkages of the military tend to be with the corporate world and especially, but not exclusively, that of armaments and repression equipment.^{xxxv} In this respect ex-General Powell is the exception as Secretary of State. These links are in the meaningful sense of the word corrupt; the Spartans of today want their share of the cake, their own financial rewards. The US has the largest share of the world's armaments market and has a government office encouraging sales called The Defense Security Assistance Agency. Former heads of this DSSA, usually Lieutenant Generals, have nearly all taken senior positions in armaments corporations like Northrop, General Dynamics and Lockheed. Large numbers of Pentagon employees have made a similar jump.^{xxxvi} The relationship works both ways with the not disinterested executives of aerospace corporations on a raft of government advisory outfits.

In Israel the conduit from the military to political leadership is well-worn, hardly surprising when it is such a militarized state and there is no line between 'security' and politics. Strategic political decisions are invariably military, when the IDF is a military which has created a whole geography of repression, spatial planning built around the creation and defence of settlements in the Occupied Territories. It is a pioneer in this field. Its repression of the first intifada and its similar efforts to repress the second, uprisings against this militarized geography, have in turn made it a pioneer in policing this geography, a policing based on humiliation and the prevention of economic development by non-settlers. This pioneering "model of the suppression of opponents" has had a huge impact. It has "been exported onto the world stage to become the dominant paradigm of US foreign policy," as has been described by Naxos.^{xxxvii}

Naxos goes on to describe the characteristics of this model as "a/ radical negation of the Other (for several decades, in Israeli discourse the Palestinians have always and only been "the terrorists"); b/ Preventive security strikes, extending increasingly to assassination; c/ micro-level capillary monitoring of populations at all levels and installation of administrative and technological means to that end; d/ intransigent and defiant unilateralism."

The Israelis were rewarded for not getting involved in the Gulf War. Since then several factors have accelerated the creation of these 'administrative and technological means' which have also had — as with the US military — a wide range of commercial spin-offs.^{xxxviii} It is from this time, the time of the first intifada that Israel made a radical break with the labour of Palestinians which had been needed in the earlier economic phase of agriculture and construction. It coincided with the arrival of the arrival of thousands of highly-skilled immigrants from the ex-USSR; the need for better technological means of repression; and the extra US aid reward. This gave greater resources to "the powerhouse of R&D represented by the IDF's high-tech academies." All this in the context of its level of military spending which "roughly equals that of all its immediate neighbours combined."^{xxxix}

It has been normal to concentrate on direct US military aid to Israel, and it is true both that Congress is not so sentimental as to not tie 75% of this aid to the purchase of American machinery; much to the benefit of Lockheed; and that the IDF has used US-made Apache and Cobra helicopters and F-16s to attack Palestinian targets, the Apache having been one of the crucial killing machines of the Gulf War. Similarly, US-supplied Flechette rounds have been used by the IDF according to an Amnesty International Report.^{xl} These are 120mm shells filled with up to 2000 potentially 5cm long steel darts (flechettes), respectable nail bombs with projectile force. Its biggest supplier has been Lockheed Martin. At the same time Israel has used its 8.9% of GDP 'defence' budget, a level four times higher than the world average to

modify imported armaments but develop its own hi-tech industry to the point where, according to its own defence ministry, Israel was supplying 10% of total world arms exports. Its biggest exporter is Israel Aircraft Industries for whom the US has, since the Gulf War been a larger market than the IDF itself. Its key recent development is the Arrow “a highly advanced stand-alone theatre missile defence system” which has been built in collaboration with the US. Israel Military Industries sells its tactical air-launched decoys to the US Navy, and Elbit Systems with a \$700m turnover and \$1.5bn order backlog sells 32 % of its weapons systems to the US. As Mandy Turner puts it in the CAAT report, “Many Israeli firms have joint ventures with US counterparts as well as having subsidiaries based in the US and nearly every electronics firm has links with US producers.”

Examples given by Naxos of such collaborations are the contract between Mercury Computer Systems “for research collaboration ” into computers able to gather and analyse signal intelligence with the Israeli Defence Ministry; and the position of a person like Professor Ouri Wolfson of the University of Chicago at Illinois whose research is financed by the US Air Force Office of Scientific Research and the Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities and whose recent Domino software is used to track aircraft as well as lorries. These links became stronger after September 11th which was (with no conspiracy theory intended or implied) a god-send to the Israeli companies with advanced paranoia/security technology. One of Israel Military Industries ‘factories’ is the IMI Academy for Advanced Security and Anti-Terror Training, a large campus with an interdisciplinary team of instructors who “are all former commanders from elite Israeli security units.”^{xli}

It was on this basis that within a few months of September 11th (in fact 5th February 2002) it organized an International National Emergency Management Seminar for foreign local and international countries as well as private companies. Practical tools had already been developed for example the revolutionary explosives sniffer device “Mini-Nose for Detection” from MS-Tech company with funding supplied by the Israeli and US defence departments; and the face and fingerprint recognition system developed by Visionics Inc. and its Israeli American founder Joseph Atick. One of its first uses “was to monitor the faces of commuting Palestinian day labourers at Israeli army checkpoints.”

Most US-Israeli development projects have been hi-tech and particularly in the military paradigms of *Shock and Awe*, but more immediately Martin van Creveld, professor of military history at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University and other Israeli military experts were giving advice on fighting inside cities. Here the technology recommended was not so hi-tech. Van Creveld’s advice, given to marines in 2002 at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina was to use D9 bulldozers converted in Israel and fitted with armour-plating as they had been used to terrible effect in Jenin earlier that year. He claimed that the US bought nine of these converted bulldozers from Israel.^{xlii}

THE MILITARY-POLITICAL-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

C. Wright Mills’ ‘The Power Elite’ of 1956 is the antithesis to the Huntington-Bobbitt style; not only is he justifiably nervous of the West Point moulded officer, but he gives us the facts, which Generals and Officers of the 1950s got corporate or political jobs and why and how this was the case, this both in the text and lengthy footnotes of the two chapters ‘The Warlords’ and the ‘Military Ascendancy’.

After an account of the history of the American military, he comes to how World War II and especially the Cold War that followed changed it (with the added premise that it filled the empty spaces that come from the US not having a professional bureaucracy) so that it became central to the country’s power elite. “The terms in which they (the American elite) have defined international reality are predominantly military. As a result, in the higher circles there has

been a replacement of diplomacy in any historically recognized sense by calculations of war potential and the military seriousness of war threats...given the military definition of reality that prevails among the men with the power of decision, the rise of the generals and the admirals into the higher circles of the American elite becomes completely understandable." In the present day it is its global spread of military bases which are the reality of US power, and its regional commanders more important than its diplomats.

"In contrast with their inter-war careers and activities," Wright Mills continues, "the warlord of post-World War II who is slated for the top will have spent a crucial tour of duty in the Pentagon, where on the middle and lower ranks each man has a superior looking over his shoulder, and where, at the top, civilians and military look over one another's shoulder."

"The warlords...now have more connections; and they are now operating in a nation whose elite and whose underlying population have accepted what can only be called a military definition of reality...no other group so readily 'internalizes' the skills of other groups nor so readily engages their skills on its own behalf; no other group has such steady access to world wide information."

"From the standpoint of the party politician, a well-trained general or admiral is an excellent legitimator of policies, for his careful use often makes it possible to lift the policy 'above politics' which is to say above political debate..."

"During World War II, the merger of the corporate economy and the military bureaucracy came into its present-day significance. Their 'coming together' was most dramatically revealed in their agreement upon the timing and the rules of 'reconversion'. The military might lose power; the corporations would no longer produce under the prime contracts they held; reconversion if not carefully handled, could easily disturb the patterns of monopoly prevailing before war production began. The generals and the dollar-a-year executives saw to it that this did not happen...It is not surprising that during the last decade, many generals and admirals, instead of merely retiring, have become members of boards and directors."

At which point Wright Mills provides a raft of examples like General Jacob Evers who went on to be technical advisor to Fairchild Aircraft Corp; and General E.R.Quesada of the H-bomb test who became a vice president of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation which he suggests is likely to be "more because of whom they know in the military and what they know of its rules and ways than because of what they know of finance and industry proper."

Of course this is hardly exclusive to the USA, the revolving doors between defence ministries and ex-generals and defence business in the UK and France for example is hardly unknown. It is the sheer scale of the military and its spending in the USA which makes it different.

THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

In his "Warrior Politics", Kaplan precedes his call for a non-democratic aristocracy to decide to go to war with another wholly superfluous demand. "Collaboration between the Pentagon and corporate America is necessary and will grow." Where has he been, one wants to ask. The Carlyle Group (see footnote ⁱⁱ), is a case in point, a private equity firm that only took off when Frank Carlucci, ex-Defense Secretary and Deputy CIA Director was hired; which has ex-President Bush and ex-PM John Major on board; which is making phenomenal rates of return mainly in the defense sector and which has the clout for direct meetings with Rumsfeld. Carlucci was one of the signatories of the 1998 letter to Clinton for action against Iraq, action in which the Carlyle Group would have an interest.

Since the time of Wright Mills the connections have become all the greater through the financing of American politics with millions of dollars of "soft money donations" coming from the big four missile defence companies Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and TRW. Though

preferring the Republicans in power they also sent money in the direction of Clinton's Democrats who spent billions on missile defence. What is different with the Bush team is that they are unilateralists in many instances. This is absolutely not the same as 'isolationist' which is surely the red herring of media and Blairite presentation of world affairs and US policy in particular. Since 1941 the US has been permanently interventionist whether it is to lean on Third World countries to not produce generic drugs, engineer coups, impose development policies or the non-development policies of structural adjustment; intervening and lecturing. Most of all, lecturing: in the Clinton era appropriately about finance, ticking off South East Asia with what we now know to be cheek of the highest order, for making financial bubbles, crony capitalism and lack of accounting transparency: in Bush's first year it was lectures to Europe, China and Russia on the danger of an ICBM attack from rogue states, as if one lecture after another would somehow stop China and Russia from worrying about the implications of the US's national missile defence (Star Wars) plans and its intent on withdrawing from ABM treaties. The only 'isolationist' strand of US conservatism represented by Pat Buchanan has been sidelined, and he talks instead of torturing prisoners.

Unilateralism simply means interventions everywhere but with less and less use of multilateral institutions which however loaded in favour of the USA and its Western supporters, still involves some restriction or slowdown of freedom of action. The Star Wars project never stopped (though for a while the Clinton Administration had shifted resources into theatre missile defences labeled by 'resident fellow' Richard Perle as "hopelessly inadequate"), only now it is not negotiable and its rationalization is a truly banal re-hash of the crudest ideology. Thus retired C-in-C of US Space Command, General Howell Estes speaking to the *Colorado Springs Independent*: "This notion that space is going to remain a peaceful area in the future of is absolutely putting our heads in the sand. It is just a fact of life. The fact of the matter is man is a warlike being. That's the nature of the beast, and we just can't be naïve about it."

To China and Russia, for example, the development of this program, assuming it is not a fantasy, can only be an act of aggression given that it implies the US could strike with impunity, especially when taken with the revoking of test bans. At the same time the Bush administration has even stronger links with the corporate beneficiaries of this program, than (post-Enron) the oil industry. Karl Grossman has described for CorpWatch how it is the power elite writ large. Dick Cheney was on the board of TRW, his wife a longtime member of the Lockheed board.

- The chair of the Foreign Policy Platform Committee at the Republican National Convention was Bruce Jackson, vice President of corporate development and strategy at Lockheed.

- Bush appointees: Albert Smith, a Lockheed vice president made undersecretary of the Air Force; Gordon England, vice president of General Dynamics made Navy Secretary; James G. Roche, retired president of Northrop-Grumman division appointed Air Force Secretary

- From Shea and Gardner, Lockheed's Washington law firm and home to Woolsey, Stephen J. Hadley was appointed deputy director of the National Security Council. He co-authored a report on US nuclear planning that appeared in January 2001, sponsored by the National Institute of Public Policy which argued that the US now faces an 'unpredictable world' (you can almost hear the word 'chaos' lurking there) potentially more dangerous than the Cold War, and that nuclear arms control treaties hinder America's flexibility to adapt its nuclear forces to any threat. But it is to the Cold War that they return to argue that "Washington cannot know today whether Russia, or for that matter China, will be neutral, friend, foe, or part of a hostile alliance in the future."

Both before, and after September 11th, the all-important defense department of this

Administration has not just been concerned with Al Qaeda or Iraq and they too have been linked to nuclear weapons development in a leaked Pentagon document reported by Julian Borger (*Guardian* 19/2/03) which talked of a new generation of nuclear weapons whose testing would be sold publicly as being about nuclear bombs to destroy buried chemical and biological weapons. The nuclear weapons/defences developments also show that the notions that the notions of pre-emption and unilateral action which characterize the sought after war against Iraq, are common to its entire military strategy as well as revealing the serious intermeshing of the military and the corporate arms industry, which in turn, as Melinda Cooper has suggested will provide new areas of work for the battered IT sector.

SHOCK AND AWE

As will “network-centric” warfare, the present Pentagon buzzword and more or less predicted by *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*,” some years ago, words which have since become shorthand for US global battle strategy. Hardly surprising given the rhetoric of the ‘realists’ (academics, cheerleaders and military men) that facilitated by the most “advanced” information technology it should nevertheless have an archaic ring to its name. Like Kaplan, the authors of *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance* are keen to make references to Sun Tzu. Choosing such a catchy title is also consistent with the military strategy they describe in broad terms, it is meant to impress, marketing at its sharpest. As with Richard Perle who appears to enjoy playing the role of a melodrama villain, it is salesmanship; but then Perle is not a melodrama villain, but an arrogant, elitist war groupie and the authors of *Shock and Awe* archetypal members of the military-industrial complex.

The book itself — written in 1996 — is already dated, but it does set out what is both continuation and radical change in strategy from the Gulf War that we are likely to see in the sought-after war, one which has, it seems, been adopted by Defence Secretary Rumsfeld. Continuation because as the *Times* headline of 13/1/91 described the prospective Gulf War: THE WORLD’S FIRST MICROCHIP WAR: NASTY, PAINFUL AND VERY BLOODY. On the face of it the present strategy, is a repudiation of ex-General Powell’s long-term bombardment strategy, it is not so much aimed at “See just how nasty we can be”, as “See how comprehensively powerful and effective we are, don’t bother to resist”, though in the case of the sought-after war Iraqi memories of the mass deaths and devastation of the Gulf War will give force to the threat. Shock to the Iraqis and a sought-after Awe to everyone else. It is also likely to be enforced by the threat of new, conventional weapons of mass destruction, (though the ‘improved’ Tomahawk missile of the Gulf War will be a key weapon this time around and is in the process of being further developed so that it can reportedly ‘shift between any of 15 pre-programmed targets mid flight), like the MOAB weapon^{xliii}, grotesquely described as the “mother of all bombs,” and tested at an Air Force Base in Florida as well as the existing BLU-82 “Daisy Cutter.” The ‘psychological’, that is to say the terrorizing effect of such bombs fit well with the Shock and Awe strategy. And even though the strategy seems to envisage less of a massacre than the Gulf War, nothing is off limits to Rapid Dominance which as *Shock and Awe* says in its introduction “will mean the ability to control the environment and to master all levels of an opponent’s activities to affect will, perception, and understanding. This could include means of communication, transportation, food production, water supply and other aspects of infrastructure as well as the denial of military responses.”

The strategy is built on an absolute confidence in the huge lead the US military has in information technology and its military application; the integration of the separate military services which is a Rumsfeld goal; and the training set-up of American forces (an under-analyzed phenomenon despite films like *Full Metal Jacket*), with the aim of producing super-soldiers as theorized by Huntington^{xliv}, and of whom Barnett says, as if to recuperate

individual autonomy, "...we fight fire with fire. If we live in a world increasingly populated by Super-Empowered individuals, then we field an army of Super-Empowered individuals." Needless to say, this strategy deals in abstractions, the aim is to break the will to resist of 'the enemy,' but there are no maimed children, nor bad drinking water for civilians as a result of infrastructural damage in its presentation. As David Byron puts it, they "refer to moral qualms and public will as minor impediments the way a marksmanship text might talk about crosswinds and glare." It is also firmly based in free-market ideology. "The American commercial-industrial base," *Shock and Awe* says in the Prologue, "is undergoing profound change propelled largely by the entrepreneurial nature of the free-enterprise system and the American personality." From this it presents a picture of dynamic small businesses being the pioneers and how defence choices are "inexorably linked to and dependent on this profound, ongoing change in the commercial sector and in learning to harness private sector advances in technology-related products." There is no mention of the massive scale of the defence budget (except that it is limited); how much research originates from that budget, nor of military colleges in either the USA or Israel. And most of all it shows its age, written in the heyday of the New Economy before it became a bubble. Now, as Melinda Cooper has said, the strategy is a boost to a battered American IT sector. And this too will be nothing new. As Wright Mills put it in 1956:

"Scientific and technological development, once seated in the economy, has increasingly become part of the military order, which is now the largest single supporter and director of scientific research in fact, as large, dollar-wise, as all other American research put together...In the lack of any political policies for science, the military, first the navy, then the army, began to move into the field of scientific direction and support, both pure and applied...The general tendency for the militarization of science has continued into the years of peace."

"Network-centric" warfare, the real-time fusion of intelligence and surveillance with precision-guided weapons, has been mostly to the benefit of Northrup Grumman and Lockheed Martin. Northrup has bought up those 'dynamic small businesses' in the field of digital communication, stealth and precision weapons, while Lockheed is the dominant provider of the military satellites that are needed to make the communications systems work, and which presumably have a major role in a re-invigorated Star Wars programme. David Teather (*Guardian* 28/2/03) also notes that the US government plans to increase spending on computers, software and services up 17% to \$58bn in the current fiscal year. Fifty eight billion! And some of this, he says, will be going to Dell, Panasonic and Compaq providing laptops and handheld devices to US soldiers.

The Authors of *Shock and Awe*, Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade Jr (with additional contributions from four retired high rankers) are both from the Power Elite template (though Ullman is of the non-chickenhawk variety), moving easily between official military work and corporate business. The book is published online by the Command and Control Research Programme of the Department of Defense. Wade is a former undersecretary of defense himself with responsibility for technology and acquisitions, and a member of the government Defense Science Board while operating a company called Defense Group Inc., of which he is both chairman and CEO. No wonder *Shock and Awe* is so keen on the dynamic small business, Defense Group's slogan — apart from hijacking a quote from Albert Einstein — reads: "In Business since 1987, Defense Group Inc. is a paragon of the small successful company." At the same time the rest of the Board of Directors are all ex military or Pentagon civilian people (one of whom, James E. Dalton, is also an "adjunct fellow" of the Hudson Institute), something it boasts of in its "About DGI" blurb. Its main customer is the American government. Describing itself it says "Since its inception, DGI has and continues to be called upon by the Departments of Defense, Energy and Justice for our subject-matter-expertise in nuclear, chemical and biological

weapons of mass destruction. DGI has provided its products and services to the FBI, Pentagon, Defense Threat Reduction Agency and National Guard as well as Worldcom and Bristol Myers Squibb.”^{xlv}

Ullman, a Navy veteran, is “Senior Associate” of the Centre For Strategic & International Studies and has his own related consultancy business, the Killowen Group. He has, according to CSIS’s potted biography, “served on the boards of several related investment and venture capital companies with holdings in Asia and as senior partner and vice chairman of two companies in the high-technology area. He is currently chairman of the advisory board of a three-dimensional radar and electro-magnetic inductive imaging company,” as well as writing for the *Washington Times* and now for the gung-ho *New York Post*. He is also on the Advisory Board of The Roosevelt Group which portrays itself as a meta-consultancy for “Chief Executive Officers and their senior executives who are charged with leading, indeed, inventing the future.”^{xlvi}

These, then, are deeply embedded members of the American power elite, its geopolitical heart who have for many years been exercised by the understanding that even for the US, defence budgets cannot be infinite. Back in 1988 when Ullman was MD of another company, Triton Defense Group Inc, he wrote a piece entitled “National Security and Fiscal Reality: An Impending Collision”, and since then they have seen the integration of IT supremacy and the streamlining of the four service military bureaucracy. All this, however, when US defence spending is still bigger than the next six national military budgets put together. At the same time *Shock and Awe*, with its best-seller type title, was written in the context of a more general notion called a “Revolution in Military Affairs”, so well established it has an acronym in general currency, RMA. If perfectly realized RMA envisages a war won before the first shots are fired. It depends on ‘neutralizing the enemy’ by making ‘him’ deaf and blind, “an electronic war, both offensive and defensive: it consists of ‘attacking’ the enemy’s electronic circuits to jam them, destroy them, or alter their content by means of ‘viruses’, logic bombs and other ‘worms’...‘the ability to create and expand the ‘information gap between friends and enemies,’ writes Andrew Krepinevich, who heads up strategy and budget review at the Pentagon and is one of the RMA theorists.”^{xlvii}

To be clear, all this was being developed in the Clinton Presidency, both at the level of real software and weapons development and in strategic terms and theoretically. It involved not just crippling the ‘enemy’s’ communications but having “dominant battlefield awareness” for the attacker, assumed to be the US. “Technology should also give commanders a much better grasp of what is evolving during a battle. Just as the American military of today has made ‘owning the night’ part of its tactical advantage, ‘owning’ the dimension of time will be critical to the success of Rapid Dominance...The rapid part of the equation becomes the ability to get real time actionable targetting information to the appropriate shooter, whether the shooter is a tank division, an individual tank, an artillery battery, an individual rifle man, a naval battle group, an individual ship, an air/wing squadron or an aircraft in flight. This means the need to have the right shooter in the right place; locating and identifying the target correctly and quickly; allocating and assigning targets rapidly; getting the ‘shoot’ order or general authority to the shooter; and then assessing the battle damage accurately.”^{xlviii}

All this allows in theory for a smaller number of troops to be committed to invasions or other wars, which theoretically allows for fighting two wars at the same time as envisaged by the Bottoms-Up review of the Clinton era. The Pentagon did not start from scratch the moment of the George W Bush coup was sanctioned. What came with Rumsfeld and the chickenhawks of the George H. Bush administration were:

- most of all, unprecedented increases in the US military budget two years running
- a determination to attack Iraq

- a more general belief in pre-emptive war with the Israelis as exemplars, and legitimized by September 11th
- an attack on the existing structures of the 4 arms of the US military, to remove their relative autonomy and make for integration directed from the Pentagon
- an acceptance of the Rapid Dominance thesis of *Shock and Awe*, that is of an all-out initial assault which in reality would mean aerial bombing plus electronic zapping, rather than the drawn out attritional bombing of the Gulf War
- an actual try-out of the technologically equipped and trained smaller military force as envisaged by Rumsfeld and both his military and ideological advisors, though the rhetoric of military transformation is somewhat undermined by the continuation of three overlapping fighter jet programmes proceeding in tandem which is allowed by those fantastic military budgets.

As a try-out, however, the likely, and as we now see inevitable invasion of Iraq— the ‘inevitable’ fought against because of the elitist determinism implied — will be a try-out that will test rough-condition super-kit, but does no more than that. It will be some time before the consequences of this sought-after war are clear, but the very likely victors — the US-UK Axis — are likely to hear only what they want to hear; that the project planned is a project completed. And it is likely the unctuous non-triumphalism of Mr Blair will spin it, as they say, to be exemplary of successful management, of a certain level of competence.

The sought-after invasion, one which will rid the world of a tinpot fascist, will not however, prove that much militarily. As Richard Perle has said: “The Iraqi force today is a third of what it was in 1991, and it is the same third, 11 years closer to obsolescence.” At the same time though the Rumsfeld strategy is to be so different from that of the Gulf War, its shock and awe may depend on Iraqi memories of the massacre of that war in ‘Ambush Alley. Further, the 1998 attacks and those air attacks sanctioned by ‘policing’ the no-fly zone, the tempo of which dramatically increased in the lead up to the sought-after war, mean that Iraq will have either ‘stone-age’ air defences, or none at all. The US forces, still heavily dependent on aerial bombing with impunity, will not be seriously tested though at a political level it will be a managerial success, one which will confirm the salaries of a wide range of think-tank fellows and other of weapons professionals.

And yet, however successful from the US point of view, this one-sided war will be, there remains what appears to be a fairly obvious problem in the assertion of military power globally, which is that it takes time to assemble the requisite kit, soldiers, airmen, marines and naval personnel, despite the ever-increasing number of US military bases worldwide. Whatever the sophistication of software development or the power of its weapons, and the training of its soldiers, the fact is that the build-up to this sought-after war has taken several months. This has not been unrecognized either by the *Shock and Awe* authors, though they see it as much more a problem of pre-Rapid Dominance strategy, what they call ‘force-on-force attrition.’ Of which they say: “This approach is based on ultimately projecting large amounts of force. This requires significant logistical lift and the time to transport the necessary forces. Rapidity may not always follow, especially when it is necessary to deliver large quantities of decisive force to remote or distant regions.”^{xlix} There is, though, an element of bluster in seeing this constraint as one of just Desert Storm-type strategy. A more realistic awareness of the problem still existing in newer strategy, came in the report on a Ditchley Foundation Conference of December ‘97, jointly organised by the Rand Corporation and entitled “Future Patterns of Military Conflict: ^{xlx}” Both Harlan Ullman and Donald Rumsfeld, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Rand Corporation were present along with Britain’s ubiquitous fixer, Dame Pauline Neville-Jones. “Even in military terms alone there remained of course important constraints which RMA would not dissolve,” the report read. “There was no sign of such step-

change improvement in the pace at which sea and air transport moved as to revolutionise the pace of distant expeditionary deployment, even though the effect of reductions in logistics burdens might well exceed the demands of new needs (such as perhaps ballistic-missile-defence systems) by enough to make substantial net inroads on volumes to be moved.”

This ‘weakness’ is however being addressed in three ways. Most frightening is the Bush Administration’s step-by-step re-legitimation of nuclear weapons. Then there is the capability of the US’s seven nuclear-powered carrier groups which “concentrate more military power in one naval group than most states can manage with all their armed forces.” Thirdly, already partly achieved, and to be furthered by the sought-after invasion of Iraq itself-is the expansion of US bases into new territories largely as a result of September 11th, the war against Afghanistan and some quid pro quo with some distinctly not democratic regimes such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. In the case of Uzbekistan, as we’ve seen, Kaplan gets his rationalisation in first: “The weakening of the brutal regime of Islam Karimov will not necessarily lead to a more enlightened alternative.” A base for 3,000 soldiers is being built in Kyrgyzstan, and has an agreement for extensive use of the only international airport at Manas with the Pentagon saying the deployment will be “long-term rather than temporary.” Iraq is about to join the list.

GLOBALISATION, MODERNITY AND 'THE WEST'

It seems likely that most American corporations and financial concerns cover their bets when it comes to large scale political donations even if Republicans will usually be considered the most sound. But if Bush has done well from oil and armaments business, Clinton did exceptionally well from finance capital in return not just for the deregulation gains made globally but also domestically. One of the most blatant cases of the revolving door in the power elite is that of Clinton’s Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin who had been CEO at Goldman Sachs. From investment banking into the most influential financial post in government and then on resigning the post, made chairman of the executive committee of Citigroup which by then, and with help from Rubin in his government role, had become the country’s largest financial institution, this after Citicorp, as it then was, had donated \$4m of campaign contributions, part of \$350m worth of lobbying and electoral contributions from finance capital. This help, well described by Robert Brenner,^{li} allowed a conflict of interest (or ‘synergy’ as one of its star beneficiaries described it) which allowed their supposedly independent stock analysts to report favourably on their client corporations, and laid the basis for the ‘dotcom’ bubble.

“Dotcoms” however, rather like neo-cons, have come to take the rap for something wider. For example far bigger stock market losses occurred in the deregulated telecoms sector, and from a general stock market boom in defiance of falling profitability in the manufacturing sector, one encouraged by de-regulation and the hype it allowed. From this point of view the end of Clinton’s second term could not have come at a better time, leaving a legacy of huge gains for American finance capital globally with the non-stop arm-twisting (accompanied by lectures) of weaker countries for open capital accounts and freedom of exit and entry to financial services firms, yet establishing all kinds of policing for the US’s own copyrights and patents; in effect imposing finance capital’s view of the world on a process of globalization it had not in itself created. That and a legacy of what Brenner calls “the titanic redistribution of wealth achieved by US corporate leaders in the 1990s.”^{lii} Clinton’s luck was that the stock market crash, in part a consequence of these legacies, only fully revealed itself after he had gone.

The Bush coup d’etat took place in this context and it’s hard to know if they understood what they were coming into, that whether ‘recession’ or not technically speaking, there was a big economic ‘downturn’; or that the soon-to-be Enron collapse would put the spotlight on their own carpetbagging. What was there for them to do, representatives of the super-rich themselves,

when “one of the most spectacular acts of expropriation in the history of capitalism,” had just taken place under a 1960s generation Democrats. Not just that, but when as wiseguy Ed Yardemi put it, “The new concern is that we have lost a generation of individual investors, much the way we did after 1929.” As we have come to learn since, September 11th gave the Administration something to work on.^{liii} and the result, a repeat of Reagan’s voodoo economics: tax cuts for the already rich, more defence spending and never mind the deficit.^{liv} And all possible when the means were there, to recreate a poisonous mix of paranoia and supremacism.

Voodoo economics has been possible in the past because of the unique position of the dollar and the USA as the world’s largest debtor being able to escape the usual drawbacks of being a debtor, which are that the creditor insists that you do what is in their interests, and has the power to make you do it. In recent years the notion of the USA — unimpeded by tight-arsed European central bankers — as the engine of world growth, heroically dragging along a sluggish world, has dominated the economics pages of all newspapers. A more grotesque version is of the USA as “consumer of last resort”^{liv} This latter does at least touch on this economic moment which is downturn or crisis or recession which makes life harder even for the majority of Americans, never mind the less privileged majority of the rest of the world. Looked at in purely American terms it is this: “Remuneration for America’s workers has not been high enough to support consumption without borrowing.”^{lvi} And debt, magnified now by Homeland (a homey version of fatherland) paranoia and security, is a pervasive tool of labour and social discipline. Internationally it is: “Low wage workers in poor countries are adding vastly to the world’s supply of goods but lacking the purchasing power to buy the products they make.”^{lvii} Old stuff, described by Keynes years ago. In the world forced along in the Reagan-Thatcher era, the attacks on unions and working conditions in the western world; combined with the power to pick and choose from a whole world of low wage and no wage countries, did restore profitability for a while by holding down wages. Now it has re-emerged instead, as a crisis of the ‘realisation of profit’, (a lack of purchasing power), staved off it would seem in the US and UK by a property boom, the very thing the Japanese were lectured about before their long-term recession set in.

In these circumstances all the instincts of the Bush administration, Spartans, supremacists and the very rich as they are, are to not do anything at a domestic or global level to deal with this ‘realisation of profit’ crisis by any form of regulation that might for example prevent your arm being sliced off by a wayward machine; or by any redistributive methods, or anything that smacks of negotiation. At a global level this is hardly new. Keynes’ Clearing Union proposal of 1944-5, and the Brandt Commission’s 1970s report recommending the benefits of a generous western attitude to global development, now seem hopelessly utopian and dated, ironically, because of the very modernity of their view of the world.

Instead, the looked-for way out of this crisis of ‘realisation of profit’/underconsumption in the longer run is the controlled expansion of the consumer class, one with the income for global goods and services, in China and India especially. As has been argued, US-led Western control of the world’s oil would give it leverage in the shape of development of both, while it would leave repression of the accompanying rise in class antagonism and violence to the domestic state. In the interim, privatisation of essential services; the terms of repayment for fruitless national debt which often involves Western enclosure of real resources; and the gains made by Western finance in murky stock markets, these have filled in the holes in profitability while leaving domestic states, Argentina for example, to control the ensuing desperation. In the US itself what we get is another archaic mix that rides roughshod over its own contradictions. While maintaining neo-liberalism in its purest and most cynical form, more deregulation and tax breaks for the rich, the Administration has gone back to a normal national-capitalist form in which the state aids its economic development in the darkest areas of its production, involving as it does, the most warped of all possibilities in the development of technology.

The sought after invasion of Iraq has prompted a debate as to whether Bush's militarist policy is in effect necessary to the current circumstances of globalized capitalism or undermine it. Whether it is a continuation of the New Economy, one which has understood its 'immaterial' vulnerability, as expressed by Melinda Cooper; or, a shift to the Huntington/Kaplan view that ruthless nationalist policies must be pursued as globalisation produces still greater inequalities; or whether they are built on a misunderstanding of the reality of a globalisation, which is beneficial to American interests amongst others, one which by definition is transnational, and which most of all depends on international laws, negotiations and agreements. From this point of view, what is going to be a more or less unilateral and 'pre-emptive war' will undermine the willingness of the rest of the world to make such agreements which have invariably been in the interests of the USA and the West, and which are especially required to ensure that full payments are made for the 'immaterial' goods and services which play so big a part in its global revenues. This benign view of globalisation also implies a confident, modern America which will retain its economic pre-eminence by the educated skill of its workforce.

Even this limited 'modern' point of view is having a hard time of it. The present version of voodoo economics is for one thing making for severe cuts in the public education offered by the states of America, meaning that pretensions to a meritocracy depend increasingly on selective immigration. And this is on top of a situation whereby spending on higher education has fallen from 8 to 4.3% of the national budget in the last 20 years, while spending on prisons has risen from 2.1 to 6.3% in the same period. Nation state military interference also places at risk at least the rhetoric of free market globalizers. Writing in *The Nation*, William Greider describes it thus: "The boosters of corporate-led globalization should understand that their vision of a New World Order is fundamentally incompatible with George W. Bush's...which...contradicts the principles claimed for free-running globalization, or at least unmasks its high-minded pretensions." To which one can only say that it is not at all clear that there is such a corporate vision or whether it contradicts its principles or not. He goes on to quote Paul McCulley, a managing director PIMCO, the world's largest bond investment fund: "American imperialism is, by definition, a retreat away from global capitalism, a retreat from the invisible hand of markets in favour of a more dominant role for the visible fist of governments." This however presumes a somewhat utopian version of capitalist-dominated globalization, while the 'realists' of US Space Command have converse worries, that, "Economic alliances as well as the growth and influence of transnational corporations will blur security arrangements."

The more immediate worry for these positive globalizers however is the unilateralism of American policy, and the downgrading of diplomacy. It is expressed for example by Bruce Nussbaum, editorial page editor of *Business Week*.^{lviii} "Chief executives," he says, "are beginning to worry that globalization may not be compatible with a foreign policy of unilateral pre-emption. Can capital, trade and labor flow smoothly when the world's only superpower maintains such a confusing and threatening stance? US corporations may soon find it more difficult to function in a multilateral economic arena when their overseas business partners and government perceive America to be acting outside the bounds of international law and institutions." As evidence he notes the failure of the US-UK second resolution explicitly authorizing war, a failure which in itself, does show the limits of American power. He might equally have referred to Richard Perle's *Spectator* article entitled THANK GOD FOR THE DEATH OF THE UN in which he refers with his usual bombast to "the intellectual wreckage of the liberal conceit of safety through international law administered by international institutions." Nussbaum expressed fears of the US losing long-term friends and allies but without raising the question of the relationship between the USA and 'the West'.

Up until now, despite the odd burst of Gaullism, competitive devaluations and spy systems

like Echelon, the 'West' has accepted American leadership vis-a-vis the rest of the world which came about in World War II, consolidated during the Cold War, and continued into the present with the 'West' getting what it wants through institutions like the WTO and IMF. The question arises as to whether the sharp differences revealed in the run-up to this war have a longer term significance. It is a questioned claimed for one by Robert Kagan, another generalizer who likes to dress up banalities in historical metaphor. The USA, he asserts, has a Hobbesian view of the world and Europe a Kantian view which eschews military force in international dealings and prefers negotiated agreements and laws. All very well within Europe, he says, but outside? Outside is another version of chaos. Instead of military force, Europe's own fear of the poor of the world and the 'chaos' they represent, is all too visible in the Fortress Europe anti-immigrant policies.

In the present situation, the opposition to the US's determination on war on the part of France, Russia and Germany is not somehow unreal. It reflects for one thing the opinion of its electorates; a belief in negotiation and diplomacy with an accompanying unease about the consequences of the war in the Arab and Muslim worlds, and the reality of a single super power. Any significant 'break' with the USA, however, when it is the final guarantor of the international investor class and 'market confidence', would only come if the US's unilateralism (shown in many instances from the ICC to Kyoto) was perceived as abandoning leadership of the West in the interests of its own dominant control of the world's oil for example, and even then the financial elites of the West would fight such a move with everything they have.

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

The time taken to get the US and British forces in place for the sought-after war was accounted for by the newzak drama of the diplomatic process which, like the Palestine 'peace process', had the net result of allowing the accumulation of facts on the ground. It would be conspiracy theory to say that this was planned but sometimes it is more important to look at net results rather than motivation. With Tony Blair one can have a gutful of motivation and analysis of it, his self-image of masochistic heroism. The 'uncomfortable truth' is that if the USA had continued its 'containment' policy in Iraq, he would have backed that too, with conviction. Instead, he is something of a fundamentalist stern white man with his own style, one which consists of a mix of irritation and sorrow that he should have to lead the poor children who just never get the point. A classic stern white man with an ego to match, the man who would strive to keep a 'justifiable American anger' within limits, would take a 'reluctant US' down the United Nations path, and in doing so, against all the odds, hold the West together. However, like all stern white men, his instinct is to lecture and not listen whether it be other Europeans and their lack of economic liberalisation, or public sector workers on how to work, and now the French and Germans.

In his self-elected missionary role in this case he was as deluded as the utopian globalizers who obviously believed that Clinton era really had changed the world. Wright Mills, speaking to us from 1956, is again the best guide: to how, on the other hand, the present Bush-style is not something alien to the American way. He talks of how America's elite and 'underlying population' "have accepted what can only be called a military definition of reality."

This has consequences. For one thing it has "led to a further feature of America's international posture: for the first time in American history, men in authority are talking about an 'emergency' without a foreseeable end." And then, "With the elite's acceptance of military definitions of world reality, the professional diplomat as we have know him or as we might imagine him, has simply lost any effective voice in the higher circles. " This because once the military definition of reality (one now recycled by neo-conservatives and 'realists', Wolfowitz and Huntington alike) is accepted then, "every man and nation is either friend or foe, and the idea

of enmity becomes mechanical, massive and without genuine passion. When virtually all negotiation aimed at peaceful agreement is likely to be seen as “appeasement”, if not treason, the active role of the diplomat becomes meaningless, for diplomacy becomes merely a prelude to war or an interlude between wars and in such a context the diplomat is replaced by the warlord.”

Which is a fairly accurate description of what has happened over the last few months leading up to the start of war and which has revealed Blair’s delusions of grandeur, the guiding hand and trusted advisor behind the world’s emperor holding the West and the UN together single-handedly, to be exactly what they are, vainglorious delusions pumped up by people like Robert Kagan who argued that only Blair could bridge the widening gap between Europe and the USA. Revealed either that, or that Blair too was determined on war, with the UN/diplomatic route to be followed only so long as it rubber-stamped the invasion of Iraq. The assertions of the September 2002 ‘dossier’ which placed all the onus of proving what might be unprovable on Iraq (not provable in that the weapons did not exist), suggest this second possibility, as does Blair knowing full well the line-up of forces for Desert Storm at the end of 1998 when Iraq was bombed by US-UK forces against the wishes of Russia, China, France and Germany, and when there was no reason to believe it would be any different this time around. When as a bridge between the USA and Europe, all faults were on the side of Europe in Blair’s view of the world.

NEW LABOUR, OLD IMPERIALISM

Perhaps the most grotesque delusion of New Labour is that it is modern or modernizing. It nailed its colours to military archaism from the very start when, contrary to earlier hinted promises, it refused to grant retrospective pardons to British soldiers executed for “cowardice” in World War I. To be clear about what this means, a refusal to recognize the justified terrors and neuroses among young men caught up in five years of state-sponsored terrorism. The real cowardice is that of New Labour. Since then, the Cool Britannia fiasco and the supremely naff Dome should have made it more modest in its claims. Unfortunately not, it continues to see Trade Unions, for example, as ‘dinosaurs’ — even though the Respect festivals they have organized were far more reflective and part of modern, multicultural Britain than anything New Labour has managed. While making the right noises about ‘civil society’, plurality and so on, New Labour, full of market fetishists and ex-Bolsheviks, dislikes Unions precisely because they are organisations of civil society with a structure at least as democratic as the government, and which have potential power. Instead, as in the USA, civil society is monopolized by a network of unelected think-tanks, institutes and quangos.^{lix} Both its archaic heart, profoundly anti-democratic nature and authoritarian instincts have been shown more clearly than ever by its enthusiastic support for the US and its sought-after war. As the graffiti in Cool Britannia’s Shoreditch heartland read: WAR, SO VERY LAST CENTURY. And it matters, this question of modernity, for in its rejection of Keynes and Willi Brandt’s proposals, the power elites of capitalism have decided that they cannot afford it, and instead allow a new rhetoric of archaism. And that matters because in the meanwhile they are lecturing, always lecturing, the Muslim world on its failure to come to terms with modernity.

This is not just a matter of Blair the individual, it is endemic in New Labour. It is Gordon Brown the supposed social democrat and ‘real’ Labour man who lectures Europeans on the need for ‘flexible’ labour markets (when we might better appreciate the efficiency of France’s public infrastructure for example) and takes his regular holidays in the USA. The trans-Atlantic links between think-tanks and institutions also involves universities and scholarships and it is as a Harkness scholar at MIT, that the ubiquitous Geoff Mulgan of Demos and now director of Cabinet Office strategy units, made the final move from being a Trotskyist sympathizer to ideologue and tactician of New Labour. Both *Demos* and *Prospect* magazine, of which he is a trustee, have American versions, and in the early nineties he was “the Clinton campaign’s link to Labour.”

It is frequently said in the run-up to this sought-after war, that the close ties between New Labour and Clinton are understandable, but why this de facto support for the very right-wing Bush Administration, even if under the banner of ‘taking the diplomatic route’, the route that has in fact been abandoned as war begins. In the first place there are Clinton-Bush continuities in attacks on welfare recipients and an ever rising prison population, and it is this which finds resonance in New Labour, which has its own elitist paranoia about the decadence of its own people. Recently it has got worse and focused almost exclusively on “Asylum Seekers”, but meanwhile the numbers of people imprisoned has reached unprecedented levels under New Labour, and the number of black prisoners in Britain’s jails has risen by 54% since Labour came to power, following the American model.^{lx} The continued emphasis on the responsibilities of citizens as against rights has reached the point where rights, it is implied are some frivolous luxury.

These ideological ties to the US, have also a history that long pre-dates New Labour. The ‘special relationship’ may be mythologized (in Blair’s mind the facts re-written as in the case of the Blitz) and Britain ever-more the junior ‘partner’ or flag of convenience, but it has some real basis in the especially Anglo-Saxon nature of the stern white man and that archaic militarism which remains at the heart of the British state. As has been said, Bobbitt talks of the US-UK being ‘the principle producers of collective goods for the society of states in the 21st century’, which turn out to be missile defence, intelligence sharing “and even pre-emption against terrorism.” As we come to see the ‘diplomatic’ line-up for this sought-after war is exactly the same as with Operation Desert Storm in December 1998, with the UK-US axis against everyone else. It makes one again wonder what Blair was expecting this time round, and it is the line-up so remarked on by Huntington as an example of the ‘soundness’ of the Anglo-Saxon world. In addition, Britain’s long and widespread history of colonialism means it is both involved with, and has great experience of the oil-armaments axis of the global political economy, a large arms export business,^{lxi} as well as the military techniques demanded by colonialism. There is already talk of how Britain has hands-on experience as in the north of Ireland, talk just at the moment when the army’s role in the perpetuation of violence and the killing of innocents there is being revealed. Britain is not just a key member of Echelon, it provides bases for American bombers and is recklessly offering facilities for the US’s National Missile Defence project, itself a product of a reckless strategy in the sphere of nuclear weapons, while in return being the only NATO member to get US stealth technology. And worse still, a historian with extraordinary media space, Niall Ferguson, resorts to archaism in the face of modernity, and rewrites the history of the British Empire as a great and positive enterprise.

The ties are in addition being encouraged on a daily basis by the media tycoons Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, those patriots whose own nationalities have been adopted for financial advantage or tacky vainglory, hard-faced men who do well out of wars. In relation to Murdoch especially, Blair’s lack of the ‘bravery’ he is now being acclaimed for by these same men, appears limitless. Their hostility to Europe where, however feeble, regulations to curb media oligopoly exist, knows no bounds and is overtly self-interested. In the case of Black, his goal is for Britain to become part of the North Atlantic Free Trade Association. Both men have been eager supporters of the sought-after war and are yet one more reason why it is the Britain of New Labour which has supported the USA towards a war that it has made inevitable. It completes New Labour’s wholesale rejection of modernity.

‘HUMANITARIAN IMPERIALISM’?

The elitist cold-war leftists of the ironically named *New Left Review* would argue that Blair’s support for the sought-after war is of a piece with military interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo. Other cold-war leftists have cited British Foreign theorist Robert Cooper as having articulated

this new form of 'imperialism'. The circumstances of Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo however, are not the same, and the insistence that they are somehow a continuum reveals only the debilitating dishonesty of the cold war leftism which still seeks to monopolize alternatives to global capitalism. *The London Review of Books*, having given itself over to this view of the world, took it to its logical conclusion in the issue of 14/11/02 in a long article by Stephen Holmes in which he accused some American liberals in the Clinton Administration who had pushed for intervention in Bosnia, of making the sought after invasion of Iraq possible.

It sticks in the gullet that such cold war leftists applaud Joe Sacco's excellent graphic account of the first Palestinian intifada and ignore his book on Gorazde in which the absolute need for outside intervention to stop planned ethnic cleansing in Bosnia is clear without any romanticization of the Bosnian position.

It sticks in the gullet that the gangster economy of Milosevic's Serbia could be described and defended as socialist.

It sticks in the gullet that people calling themselves Marxist could argue that Serbian concentration camps were fictional.

It sticks in the gullet that cold war leftists given free rein in the Opinion pages of the *Guardian* newspaper have, like Holocaust deniers, argued that not so many Bosnians were massacred; and have described Kosovan Albanians, including the militant working class of the Mitroveca mines, in terms that applied to any other people would be called racist by the very same writers. The same people who argue that the mass graves of Kosovan Albanians are somehow a trick of the Americans or the KLA to deceive the world.

It sticks in the gullet to remember Tony Benn dismissing Albanian Kosovans as fascists simply because they wanted to be defended, while marching in London with known Serbian supporters of ethnic cleansing. As Slavoj Zizek puts it: "I remember from the early 1990s dozens of Western leftists who proudly threw in my face how for them, Yugoslavia still exists, and reproached me for betraying the unique chance of maintaining Yugoslavia — to which I always answered that I am not yet ready to lead my life so that it will not disappoint Western leftist dreams." These dreams continue to operate on the non-strategy of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend', and in attaching more importance to what people and governments say they are, than to what they do in practice. Of course hypocrisy is involved, it could hardly be otherwise when the Western powers are involved. Nothing was done by the European powers most closely involved to stop the momentum towards the horror of Rwanda, there are far more war criminals at large than just Milosevic, and the Americans have refused to sign up to the International Criminal Court. However, a powerful court on war crimes is operating effectively in Rwanda; Croatian war criminals have been condemned at the Hague, and the idea that the anti-war movement should follow a cold war leftist like Harold Pinter into defending Milosevic the ethnic cleanser is a grim farce.

We never have exactly the allies we might want in such conflicts, and it is true that some American neo-conservatives were urging the Clinton Administration to action in Bosnia. This was in part an automatic condemnation of Clinton foreign policy on their account, and in the event they were irrelevant; it was both Sebrenica and the efforts of the liberals, like Anthony Lake, who Stephen Holmes condemns, which finally moved the Administration to make realistic (rather than the ritualistic) threats of air assault, a threat which forced the retreat of General Mladic, heroic killer of unarmed civilians. Look, however, at the allies of the cold war left in that period. Start with Samuel Huntington who begins "The Clash of Civilizations", with his identification of the people of Sarajevo as Islamists. And then that particular brand of British elitism which we might call 'conservative pessimism', one, which in contrast to George W. Bush, makes it a mark of honour to see the rest of the world in terms of grey, with each side as bad as the other: Lord Hurd, Malcolm Rifkind and the whole John Major government who

performed extraordinary contortions to prevent any realistic effort to stop the ethnic cleansing and the killing that involved in Bosnia. In fact, people who were as one with Tony Benn in a ludicrous romanticization of the Serb forces, as if Mladic were a Tito partisan ready to fight to the death instead of the killer of civilians he obviously was. It may be that Hurd and Rifkind will be sceptics when it comes to the sought-after invasion of Iraq, but they will be poisonous allies to any realistic anti-war movement.

Kosovo was especially difficult for anyone with a humanist anti-imperialist view of the world. Between a rock and hard place when it came to seeing the defence of Kosovans being conducted by a NATO bombing campaign so enthusiastically supported by a British Labour government, when means and ends seemed so askew. This government in its normal style chose to ridicule those asking why bombing and why bombing then, when so much could have been done before, to constrain a Milosevic who the West had saved from the implications of defeat. Blair appeared to enjoy the exhibition of armed state power as an area in which civil society was not just powerless but irrelevant. But what still sticks in the gullet is the refusal of the cold-war left to recognize that we were between a rock and a hard place, and that their only solution was to start a classic smear campaign against the Kosovans. Victim-blame was the order of the day and it was the Kosovans who were the ethnic cleansers as well as being criminals and so on.

The circumstances of ex-Yugoslavia and Iraq are different in several ways.

There is no serious strategic US-UK interest in Bosnia or Kosovo. Despite convoluted arguments about oil pipelines, and then contradicted by other more serious analysis of global oil production by the very same people, there is no such interest. The aggressive eastern expansion of NATO was taking place anyway.

In the case of the planned ethnic cleansing of Bosnia, both the US and UK had to be dragged kicking and screaming to do anything at all to prevent it. George Bush senior's Secretary of State James Baker wanted the continuation of the unified state of Yugoslavia. They only acted after three years of killing and the shame of Sebrenica. Even in the case of Kosovo there was not the massive propaganda effort exerted by the UK-US in the present sought-after war.

There is clear evidence of mass killings carried out by the Saddam Hussein regime. Now we hear constantly of the gassing of the Kurds in the 1980s (which the Western powers did nothing about at the time) and we know of the mass killings of those forces betrayed by the same powers after the Gulf War. No doubt the regime does now torture and perhaps kill individuals but as far as we know there is no present-day organized ethnic killing as there was in Bosnia and Kosovo, killings which were preventable.

THE DANGERS OF ABSTRACTION

Several such dangers have already been highlighted. There is the way in which Western, and especially American, computerized weapons technology allows its killers to be wholly remote from those they kill. From the Tomahawk missile, first experimented with in the Presidency of Jimmy Carter, via Star Wars and the computerized war-gaming that preceded the Gulf War to the 'virtual killing' by pilot-less planes, the process continues in one direction. It appears to do so without all those dramas of conscience we have been told of among the scientists of Los Alamos and the first nuclear bomb. The seductiveness of such 'gamed' war was shown most clearly by the media horror at its obverse, the lynching of two Israeli soldiers — spy soldiers as far as is known — by a young Palestinian crowd in 2001, their bodies hung out of a window. In the West, the horror was palpable, the killing body to body, stones or strangulation too much to contemplate. It was horrific, but when presented with the hi-tech killing of Palestinians by helicopter gunship by pilots we never see, the horror washed out by the distance between cause and effect, the pilots just doing a job except for rare moments as in the 'duck shoot' of the Gulf

War when they reveal themselves to have enjoyed what they did.

There is also the cold-war left which somehow cannot see the suffering of those oppressed and killed by non-imperialist forces. Sometimes it is true that such killing takes place as a consequence of the disintegration of the state's capability through the imposition of structural adjustment policies. But this is not the case with Mengitsu or Mugabe or Milosevic. Equally, whatever the pious denials from the US-UK axis, the way in which Islam has become a monolithic menace. Reputable public opinion polls have shown that in the USA for one, despite the lack of any evidence, despite in fact, evidence to the contrary, many people believe there to be a direct connection between the Iraq regime and shadowy Al-Qaeda.

Another, equally insidious form of abstraction, has come from what might be called "the pro-war left". They and the cold-war left share the bolshevik view that the ends justify the means. This bolshevik view was also that of Mr Blair who told us in mid February in the most patronising tone, just when he was being most slippery about the circumstances in which Britain would go to war, that "Above all, we need to be more radical in dividing means from ends. The bane of the centre-left is confusion between the two. The objectives, values and beliefs never change. The means should change as the world changes."

The pro-war left, as celebrated by Johann Hari in *The Independent*, have a marked distaste for the cold-war left, but this in itself can hardly be a justification for their position given that it is another version of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend', and the similiarity remarked above on the matter of ends and means. The visit to Saddam by that unreconstructed egomaniac Tony Benn was indeed grotesque, but hardly a reason in itself to be as pro-war as it seems to have been for the editor of *The Observer* newspaper. This pro-war left has made its bid for the moral high ground when it says that they are the only ones not dealing in abstractions, that they are the only ones who really care about the Iraqi people as real people, as people entitled to freedom and democracy. But democracy out of the guns of a mono-superpower with its own agenda is precisely that, an abstraction, one which is doubly grotesque. For one thing it is so selective, as if democracy and freedom were ballistic missiles for Iraq only when no reference is made to the realities of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Algeria, all western-supported. Closer to home this abstract moral superiority makes no reference to what we know of conditions at Guantanamo Bay, of torture, places we have only heard of in Afghanistan or the justifications for torture made by treacherous American intellectuals.

One of Johann Hari's heroes, John Lloyd (formerly stupid enough to have been a member of the Communist Party) takes abstraction one step further to argue that imperialism is good for the whole world. It is a view of the world from another era when it was possible for the communist Bill Warren to say it in the early 70s and, in the process, mimic a pro-war capitalist of the same period, W.W. Rostow who in American Administrations believed that the Vietnamese must be beaten while the American economic success model could be copied by all countries. For a brief period this view was justified by the special case successes of the Newly Industrializing Countries of South East Asia. Thos special case is still invoked now as if despite all the evidence they were not special cases, by Robert Cooper in comparing South Korea to Zambia.

The reiteration of this viewpoint in the present situation is where we can find an echo of that of Robert Cooper presented by the cold-war left as the ideologue of humanitarian imperialism and a big influence on Tony Blair. What Cooper shares with the American ideologues described above, is a picture and fear of chaos emanating from outside a familiar loop which he calls the 'post-modern' world. 'Post-modern' involves a change in the 'naming of parts' from say 'core' and 'gap' and is especially cheeky in that it bypasses the retreat from modernity signalled by the capitalist world in the mid-seventies and, more cheeky still, does have a category of 'modern' states, but then defines them as potentially the most dangerous of

all in that they “continue to operate by the principles of empire and the supremacy of national interest,” states like Russia, China and India. Instead for Cooper, it is the end of the Cold War which ends what he calls the modern world, one — which it turns out — has its origins in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

It is not just a change in the ‘naming of parts’ however which makes Cooper different to the American ideologues described above, and most explicitly from Robert Kagan. For Cooper it is the European Union which is the most “developed example of a postmodern system. It represents security through transparency, and transparency through interdependence.” Whereas, “the USA is a more doubtful case since it is not clear that the US government or Congress accepts either the necessity or desirability of interdependence, or its corollaries of openness, mutual surveillance and mutual interference, to the same extent as most European governments now do.” (R.Cooper “The Postmodern State.”)

But then, in a more downbeat and open way he articulates a position similar to the ‘realist’ Robert Kaplan: “The challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards...when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of states...we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era—force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the 19th century world of every state for itself...when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle.” The naff quality to this dodgy analogy should immediately put the reader on red alert. And it is needed, as Cooper slides from states “who still live in the 19th century world of every state for itself,” in which he would presumably include Iraq, to what he calls the “pre-modern world of failed states” of which he designates Afghanistan as one, placing them all in a metaphorical world of the jungle. This is the Kaplan and Barnett world vision with the same neat tie-up to the world of Al Qaeda. “The pre-modern state may be too weak even to secure its home territory, let alone pose a threat internationally, but it can provide a base for non-state actors who may represent a danger to the postmodern world.” In reality the trick pulled by Bush and Blair has been to make the same picture of a merged jungle, so that an ‘old-fashioned’ state like Iraq is implied to be a base for non-state actors.

As with Barnett, he sees “those left out of the global economy risk falling into a vicious circle,” and that it is here that a new kind of benign imperialism should come into play like the ‘voluntary imperialism of the global economy’ and an insistence on good ‘governance’ in return for aid. This is very similar to the ‘leftist’ pro-war position but it is a misleading abstraction. The former Peruvian diplomat Octavio Romario in his book “The Myth of Development” (Zed Books) is also worried about how many developing countries are not on the South East Asian road but are slipping towards being “non-viable national economies” which could then implode into what he calls “ungovernable chaotic entities.” His analysis of this process is not however abstract. Instead, he describes the depreciation of raw materials prices; of how deregulation and privatisation do not create market economies in the Third World because a vast majority of the population live below the poverty line; of how the World Bank’s sudden rediscovery of the virtues of the state does not include it having any managerial economic role; how with Structural adjustment policies, privatisation and deregulation, the state is weakened because it has nothing to offer its own populations.

It is doubtful whether even Tony Blair was much governed in his decisions by such abstractions provided by Cooper except for his response to the huge demonstration of 16th February, when he talked of ‘rogue states’ and terrorism as ‘twins of chaos’, and for legitimizing the notion of pre-emptive attacks on other states; or by the pro-war leftist cheerleaders except for his February 9th rhetorical line that “the left should not weep if Saddam is toppled” — and use of their increasingly abstract notions of democracy and freedom as applied only to Iraq.

The main line of attack from these cheerleaders (mimicking in many instances those of the

American neo-cons) was that those opposed to the war were denying Iraqis the right to the democracy they themselves enjoyed. This continued despite the fact that the democratic process in the UK and USA was being undermined and manipulated in order to make the conditions for Iraqi democracy; and in the face of arguments that it — as an abstraction — could not be imposed from outside by a superpower with its own self-interests, especially given the long undermining of democratic prospects in Iraq by the sanctions policy which gave the Ba’athist government yet more power. However the use of these abstractions in the diplomatic process leading to the sought-after war was prominent, and this process too needs some light shone upon it.

THE DIPLOMATIC ROUTE

“The USA’s flexibility to date may have more to do with the problems the Pentagon has been having putting its troops into place than its commitment to a diplomatic solution. It is military logistics that have been driving the pace of diplomacy.”

The Guardian 12/3/03.

The idea that an intensely reported and long drawn out diplomatic process was just a charade has the ring of ultra-leftist omniscience. In this case however it is public knowledge that the objective of an invasion of Iraq, including the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, has been common to many members of the Bush Administration for several years. The attacks of September 11th 2001, removed any checks against its resumption of what Wright Mills called “a military definition of reality...when virtually all negotiation aimed at peaceful agreement is likely to be seen as ‘appeasement’, if not treason, the active role of the diplomat becomes meaningless, for diplomacy becomes merely a prelude to war or an interlude between wars.” Within six days of the September 11th attacks Bush commissioned plans to invade Iraq. Some few months after the military defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan, involving many civilian deaths and the subsequent return to power of the ‘warlords’, Bush then made a speech (June 2002) announcing a doctrine whereby the US had the right to launch pre-emptive attacks on other countries. Appropriately, it was made at West Point, the military academy fetishised by Huntington for the purity of its Spartan values. In July, Vice President Cheney, chickenhawk carpetbagger supreme,^{lxii} said that it was a waste of time to deal with Iraq through the UN. At the beginning of August it was reported that Bush had ordered the USA’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to be filled to its 700 million barrel capacity, advance preparation to insulate it from any disruption to supplies a war of invasion might cause.

Later in that month (August 02) both Rumsfeld and Bush attacked what they called media ‘frenzy’ about Iraq, while the Administration continued to leak hints that they would attack, culminating on the 27th when Cheney called for a pre-emptive strike, saying that they should not give in to ‘wishful thinking’.^{lxii} Two things stand out from this period: wishful thinking is always made out to be a mindset exclusive to those who do not share a military definition of reality, whereas all kinds of fantasies about democratizing the Middle East are accepted as realistic. Second, this coyness about an attack or not has become a strategic method especially in Britain where the phrase “no decision has yet been taken” became a daily event in conjunction with warnings to Iraq (which by this time had ceased to be Iraq or even Saddam Hussein but just Saddam, Saddam as Frankenstein), and a media flirtation with the word ‘inevitable’. What the ‘no-decision-has-yet-been taken’ line did was to prevent any debate-with-consequences about a war and what its consequences might be, not until the very last minute. Their smug voices still ring in the ears, those New Labour apparatchiks: they weren’t in the business of answering hypothetical questions. Not even later in 2002 as tenders were put out to commercial shipping to carry tanks and heavy armour to the Gulf. As in the USA, the greater the talk of bringing democracy to Iraq, the more it was stifled domestically.

It is said that some time in early September after those old heavyweights James Baker and Brent Scowcroft had expressed doubts about a unilateral approach, Secretary of State Powell and/or Tony Blair persuaded Bush to take the multilateral UN. This route came to an end when members of the UN Security Council, many vulnerable to US pressure and blandishment refused to rubber stamp the move to war, preparations for which were finalized, everything in place, at almost exactly the same time. This refusal in itself by countries with much to lose is in itself a reason for optimism and confirmation that the anti-war movement was not a waste of time even if it has not prevented the invasion. What Powell, and possibly Blair, got from Bush was a commitment to back a last ditch UN ultimatum for Iraq to accept the return of UN weapons inspectors after an absence of nearly four years. And yet later in the month the *Guardian* reported that “the US navy had booked a large commercial freighter to ship tanks and other heavy armour to the Gulf in late September, the third such shipment in a month. Shipping analysts said the commercial charters suggested the navy had already exhausted its transport capacity.”

To be scrupulous, the argument articulated at this time, and most clearly from the UK side of the axis, was that the real threat of military force was the only way in which Iraq would comply with a demand for the return of weapons inspectors with non-negotiable powers. What is at issue is how much the military plans already made by the US with the weight behind it of the ideological and media backing described above, and the size of troop build-up, would of itself create a situation whereby the inspectors would be bound to fail. The question in Britain, with the special responsibility we its citizens have, given the importance ascribed to British support for the American position within the USA itself, was and is the good faith of the New Labour government in the matter.

The first mass demonstration in London (it took two hours to even move off from the Embankment in London) took place in October, because even then, the signs were all of the government’s bad faith. Just before Tony Blair accepted the role ‘thrust upon him’ of keeping George W. Bush to the UN path, he had already made a speech which talked of Iraq posing a “real and unique threat to the region and the rest of the world.” (*Guardian* 4/9/03). He did not specify how this was the case save to say that “without any question” Saddam “is still trying to develop Iraq’s chemical, biological and nuclear capability.” Then, in a characteristic Blair preemptive strike, he attacked critics of a possible war for “not thinking things through if they believed Britain was too loyal to the USA,” because, he said, September 11th could have happened anywhere, London for example.^{lxiii} Just as ‘Saddam’ was a threat “to the rest of the world”, the Prime Minister was already making one of those fact-less links between Iraq and Al Qaeda which became so regular on both sides of the Atlantic, and which culminated early this year in the ringing of Heathrow airport against an unnamed threat and government advice to hoard necessities. What was especially disturbing was the reported quote from Elizabeth Jones, US Assistant Secretary of State at this same time, early in September, that she had no doubt of British support for any possible military action: “Certainly, that’s what the British government has told us, that they’re with us.” Whatever the circumstances, Blair’s speech was well understood elsewhere, the following day Gerhard Schroeder said that Blair did not speak for Europe.

Further evidence of New Labour’s bad faith came later in the month when the government produced a dossier, “based, in large part,” the Prime Minister wrote in his personal introduction, on the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee. “It was, he said, “unprecedented for the Government to publish this kind of document.” He repeated the assertions he had already made and went on to say that Saddam’s “military planning allows for some of the WMD to be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them.” This is scary stuff, amplified in the Executive Summary, not just scary but ensuring that whatever the UN course pursued, whatever

negatives found by the inspectors would never be enough. All this taken together was understood by many people in Britain and got us up on our feet for that first big march the following month.

AMBIGUITY, SMEARS AND SHIFTING SANDS

By late September, even that reckless fascist Saddam Hussein had recognized things were serious and offered ‘unfettered access’ to UN inspectors. In November UN Resolution 1441 was passed unanimously by the Security Council and then accepted by Iraq. It had, however, taken several weeks to negotiate with Blair threatening France, Russia and China that failure to agree on a resolution would make war more likely, while distancing himself from the USA’s ‘regime change’ aim. “I think it would be a fantastic thing if we got rid of Saddam Hussein but the purpose is disarmament.” In fact the resolution when passed was looked to as involving a potential justification for war, even though Russia had made it clear right through October that the resolution should not be an automatic trigger for military action. The resolution finally used the words ‘serious consequences’ if Iraq did not disarm, a phrase that occasioned hundreds of hours of airtime for experts and loudmouths. The ambiguities ran deeper than the form of words. No mechanism was properly described for judging if disarmament had taken place or not, and no timetable given for the inspectors to finish their work. This meant that the US could continually and unilaterally describe events and non-events as being a ‘material breach’ of the Resolution; the school prefects of New Labour talk of ‘attitude’; the position of the UN inspectors undermined from day one; and the build-up of US-UK forces in the Gulf could continue unchecked on the grounds that only a threat of force would get compliance from the Iraqi government.

Within a month, the Pentagon won approval to double the number of military personnel in the Gulf to 100,000 and the British Ministry of Defence put out a tender for four more ships to take heavy armour to the Gulf, while Secretary of State, ex-General Powell was said to have ‘become a hawk’, demanding that Iraq accept an even more aggressive inspection regime. In January, he perfected a pincer movement on the weapons inspectors. They were patronized and pressured when he told the *Washington Post* (reported in the *Guardian* 10/1/03) that the US had begun to feed ‘significant’ intelligence to the inspectors on weapons programmes they believed to be still active but that “The floodgates would not be opened until they proved they could handle and exploit the information.” All this on the same day that the US ordered an extra 62,000 troops to the Gulf; the US-UK axis decided that what Blix had said was that Iraq had failed to provide ‘proactive co-operation’; when US Ambassador to the UN Negroponte^{lxiv} warned Iraq against ‘legalistic’ interpretations of its obligations, accompanied by a demand that it admit to having weapons programmes; and Blair admitted to the chartering of more ships to carry tanks and heavy guns for a possible invasion of Iraq in the face of *Lloyds List* confronting Ministry of Defence evasions by describing how, ironically, the Russian ship the *Sochi* was loading equipment at the MoD docks at Marchwood, near Southampton.

To the annoyance of elitists, people, nearly all of them, are not stupid; that is if they have real information and are paying attention to what is going on. And, despite all newzak’s phoney dramas, it was becoming clear from this point that the build-up of US-UK troops and weaponry was going beyond the point of being a credible threat to enforce Iraqi compliance, especially when the very notion of compliance was being made impossible for Iraq and which, Saddam’s ‘attitude’ the US-UK axis implied, made impossible. It was from this point that people who had never demonstrated against anything were starting to think that they too might go to London on 16th February.

In the month between, from mid January to the 16th February, the military build-up continued, while Bush continued to assert that no final decision had been made on war. ‘Final’

was the giveaway word, integral to his consistent tone throughout, both coy and aggressive. On the 21st January it was announced that a quarter of the British army, 26,000 troops, was to be deployed in the Gulf bringing the total deployment to 30,000 even if, “British armoured regiments risk being left behind heavy US forces and being unable to communicate properly with them.”^{lxv} At this time, never mind the entire rest of the world where opinion polls showed opposition to the sought after war was in the 80-90% range, a YouGov Poll in the UK showed 59% not convinced that Iraq (described as usual as ‘Saddam’) was dangerous enough to justify war, a percentage which fell to 30% in a Guardian poll of 21/1/03. In the USA, polls showed 66-70% saying both that the case for war had not yet been made and that the UN inspectors should be given more time. Blix and the UN inspectors were simply not coming up with any ‘smoking gun’.

All of which prompted a shift in the extraordinarily slippery evolution of Tony Blair’s arguments on the issue of Iraq. It is this, more than anything else which suggests that his urging on the USA of the UN route was hobbled from the very beginning, that he would support the US in whatever it did if the UN too did not support the US in whatever it had decided. On the 26th January the hysterically Blairite *Observer* newspaper reported that Blair had said they didn’t need to find a ‘smoking gun’ and quoted a ‘Number Ten insider’ saying with breathtaking arrogance, and in imitation of ex-General Powell’s pincer movement, “We know the stuff is there. Whether the UN can find is another matter.” Chief Blairite cheerleader Andrew Rawnsley added his contribution to the undermining of the UN in the same newspaper. He attacked Chirac in the crudest terms; said German motives were electoral; that Russia just wanted to be paid for its acquiescence; and that, “As for the Chinese, I am not comfortable with the idea that how we deal with Saddam should be dependent on the say-so of the autocrats presiding in Beijing.” Never mind the pomposity (‘I am not comfortable with’), or even the blindness to Blair’s own autocratic tendencies, this is symptomatic of New Labour, comfortable with the role of ‘stern white Anglo-Saxon’^{lxvi} and its approach from here on in, to not take on the real arguments, but to smear opposition to the war.

On the same day Blair himself, on The David Frost TV show, shifted his ground again, and said Britain would only go to war without UN approval if faced with an ‘unreasonable’ UN veto when the UN inspectors had said there wasn’t enough co-operation. As we know, now the invasion has started, the unreasonable veto line, aimed at a misquoted Chirac, became New Labour’s final justification to attack, but without the corresponding evidence from the inspectors on non-co-operation. A few days later Blair was at Camp David where, it has been reported, he was ‘roughed up’ by the Americans over his continued emphasis on the UN route.

We, of course, are not privy to what went on at Camp David, but what we could see was a shift of stance after that meeting which made the need to protest even stronger. It also followed the presentation by ex-General Powell at the UN of ‘evidence’ which once again undermined the UN inspectors by asserting that the Iraqis knew in advance of UN inspections by phone-tapping. This assertion was, in turn, contested by the UN team some two weeks later as was Powell’s interpretation of satellite pictures including one which purported to show an engine testing stand for long-range missiles. But that was two weeks later, and, to the extent that polls are an accurate reflection of public opinion, the Powell presentation made a huge difference in the USA itself. At the same time Blair shifted ground again in front of a Jeremy Paxman audience of sceptics and refused to rule out invading Iraq without a UN mandate in the face of an ‘unreasonable veto’ without reference to the opinions of the UN weapons inspectors and followed this up with another dossier. This dossier was quickly revealed to be a mish-mash of half-baked intelligence and plagiarism from an obscure academic source.

WISHFUL THINKING

The socialist humanist view of the world which necessarily involves notions of equality, justice and mutual respect has been dismissed as wishful thinking by the rich and powerful for generations. Stern white men have endeavoured to make such a dismissal into a *fait accompli*. This was taken a step or two further when Dick Cheney spoke for all the other chickenhawks sharing a military definition of reality, when he talked of alternatives to a pre-emptive strike on Iraq as wishful thinking. What has been frightening in the build-up to this war is how New Labour and its humanist media supporters are those who have indulged in wishful thinking; what is so encouraging is how many people who came out in London and all over the world against the sought-after war rejected it.

This wishful thinking was most evident in Britain from the *Observer-Guardian* conglomerate with a few honourable exceptions. The end of Andrew Rawnsley's 26th January article, in which he dutifully undermined the legitimacy of the UN's Council, was to repeat how Blair was not just heroic in not 'pandering' to British public opinion and then add that this was especially principled, in that he hadn't asked for anything from the US in return for his support. This meant, he said, that Blair could argue for more time and diplomacy on the grounds that the US could not go it alone when it came to domestic support.

Such wishful thinking has reflected that of the New Labour government itself. On 7th February 2003, Jack Straw was quoted as saying that the Powell dossier was 'compelling evidence' while dismissing reports of what US National Security Coordinator Condoleezza Rice had clearly said, that no further UN resolution was needed. But it was encouraged by the *Guardian's* chief political correspondent Michael White for example. Thus on 15th February he wrote that the heroic Blair had ensured that Bush had not 'capitulated' to the 'unilateralist party' because, quoting a minister, "Tony had to move Heaven and earth to get them into a second resolution." On the 28th February after a 121 rebel vote against the war in Parliament, White wrote that this would help Blair's case and make it easier for him to keep Bush in the UN ambit and push on for a Security Council majority for a 2nd resolution explicitly authorizing war. This is a level of wishful thinking that defies reality altogether but did not stop White repeating a new New Labour line of attack on the anti-war movement, describing it as a not tough enough set of middle class whingers. This from a party of government by and for the middle class except where their interests clash with the very rich and/or media barons. He concluded by predicting, with no evidence, that Blix's next report would be hard on the Iraqi regime.

This went beyond wishful thinking. Written some 12 days after London's million-plus demonstration, it was part of what can only be described as a softening up process. These wishful thinkers may well have started out as simply too afraid to look at the increasingly obvious consequences of the military build-up, but became just as complicit in making the sought-after war 'inevitable' as the Murdoch press for example, when they stopped looking at the 'arguments and facts' and instead denigrated opponents. It is in this respect that New Labour and the Bush White House have become so similar, the way in which contempt became the coinage of debate, and punishment the reward for dissidents with the Pentagon threatening to withdraw all co-operation and bases from Germany.

THE ANTI WAR MOVEMENT

The 16th February demonstration against the war in London was huge, and it was not an isolated event. Demonstrations took place all over the world, rich and poor worlds, big cities and small towns. In London, as one comrade put it, it was a case of the masses using the vanguard and not the other way round. It was this perhaps which most irritated Perry Anderson, doyen of cold-war left elitism. In a *London Review of Books* article in which he made valid points about

the suffering of Iraqi people from UN sanctions for many years, he concluded that therefore the demonstration against the sought-after war was simply “mewling”. Hardly the way to build any kind of effective mass movement, but then unless fully educated and lead by *New Left Review*, such a thing would be not just a waste of time, but repellent to him and even then, rather disturbing.

The vanguard produced posters and speakers, most of whom were not heard by the thousands of matchers still on the road, and who — with the exception of Ken Livingstone and Ms Dynamite — spoke bombast. The thousands who came had not come to hear bolshevik fantasy from a finger-waving Tariq Ali, but because they had understood that a dangerous process was underway in which even a semblance of democracy was being ditched. And this had an effect. Even though Blair’s response was characteristic — I respect what you’re saying but you are wrong and I am right, and sincerely believe that I am right — he shifted ground yet again. While sticking to the ‘imminent and real’ dangers of WMD; of ‘rogue states’ and terrorism as “twins of chaos”, he began to emphasise the war (on which of course no decision had yet been taken) as also one of liberation for the Iraqi people and democracy. This was the language of the pro-war left, a language of selective democracy which somehow did not apply to Egypt or Saudi Arabia. All this while he fell back increasingly on the sincerity of his beliefs.

A classic encounter took place soon afterwards at a televised Blair speech to New Labour loyalists in London. He was heckled about the war by a young man who had slipped through the net. On the TV pictures the young man’s voice was meaningless noise while the Prime Minister, with the power of the microphone, was perfectly audible in normal speaking voice. As the heckler was dragged away by two large and suited goons, Blair told him, “If you don’t mind me saying so,” (characteristic smug pause), “if you were in Iraq you wouldn’t have the free speech to be able to speak to the Prime Minister like this.” Yes, said the young man as he was being dragged away.

What has been strong in the anti-war movement is how it has asserted the critical intelligence of masses of people, its demand for evidence; for explanation as to Why Now?; its rejection of the very notion of ‘the nevitabile.’ Finally it failed, in this country, to stop ‘the inevitable’; yet despite the absence of any consistent, forceful opposition from any major political figures either side of the Atlantic until it was too late, with the exception of Jimmy Carter, it has had consequences. In its own way it can only have helped the courageous stance taken by the ‘small power’ members of the Security Council on rejecting the ‘second resolution that the UK-US axis had pushed for to give legitimacy (as legitimacy had until then been defined) to the decision to invade which had by then been clearly made.

In its own way, it can only have helped push Blair not just into a ‘humanitarian’ stance, but more importantly into insisting that there be a serious attempt to push for a just Israeli-Palestinian agreement. Given what we know of the extreme pro-Israeli position of most of the US chickenhawks; the ability of the Israeli state to cash in on its white man position in a sea of ‘crazy Arab terrorists’; and the lack of any history to Western encouragement of progressive secular politics in the Middle East, this may prove to be just more rhetoric. But rhetoric is better than nothing at all, because it allows the Western anti-war movement to remind its leaders of what they said, and what they promised. Similarly, the vigilance the movement promises will be an important force in pressurising the invading forces on the nature of the promised democracy in Iraq; and the use of oil revenues for the economic development of the country rather than paying for the invasion itself; and the nature and beneficiaries of reconstruction contracts.

The Bush-Blair axis seems to have made no effort to resist the temptation of easy military victory with few casualties which the technology offers. The anti-war movement also has its temptations, but these have to be resisted. There is for example that perverse wishful thinking

from the Gulf War, that the invading forces will have a tough time. The inequality in armaments is far greater this time. The greater temptation is for hoping the American-British axis to act as viciously as possible, simply so that we could say with grim relish, “we told you so.” The abstractions are there to be resisted, and the fewer people killed the better.

The anti-war movement has not stopped ‘the inevitable,’ and the opinion polls show that in Britain too, its support slipped from well-over to well-below 50% in the period between the demonstration of 16th February and the start of the invasion, just as something similar happened in the USA a little earlier. Opinion polls reflect a passive form of decision-making, the problem for the active opposition of the anti-war movement was precisely the drawn-out nature of the ‘diplomatic process’ accompanied by ‘no decision has yet been taken’. For many people, February 16th was the first march they had been on, and for many more it was an all-day effort, with coaches coming from Wales and the north of England, starting at dawn and returning late at night. For most it did not further their careers or the size of a particular political group. In these circumstances to try and reproduce anything as powerful was impossible. From then on, the pro-war media made it into a numbers game, just as happened when finally a parliamentary debate did happen. The number of MPs voting against war the first time a vote was allowed created a situation where only at least a doubling of that number in a subsequent vote would be seen as significant.

At the same time, as has been indicated, the build-up of forces by the US-UK forces continued apace while bombing raids in the no-fly zone increased in intensity, as did official coyness with ‘inevitable’ and ‘not inevitable’ and a newzack which took this seriously. Similarly the connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda was suggested and qualified, qualified and re-suggested in the US and UK where the Murdoch press and the BBC vied with each other in giving uncritical space to American military men and analysts with an axe to grind. With the honourable exceptions of the *Mirror*, *The Independent*, and especially *The Independent on Sunday*, the media fell into line when it mattered most and assumed for itself a phantom version of democracy with its polls and phone-ins. In the absence of a ‘national strategy’ to deal with this, individuals in the anti-war movement ended up wondering just how much radio, TV and newsprint they would have to consume in order to prevent this ad hoc creation of ‘public opinion’. It is perhaps surprising that opposition to the war has held up as well as it has.

CULTURES OF BLAME AND PRESUMPTION

The final weeks leading to what the *Independent on Sunday* called “The final charade” when Bush, Blair and Aznar met in the Azores on the weekend of 16th March, are characterized by the resistance to their desires by the countries of the Security Council with a lot to lose in taking such a position, and the blame and smear campaign so characteristic of the Bush regime and New Labour, whereby it was Chirac who made war inevitable by announcing that France would veto any resolution which triggered war.

What is so heartening about the failure of the US-UK axis to win a majority for their rubber stamp for war in a second Security Council resolution, is that they had taken it for granted that they had the ‘clout’ to get what they wanted. Their presumption was breathtaking, and its rejection is something that has been studiously ignored by pro-war leftists so keen to tell the world that they are the real Third Worldists. The Chilean President ignored the threat to the free trade treaty with the US posed by its rejection, and the Mexicans made it clear that American promises were not to be taken seriously. But most important of all has been the attitude of Guinea’s Prime Minister Lamine Sidime who, though prepared to be flexible on how long a deadline to Iraq might be, he might accept less than the 45 days he had proposed, demanded that their must be benchmarks, that ad hoc US-UK interpretations of attitude and compliance were not enough, there had to be something measurable and definable. In so many

instances we have seen that the west, the Americans in particular, always want to keep it vague. Finally, and specifically some one week later as the Azores meeting took place, He said he would abstain, “affronted by American presumption.” Affronted also by the absolute opposite to his insistence on benchmarks which the British suggested (to ‘win over the waverers’), that Iraq be presented with six tests, one of which involved Saddam Hussein going on television to admit he had stocks of illegal weapons and had therefore been lying. For this to have been seriously suggested, indicates only that the British believed these Security Council members to be stupid inferiors.

Presumptions made about Turkey were also overthrown when, in early March, the Turkish Parliament voted against allowing 62, 000 US troops into the country as part of an attack force. It will be remembered that one of the most ferocious US attacks on French-German unity in NATO was when they obstructed a move to push through automatic military support for Turkey, a state considered to be the most reliable of NATO partners. Its military were presumed to be on side if only for the negative reason that non-involvement at a military level might create unacceptable levels of confidence in the Kurdish ‘mini-state’ in Northern Iraq. Huge sums of money were also being offered at the same time as the Security Council members were being leant on for that second resolution. On 22nd February it was reported that a \$26billion ‘compensation’ package was on the table. And yet the Parliament voted no, which did not prevent the Americans still believing into mid-March that the vote would be reversed. For one thing, as Paul Krugman pointed out, there was a widespread scepticism about ‘promises’ of money from the USA among many countries who wanted to see ‘money in the bank’.^{lxvii} Most of all the parliamentary vote did reflect the view of Turkish people who would be well aware that any dangerous consequences from the war would affect those close by, rather than the far-distant US-UK axis. They were listened to because the pragmatic Islamist party that had won a landslide election victory had done so precisely because it had a mass base based on its not-corrupt work at the level of social infrastructure. The new government had learned not to be provocatively ‘Islamist’ as Erbakan’s had been by visits to Libya and Iran, prompting an army coup, but showed it was prepared to stand up to the ‘deep’ Kemalist/military state, finding that on the question of democracy and civil rights, it was in line with European demands for the country. By itself, the government shattered the fetishising of ‘the secular’ as somehow automatically progressive which has seen the vicious and corrupt dictatorship of Algeria. The parliamentary vote in Turkey was an expression of democracy at work in the region, that democracy trumpeted as a necessary virtue by the UK-US axis in the case of Iraq only.

By the time it was clear that a second UN resolution was not going to be won, Turkish involvement was reluctantly dispensed with by a confident Donald Rumsfeld and the US-UK military more or less in place and in a state where ‘it cannot wait much longer’ as Christopher Bellamy put it. It is the coincidence of this timing which has led so many of us in the anti-war movement to doubt the sincerity of the ‘diplomatic process’, that is, it was engaged with only so long as it produced the result desired by the US-UK axis. It is said that it has been Blair who has most wanted the desired diplomatic result, to the extent that at one point Rumsfeld (to be ‘helpful’) said the US could go it alone and the Spanish government reverting to its Francoist mindset, was said to be fed up with his ‘concern’ with public opinion. In the most cynical fashion Blair squared the circle for himself and the Blairite bolsheviks of New Labour by a misinterpretation of a statement by Chirac and with the enthusiastic support of super-patriots Murdoch and Black, blamed France for making war ‘inevitable’ by his very opposition to it. At Prime Ministers Question Time he blamed France 12 times.

This was then repeated in the House of Commons debate and vote on the eve of war, which was, like the speech of Robin Cook that demolished Blair’s arguments, too late. It is said that his resignation and speech was too late because only on this basis would he not be ‘spun’

against.^{lxviii} Many MPs did vote against the war, a few gave up political careers but it didn't change anything. What remains most frightening about this debate is not just the bombastic nature of Blair's speech — bombast and blame the French-but the smugness right across the media, that this had been a great moment, parliamentary democracy at its best.

So that was all right then.

To be continued....

Notes

i Though the eerie similarity in the numbers shows the further decline in the real price of oil.

ii The Carlyle Group is one of the most successful of crony capitalist money-makers in the USA with defence contracts as a main source of income. Carlucci, a Defence Secretary under Reagan is an original partner of the firm which has specialized in buying private companies that make munitions and equipment for the US military. Over 15 years it has been returning a 34% rate of return on its investments. Bush Senior and John Major are both on the payroll and in February '2001, Carlucci had the clout for a meeting with Rumsfeld when defence contracts were under discussion. The company epitomises the links described by Wright Mills as 'The Power Elite'.

iii 1991 being the betrayal they all want to distance themselves from, Baker as well as Bush Senior must be in the firing line. This did not prevent Baker being the hard nut lawyer chosen by George W. Bush to make good his stolen victory in Florida and though Baker is said to have had reservations about the sought-after war, he has supplied some of the ammunition via his Institute's oil report. (See below)

iv Perle has written a thriller in which a lone Ayn Rand-type character in the Pentagon works through the night to battle the perfidious State Department establishment, one all too keen to 'sell out' to the Soviets. The State Department has often been an object of suspicion to the American hard right and suffered an all-out attack from Senator McCarthy and his Committee. McCarthy's own downfall came when he tried to do the same to the military.

v *Daily Telegraph*: 9th August 2002

vii *Guardian* 25/2/03

vi These are another strand of the so called neo-conservative 'coalition' and are called Social Democrats, USA originating from an American Trotskyist group, the Shachtmanites. See Michael Massing's article "Trotsky's Orphans" (*New Republic*, June 22 1987) for how they came to find positions in the Reagan administration. They showed their colours at that time by supporting organizations in South Africa less militant than the UDF or ANC. Like Richard Perle they were big fans of cold war hawk Democrat 'Scoop' Jackson and are also dynastic. One of the new generation. William Kristol talked of the Gulf War as resulting in a 'lack of "awe for the US in the mid-east" which fostered contempt among the Arabs.

viii Michael Renner "Washington's War in Iraq: Foreign Policy" in *Focus* 14/2/03

ix See "Iraq War Scenario": Dan Morgan and David B. Ottway: *Washington Post* 15/9/02

x William Clark: "The Real Reasons for the Upcoming War with Iraq: A Macroeconomic and Geo-strategic Analysis of the Unspoken Truth" (January 2003)

<http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/RRRiraqWar.html>

xi See Barker: "Korea Inc: Wiseguys at the Calamity Bazaar":1998 *Telepolis* magazine: www.heise.de/tp/english/default.html

xii Fidel Castro: "The World Economic and Social Crisis", 1983

xiii Brian Whittaker: *The Guardian*: 19/8/2002

xiv Corporate donors. As well as receiving from long-running right wing foundations like the Olin Foundation the AEI has over the years been financed by a variety of corporations including Ford, General Electric, Smith Kline Beecham, General Motors, and Procter & Gamble. This needs to be emphasized when desperate European elites try to make out that such institutes are financed only by right wing crank foundations. The person most responsible for convincing big business to support such 'think-tanks' was Irving Kristol a leading US Social Democrat ex-Trotskyist. In the dynastic manner which suits the oligarchic nature of the US power elite, his son William is now editor of the *Weekly Standard*, the leading neo-con publication which is financed by Rupert Murdoch. Most of the AEI's Board of Directors are the CEOs of major companies including Exxon, Motorola, American Express and Dow Chemicals.

xv They both show a Democrat-Republican continuity. Huntington, like Richard Perle, makes something of the fact that he is an 'old-fashioned' Democrat, as if somehow this makes his views more palatable. Perle was a Henry 'Scoop' Jackson Democrat, a Cold War hardliner. Huntington at the State Department wrote a paper in support of American aims in Vietnam in 1967, while criticizing the military tactics. At the start of the 80s he was pushing for the build-up of a Persian Gulf reaction force, the build-up which over the long run, made the Gulf War possible. Bobbitt was in the NSC from 1977-9 with a spell as its Director of Intelligence. This right wing of the Democrat Party is now represented by Senator Joe Lieberman, Gore's running mate in the 2000 elections. He was especially acquiescent to the Bush coup and has been a keen supporter of the sought-after war.

xvi "The Clash of Civilizations": Touchstone Books.

xvii Looking the World in the Eye: *The Atlantic Monthly*: December 2001. In the same paragraph he launches into classic American hagiography. This maker of 'sweeping and icy statements' turns out to be a shy man with an unimposing physical presence, "yet extraordinarily tough when the occasion demands." Kaplan then proves this with a story about how Huntington saw off three 'muggers' in Cambridge, Mass. I do not know if 'muggers' is code for young black men or not, but the story is 'classic' like all those American films of the early Cold War years in which the good and moral man is forced to fight even though his instincts are against it, and then proves to be a pretty good fighter. Kaplan is also unashamedly elitist in his appreciation. Huntington, he says is not a media star, he doesn't need to be: his books 'though often publicly denounced, have had a pervasive influence among people who count.'

xviii "Clash of Civilizations": Touchstone Books: p1.

xix "Clash of Civilizations": p1

xx Jacob Heilbrunn: "The Clash of the Samuel Huntingtons": *The American Prospect* vol 9 no,39, July 1 1998-August 1 1998.

xxi For variation, Huntington also calls them 'unfortunate truths'.

xxii Jeet Heer in an article in *The Boston Globe* (23/3/03) argues that the notion of 'an American Empire' has recently been given a positive spin but by non-Americans of the 'Anglosphere' like the rabid Canadian Charles Krauthammer and that fastidious elitist Michael Ignatieff, also Canadian and that various English right-wing historians as well as newspaper proprietors like Conrad Black want Britain to renounce its place in Europe for a formal Atlantic arrangement.

xxiii I am grateful to Kermit Snelson's posting on Nettime for alerting me to this book.

xxiv "The Grand Chessboard" is positively spooky in its prescience and it is only surprising that it has not entered the universe of September 11th conspiracy theory. In the book, Brzezinski concludes that the US must expand its influence in Central Asia in order to continue to dominate the world. He further claimed that it might require a major attack on the USA, like Pearl Harbour to rally the American public around such a project. The 'conquest' of Afghanistan and more importantly the establishment of bases around it has achieved this. It has involved support for regional dictators, something forgiven in advance by Kaplan and his 'pagan' values.

xxv See www.socialdemocrats.org

xxvi *The Atlantic Monthly*: November 2002

xxvii In 19th century England the 'Irish' were the underclass that had too many children.

xxviii *New York Times* magazine: 23/11/07. Wattenberg here uses the supremely elastic term 'democratic values'.

xxix BBC Radio4 Stephen Sackur special report on APAC

xxx *Guardian*, August 19 2002: US think tanks give lessons in foreign policy: Brian Whittaker.

xxxi Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, biography of Ross on the occasion of their 'Undermining Terrorism' course, 2002

xxxii For the view from a despairing but sharp-eyed Palestinian humanist see Marwan Bishara: "Palestine/Israel: Peace or Apartheid" Zed Books 2001.

xxxiii Socialist Feminism: *Monthly Review Press*: 2003

xxxiv *Ha'aretz* 16/2/03. I am grateful to Billy Clark, long-time editor of the Scottish based magazine *Variant*, for pointing me to this article.

xxxv C. Wright Mills prescient "The Power Elite" was published in 1956 in a pre-chickenhawk world of political

soldiers. Ex-General Eisenhower was the President. But then, as Mills showed, one didn't have to be a hero to be a general. Quoting from *Business Week* 16th May 1953, an article entitled "Insuring Military Officers," Mills writes: "The nearest the modern general or admiral comes to a small-arms encounter of any sort is at a duck hunt in the company of corporation executives. One insurance company in fact 'has been insuring officers for a decade and a half, went through World War II...and survived...during the Korean War, the mortality rate of officer policy holders serving in the battle zone was below the average for industry as a whole."

xxxvi See Ken Silverstein: *Behind the Revolving Doors: The Arms Pushers: Counterpunch* 1998-9. Silverstein gives a list of names and concludes by saying "The revolving door from DSAA is typical of the unceasing migrations from the military and the private sector. Between 1992 and 1995 3,288 Pentagon employees-of whom 2,482 were officers with the rank of Colonel or above, made the jump to industry. It's impossible to determine how fast the revolving door is now spinning because at the request of the Pentagon, Congress in February of 1996 repealed the door that mandated such reporting, a move that was apparently never noticed by the mainstream press." This repeal can only encourage further consolidation of the power elite and is one more instance of how pick 'n mix is free market ideology.

xxxvii "General Intellect versus the Intifada" by Naxos. In French can be found in *Multitudes* No10, Paris: October 2002, pp23-4

xxxviii Much of this comes from Naxos's seminal article.

xxxix *Arming the occupation: Israel and the Arms Trade:* by Mandy Turner for the Campaign Against the Arms Trade October 2002

xl Amnesty International: *Terror Trade Times:* June 2002, cited by Mandy Turner, above.

xli www.imi-israel.com as cited by Naxos

xlii Justin Huggler: *Independent:* March 29 2003.

xliii the Massive Ordnance Air Burst

xliv "Brilliance in operations means achieving the highest standards of operational competence and, through a superiority of knowledge, maintaining the ability to impose *Shock and Awe* through continuously surprising and psychologically and physically breaking the adversary's will to resist. This will require training and exercising of joint land, sea, air, space and special forces to new standards of excellence and competence. It is mainly in training where the difference lies in achieving operational brilliance. This desired standard of performance can be achieved by making innovations to permit new levels of battlefield fidelity for training units and developing leaders."

xliv www.defensegroupinc.com/about.cfm. When looking at people like Wade it is easy to see how Richard Perle should be so aggrieved at being caught out by the journalist Seymour Hersh trying to sell internal security equipment to Saudi Arabia while being Chairman of the Defense Advisory Board. It's normal. Less funny is Perle's intention of suing Hersh in London. If he were successful, it would mean British libel law would be a main prop of silencing any critical investigative journalism in the USA. Since Perle' story is so unlikely (that he of all people was seeking a peace deal on Iraq with the Saudis at the meeting in question) we can only hope he is humiliated.

xlvi This colonisation of the future is a rhetoric common to elitist 'think-tanks', quangos and unaccountable institutions.

xlvi *Developing the weapons of the 21st century: Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 1998: Maurice Najman

xlvi *Shock and Awe*; Chapter 3, page 8

xlix *Shock and Awe*; Chapter 2, page 2

l. www.ditchley.co.uk/news/news_12-05-97.htm. The Ditchley Foundation is an overtly elitist outfit, its self-description a model of bad faith. "In this interdependent and complicated world it is imperative that people of different countries learn to understand each others problems and outlook. It is the purpose of Ditchley Foundations to contribute towards this process of learning largely by means of intimate weekend conferences of decision-makers held at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire." The flim-flam of people understanding each other becomes "decision-makers" only in an instant as if all people not mentally impaired weren't having to make decisions all the time. Its council and trustees list is a Who's Who of an Anglo-US dominated global power elite and its meetings more regular than those of the Bilderburg Conference or Davos. Satire, as Tom Lehrer pointed out, when the war criminal Henry Kissinger won the Nobel Prize for Peace is dead because constantly outdone by the grossness of reality. In similar vein, the intimate weekend for "decision-makers" at Ditchley due for the allotted time for the invasion of Iraq to

begin is to be chaired by Peter Mandelson and entitled “correcting the Democratic Deficit.”

li *London Review of Books* 6/2/03 “The climax came in April 1998 when Travelers Insurance, owners of the investment bank Salomon Smith Barney, merged with the commercial bank Citicorp to form Citigroup, in direct defiance of the still valid Glass Steagall Act, the pivotal piece of New Deal legislation regulating finance....Above all the newly merged mega-bank knew it could count on Rubin, and the Treasury Secretary didn’t them down”

lii *ibid.* Brenner “Between 1995 and 1999, the value of stock options granted to US executives more than quadrupled...In 1992 corporate CEOs held a 2% of the equity of US corporations: today they own 12%. This ranks among the most spectacular acts of appropriation in the history of capitalism”

liii Despite the fact that both Bzerzinski and Wolfowitz saw the need for something like Pearl Harbour for the American electorate to get behind their project of a self-interested AND benign American empire, conspiracy theory, invariably involving “Jews” about September 11th are dangerous red herrings, which is not to say that what the FBI or CIA did or didn’t know should not be made public.

liv The cut of dividend tax was, it is said, made across the board on the insistence of Karl Rove, the vicious obsessive who is Bush’s election guru in order to make it harder for the Democrats to oppose in that it included those financially battered “individual investors.”

lv This is wiseguy wit, yet one more recuperation of Situationist ‘renversement’, a re-mix on the conservative notion of the central bank as ‘lender of last resort’

lvi Jeff Madrick: Review of Kevin Phillips’ “Wealth and Democracy, A Political History of the American Rich”: *New York Review of Books* 18/7/02

lvii Robert Kuttner: “Everything for Sale”. See also Barker: “Wiseguys at the Calamity Bazaar” and “Crony Capitalism Revisited.”

lviii *Business Week* 24/3/03

lix For an excellent account of all the interlinking between think tanks, quangos and other un-elected power bases see Billy Clark: *Lobster* 45: Summer 2003 edition ISSN 0964-0436

lx Despite David Blunkett’s continual whinging about lenient judges, Britain is now the ‘jail capital’ of Europe and with the number of those convicted going to jail up from 45% in 1992 to 64% in 2001.

lxi The independent thinktank Safeworld reported that at the very time Blair switched to the moral case for liberating the Iraqi people, the British government was promoting arms sales to the US-favoured dictatorships of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan as well as to Ukraine which itself had supplied Iraq with weapons in the past. (*Independent* 27/2/03). From his moral high ground — Blair personally intervened to weaken UK legislation aimed to stop selling arms to what he and Bush call the world’s worst leaders, and failed to put in place the arms controls promised in opposition. As we know the only promise set in stone is not to raise income tax.

lxii Cheney is still being paid by Halliburton, a company which he headed for five years during which time it doubled its government business to \$2.3 billion. Great patriot that he is, he took his leaving payment to be spread over five years — and therefore still running — for tax reasons. In addition he holds millions of shares in a blind trust while its subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root has done well out of anti-terror and Halliburton itself is pencilled in to do very well out of Iraq.

lxiii It is not just Blair. The new careerist of the left, Peter Hain in one of those Guardian pieces with the familiar headline “Why the Left Must...” used the patronising tone that is so distinctively New Labour to tell us that Britain under this government is definitely not an American poodle.

lxiv Negroponte, the notorious hatchet man supporter of Central and South American dictators and torturers.

lxv *The Guardian* 13/1/03

lxvi Here is the lead political writer of *The Observer* mimicking almost exactly the words of Richard Perle in his “Thank God for the Death of the UN” piece for the magazine where he writes: “It is a dangerously wrong idea that leads inexorably to handing great moral and even existential politico-military decisions to the likes of Syria, Cameroon, Angola, Russia, China and France.” How dangerous, how truly dangerous is this arrogance of the anglo-Saxon white man.

lxvii Other promises too. Vicente Fox of Mexico who was, and should have been pro-Bush, was angered by Bush backtracking on a promise to regularize the position of ‘illegal’ Mexican immigrants in the USA.

lxviii This is not something to be judgemental. There can be almost nothing worse than a spotlight and skewer job from the tabloids, followed pitter-patter by the broadsheets. Cook's history of divorce and marrying his much younger secretary would provide material and he, Cook, can hardly have had any illusions about the vicious bastards employed by saintly Blair.