

In Bremer's Iraq, Democracy Is Hatched In A Coup

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

If, as President George W. Bush has always maintained, the introduction of democracy in post-Saddam Iraq is the harbinger of sweeping democratic reforms throughout the region, then, the message sent out to leaders of neighboring countries is loud and clear: Beware! You may be the next to go! No matter how much tinsel be draped over the figureheads of the new interim Iraq government that was ceremoniously presented in Baghdad on June 1, the plain facts are that that government was nothing but a rearrangement of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) appointed by American proconsul Paul Bremer. The new government was put in place through a process which can be characterized as a coup—against the United Nations and its special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who had been tasked to help form a government.

Brahimi, who had conducted in-depth talks with Iraqi political figures, tribal leaders and religious authorities, had reportedly come to the conclusion that the least offensive government, in the eyes of the country's population and neighboring nations, would be one composed of faceless technocrats, whose main task during its limited mandate, would be to work with the UN to organize national elections by the end of 2004.

'Bremer Is the Dictator of Iraq'

Instead, Brahimi was presented with a *fait accompli* on May 29, when the IGC boldly announced that it had elected a prime minister, and, soon thereafter, a president. For the first post, they chose Iyad Allawi, a neurologist with longstanding links to Anglo-American intelligence agencies; and for president, Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawer, a Sunni leader of the large Shammar tribe. The IGC made the announcement in a press conference called for Arab media outlets, with the intention

of presenting the operation as a genuine "Iraqi" move.

UN personnel were furious; later, press coverage spoke of the UN having been "duped." UN Secretary General Kofi Annan himself issued the understatement: "We all have to recognize the process wasn't perfect."

Brahimi did not mince words regarding who was ultimately responsible. The entire coup had been organized by Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) together with the IGC which he had created. Brahimi said that although he had been mandated to choose the new cabinet, the real power was the United States. Brahimi wearily told a June 2 press conference in Baghdad: "The government of Iraq, I sometimes say—I'm sure he doesn't mind my saying this—Bremer is the dictator of Iraq. He has the money, he has the signature." It is "the Americans who run the country. . . . Nothing happens without his agreement."

Brahimi, furthermore, had been trying to engage forces in the new government which would represent those opposing the occupation. "Why is there . . . this insurgency?" he asked on June 2. "I think it's a little bit too easy to call everybody a terrorist. And I think if you find out that there are people who are not terrorists, who are respectable, genuine Iraqi patriots, you must find a way of talking to them."

But for Bremer, the primary consideration was to have a loyal puppet government. For the IGC members, who have thoroughly discredited themselves as such puppets since being named by the occupation, it was a matter of hanging on to "power."

'Son of IGC'

The new interim government includes ten members of the IGC. Thus, as soon as it had been constituted, the mother

organization announced it would dissolve itself, to allow the new body to start functioning. A quick overview of the profiles of the leading members, illustrates the Quisling nature of the government. Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is a man with long years of collaboration with the CIA, State Department, and Britain's MI-6. Indeed, the question that his nomination raises, is: Is he more a British or an American agent? The American press has highlighted his CIA connections, whereas the *London Times* entitled its story on Allawi: "Iraq premier's MI6 links." The 58-year-old Dr. Allawi was a senior member of the Ba'ath Party, who broke with Saddam Hussein, and went into exile in London. He founded the Iraqi National Accord (INA) in 1990, and quickly received backing from the CIA and British intelligence, largely due to the fact that he had recruited into his INA large numbers of Iraqi dissident military and Ba'athists. Although Allawi is a Shi'ite, his INA includes Sunnis as well.

Allawi was in charge of security for the IGC, while his cousin was its defense minister. Allawi is reportedly the man who told the British that Saddam Hussein had the ability to launch weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes, an infamous claim that was presented in British Prime Minister Tony Blair's famous dossier.

Allawi's ascent followed an extensive public relations campaign for him, run—not from Iraq—but by the Washington, D.C. law firm of Preston, Gates, Ellis, and Rouvelas Meeds, and the New York PR firm of Brown, Lloyd, James, which together spent nearly \$350,000 on meetings including Congress, the NSC, think-tanks, and Vice President Cheney's office. The *Financial Times* said the choice of Allawi was a victory for the IGC; and "His nomination also represents a victory for the CIA and the U.S. State Department in their struggle with the Pentagon over control of policy in Iraq. Mr. Allawi is considered a protege of the CIA, while his arch-rival, Ahmed Chalabi, was backed by the Pentagon." It can be assumed that the vast majority of Iraqis will not be enthusiastic about having a 20-year exile, CIA/MI-6 agent as their prime minister of the new "sovereign" and "independent" government of Iraq.

One of the two Vice Presidents, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, leads the Shi'ite Muslim Al Dawaa Islamic Party, which was founded in 1957-58 by the uncle of radical Shi'ite militia leader Moqtadar al-Sadr. Jaafari, born in Karbala, joined Al Dawaa in 1996. Jaafari has an Iranian connection, and had travelled to Tehran to confer with President Mohammed Khatami on how to end the fighting in the holy Shi'ite city of Najaf. Jaafari had lived in Iran until 1989, when he fled to London.

The two leading Kurdish parties are represented in the new government as well. Vice President Rowsch Shaways is the speaker of the parliament in Irbil, in the Kurdish North, and a member of the Kurdish Democratic Party. The Deputy Prime Minister for National Security Affairs, Barham Saleh, belongs to the other main Kurdish party, the Patriotic Union

of Kurdistan, and is very close to the United States. Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, a Kurd, was also a member of the IGC; he had been involved in Kurdish fighting against Saddam Hussein's regime.

Finance Minister Adil Abdel-Mahdi is a Shi'ite, educated in France. His father was a minister under the monarchy in Iraq. He is an official of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Oil Minister Thamir Ghadhbhan has been the American puppet running the oil operations since the occupation, and has been involved in plans for privatization. He was appointed by the U.S. Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.

Given this cast of characters, it is no wonder that the interim government was received with skepticism, at best, and ridicule, at the worst. But U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was delighted. "I can tell you firmly and without any contradiction: this is a terrific list, a really good government and we are very pleased with the names that have emerged," she said.

Otherwise, in the Arab world, the word was that another puppet government had been born. One Arab source based in Lebanon noted to *EIR*: "Nothing has changed. The Americans nominated the Iraqi Governing Council, and now they have nominated the government. They are all puppets. . . . It will all be an American game, until and unless elections take place, if the U.S. allows them; then they will run into real problems."

The puppet image also made the rounds of the newspaper cartoons. One, published in the British *Guardian* on June 2, depicted a circus tent, with "Cheney's Neo-Con Puppet Show" written on the outside. From the opening of the tent, one could see Dick Cheney's snarling face, and his right hand, which has a Bush puppet on it. Another puppet, with a label reading "Pachachi" lies lifeless on the ground. To the right is a large box, with a bunch of other puppets in it, who are holding up a puppet of the new Iraqi president. The box has written on it: "Iraq Governing Council Puppet Set: See Them Come To Life!"

Puppets Cannot Govern

Lyndon LaRouche's comment on these appointments was categorical. Comparing the new arrangement to the revisions during the Vietnam war, he said, "None of those would work. The stooge government of Chalabi was thrown away, but the stooges are still there, running the provisional government, with the same mission. They're going to do what their masters want them to do. And their masters are people like Cheney and Blair. And they will do that. Therefore, the asymmetric warfare will continue, and will accelerate."

To wit: The first thing the newly named ministers did was announce their obedience. On June 1, Allawi said he would call on Iraq's allies—the occupying forces—to help "defeat the enemies of Iraq." He promised to strengthen the army and raise pay for soldiers. Switching to English at the ceremony presenting the cabinet, Allawi said: "We're grateful to the

national alliance led by the Americans who have sacrificed so much to liberate us.” Reportedly, Allawi will open talks immediately on a status-of-forces agreement with the occupying powers.

Not coincidentally, as the new cabinet was being presented to the world, bomb blasts were to be heard in Baghdad, and the asymmetric warfare escalated in the days thereafter, not only in the capital, but in Kirkuk, Fallujah, and Najaf.

As Brahimi noted with perspicacity, no matter how loyal the new government may be to its puppetmasters, it is the Iraqi population which must be convinced. On June 3, he said bluntly, “None of us should forget that ultimately it is only an elected government that can legitimately claim to represent the people of Iraq.”

A New UN Resolution?

Both the U.S. and U.K. governments assumed that the process of transfer of sovereignty, as they call it, would be sanctioned by a new UN Security Council resolution. After significant resistance was mounted by China, Russia, France, and Germany to their first draft, the Anglo-Americans presented a revised version. But the criticisms remained. One issue raised on the first draft was that it did not specify the timeframe for ending the occupation. In the second draft, paragraph 10 redefines the matter as follows:

The Security Council . . . 10) Decides further that this mandate for the multinational force shall be reviewed at the request of the Transitional Government of Iraq, or twelve months from the date of this resolution, and that this mandate shall expire upon the completion of the political process set out in paragraph three above; and declares its readiness to terminate this mandate earlier if requested by the elected Transitional Government of Iraq.

In short, occupation should end and the troops be withdrawn “upon the completion of the political process.” This process was to include the “(a) formation of a sovereign Interim Government of Iraq . . . by 30 June 2004; (b) convening of a national conference; and (c) holding of direct democratic election by 31 December 2004 if possible, and in no case later than 31 January 2005, to a Transitional National Assembly which will, *inter alia*, have responsibility for forming a Transitional Government of Iraq and drafting a permanent constitution for Iraq leading to a constitutionally elected government; . . .” The UN special envoy is, furthermore, tasked to help set up “a national conference to select a Consultative Council,” and advise and support the electoral process.

This is interpreted to mean that the military occupation will end at the end of 2005 or January 2006; yet, there is no fixed date given in the draft, and the resolution states that

“the multinational force shall have the authority to take all necessary measures to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq including by preventing and deterring terrorism, . . . etc.”

The criticism raised by Russia, China, Germany, France, and others boils down to two points: How “sovereign” can the Iraqi government be, under these conditions? The resolution draft speaks of the “importance of the consent of the sovereign government of Iraq for the presence of the multinational force and of close cooperation between the multinational force and that government,” but there is no indication that the Iraqi government will have the power to veto military actions taken by the occupiers. On June 3, *BBC* reported that Secretary of State Powell had said that the new Iraqi government would *not* have veto power over U.S.-U.K. forces after June 30.

Even aside from the 150,000-strong occupying force, the Bremer/CPA-dictated policies of the past year, imposed by a process illegal under international law, produce massive ambiguities regarding the actual jurisdiction of the Iraqi government. First: Bremer has decreed that Americans in Iraq are immune from Iraqi law. Is this immunity to continue? Second: Bremer had decreed that all transactions of the Iraqi government must be audited by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the UN, and the Arab Development Bank; will this continue? Third: The plethora of international multi-billion dollar contracts signed are also all illegal. Fourth: The several institutions set up under the occupation, including a central bank, have no basis in international law. Fifth: There upwards of 10,000 Iraqis who are prisoners of the occupation force. They have apparently not been formally charged, provided legal assistance, or anything else, according to normal procedure. What government will have the right to decide their terms of trial, further detention, etc.? Sixth: The so-called Transitional Administrative Law which Bremer decreed, was signed by the CPA and the IGC. The CPA is to cease to exist after June 30, and the IGC has already been dissolved. Bremer insists that this “Law” be maintained, but there is no reference to it in the new UN draft resolution.

Regional Tensions

More threatening than these legal snags (which could be settled with recourse to international law) are regional tensions, which are escalating in a way that indicates a deliberate destabilization of Southwest Asia is underway.

As Lyndon LaRouche outlined in his April 17 “LaRouche Doctrine” for Southwest Asia, the Iraqi crisis can only be solved, and U.S. forces quickly withdrawn, by locating it—as well as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict—within the overall regional context, of Southwest Asia, and organizing the cooperation of neighboring states for a regional security arrangement. LaRouche defined four keystone states—Egypt, Syria,

Iran and Turkey—whose active support for a security arrangement would be crucial. In the recent weeks, not one, but three leading neighbors of Iraq, have been affected: Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

The terrorist attacks inside the Saudi kingdom have been widely reported, and automatically attributed to “al-Qaeda,” without any further documentation. However, terrorist experts consulted by *EIR* have hypothesized that it is the neo-conservative apparatus in Washington which may be deliberately orchestrating a “chaos scenario.”

According to one Southwest Asia expert, money has been pouring into Saudi Arabia to support certain tribal and other elements who are manipulating the terror attacks. The fact that the Bush Administration withdrew all but its essential diplomatic staff and advised all Americans to leave Saudi Arabia, was seen as a signal of withdrawing political support for the regime. This fuels the opposition, particularly fanatical Wahabite elements which are conducting the attacks. No single opposition force has “the power to seize control of the country,” says one source, “but it is just chaos theory.” And someone in Washington is orchestrating the chaos, against a regime which has been explicitly targeted by the neo-cons likes of Richard Perle.

Relations with Iran have been affected by the “Chalabi affair”; that is, the scandal that broke around the figure of Ahmed Chalabi of the now-defunct Iraqi Governing Council. Chalabi, who has been exposed by *EIR* over years as the leading Iraqi player for the neocons, was dumped last month, and charges circulated internationally that he had been passing sensitive intelligence from the United States to contacts in Iran.

Whatever Chalabi’s crimes, they were committed through the still-surviving “Iran-Contra” networks; the Iranian government of President Mohammad Seyyed Khatami was involved. In fact, the Khatami government, as represented abroad by Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, has been engaged indefatigably in the effort to stabilize the Iraq situation. Iran has intervened directly, through Kharrazi’s diplomatic efforts throughout Europe, Russia, and the region; and indirectly, through Iraq’s Shi’ite religious leadership, to prevent the situation from exploding. This is precisely the reason why such press spin is being organized against Iran, to undermine the critical role that Iran has continued to play, in seeking rational, peaceful solutions to various aspects of the crisis in Iraq. In addition, the allegations that Iran is working on a secret nuclear weapons program have been resurrected in the international press. The damage has been done, and the high-profile diplomacy undertaken by Kharrazi, in the direction of progress for Iraq, has been toned down.

In Turkey, the political temperature has suddenly risen. While Prime Minister Erdogan has been intervening most vocally to denounce the genocidal policies of Israel’s Sharon government against the Palestinian people, the security situa-

tion inside the country has become red hot. In preparation for the NATO summit to be held in Istanbul later in June, massive security measures are being mounted, with tens of thousands of troops and police deployed, a no-fly zone established over the city, and a “NATO valley” of seclusion set up. An important international conference scheduled for June 19-20 in Istanbul, which was to discuss U.S. policy for the region, and the Iraq war, had to be cancelled because the authorities could not guarantee the security required.

On June 1, the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) announced, in a press conference in northern Iraq, that it was ending its unilateral ceasefire in its war against the Turkish government. The announcement was made in the Quandil mountains in Northern Iraq. Zubeyir Ayder, head of the presidential council of the group, said the ceasefire was ending because the Turkish government refused to recognize it. He warned tourists and investors not to travel to Turkey. Other reports indicated that the decision to end the ceasefire had been ordered by the jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who called for war against the Erdogan government.

In a background piece on June 3, the *Neue Zueriche Zeitung* reported, “Turkish army circles believe that hundreds of armed PKK rebels have infiltrated Turkey from northern Iraq in the past weeks. The Turkish government blames the U.S.A., for having done nothing against the PKK presence in northern Iraq.” There are about 5,000 PKK fighters in the region. The *NZZ* points out that “a revival of the war could be devastating for the entire region. Iraq’s Kurds fear that the Turkish army would use the fighting in southeastern Turkey as a pretext to legitimize a new intervention in northern Iraq.”

The Iraqi situation, though deteriorating, is not hopeless. As defined in the LaRouche Doctrine, a government worth its name must be supported by the entire population, and must, therefore, include those political circles formerly associated with the Ba’ath Party. Lakhdar Brahimi apparently intended to draw such leaders in from the opposition, into a government of national reconciliation, but was blocked. Likewise, a national military force, under the leadership of patriotic officers, must be reconstituted, if there is to be true security.

At the same time, as LaRouche has proposed, the regional powers must be brought into the equation. This means reversing the destabilizations which have been unleashed. And that can be done only by removing from power in Washington, those neo-con figures—beginning with Dick Cheney—who launched this insane war policy.

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