

circumstances' (*Guardian*, 3 June) with those close to the UN envoy 'say[ing] the choices, especially that of the prime minister ... were essentially negotiated between the United States and the [US-appointed] Iraqi Governing Council' (*NYT*, 2 June).

'[A]fter first agreeing to the idea of a technocratic government, [the US] changed their minds. They accepted the complaints of their friends on the governing council that they could not all be shunted aside. **The Americans were also afraid that genuine independents might call for a US troop pullout.** So Washington dispatched Robert Blackwill, the national security council's Iraq specialist, to Baghdad to work closely with the chief administrator, Paul Bremer, shortly before Mr Brahimi returned' (*Guardian*, 3 June). According to Tony Dodge, an Iraq expert at Warwick University, "First Blackwill watered down Brahimi's plan. Then the governing council deliberately sabotaged it. The council undermined Brahimi and the US didn't support him" (*Guardian*, 3 June).

George Bush later claimed that he had played "no role" in picking the new government (*AFP*, 2 June) – which, given that he would probably have difficulty locating Iraq on a map, may well be true as a statement of his personal involvement. However 'in an undiplomatic flash of anger, [Brahimi] told reporters: "I'm sure he doesn't mind me saying that [US civilian administrator for Iraq Paul] **Bremer is the dictator of Iraq. He has the money. He has the signature. Nothing happens without his agreement in this country**"' (*Guardian*, 3 June).

### A "big mistake"

Having won this overwhelming 'popular' mandate from the US Government and 25 US-appointed Iraqis, Allawi lost no time in spelling out his vision for the future, telling the *Sunday Telegraph* of his plans 'to recall four divisions of Saddam Hussein's old army and create a rapid reaction force and anti-terrorism [sic] unit to deal with the country's security crisis' (30 May). A few days later he intimated that he would shortly be passing a new law 'reinstating some former members of the Ba'ath party' (*Reuters*, 5 June). **According to Allawi, dissolving Saddam Hussein's internal security forces had been a "big mistake."** "We have begun to rectify these mistakes," he explained ominously.

### The 'multinational force': the military occupation continues

Allawi also lost no time in calling for foreign troops to remain in Iraq after 30 June. Indeed, during the ceremony unveiling the new government in Baghdad, Allawi 'went out of his way to stress Iraq's need for US and foreign troops to protect itself [declaring,] "Iraq will need multinational forces to defeat its enemies ... I call on the United States and Europe to protect Iraq."' (*AFP*, 2 June). The new US/UK-drafted UN resolution regarding the 30 June transfer 'reaffirms the authorisation for the multinational force' established by UN Resolution 1511<sup>1</sup>, declaring that this authorisation 'shall expire' once a constitutionally elected government is in place or 'if requested by the Government of Iraq.' Of course, no such request will be made, for, as 'top US officials' explained last December, 'the new Iraqi government's sovereignty [sic] ... rest[s] on a foundation of US military force and money' (*LA Times*, 28 Dec 2003). Here, of course, they were simply echoing the words of British Colonial Secretary Leopold Amery who in 1925 wrote that '[i]f the writ of [the British-installed Iraqi monarch] King Faisal

<sup>1</sup> 1511 actually left open the question of whether the existing occupation forces were part of the new 'multinational force' (MNF) it created but, for the sake of comprehension in what follows, we shall adopt the US/UK fiction that they are one and the same.

runs effectively through his kingdom, it is entirely due to to the British airplanes' that had by then become the state's main weapon of coercion (*Inventing Iraq*, Toby Dodge, Hurst, p. 131)

### 'What sovereignty means'

**The new resolution does not grant the IIG veto power over the activities of US/UK forces in Iraq.** Instead it merely states that the 'security structures' described in a pair of letters exchanged between the US and the Iraqi Interim Government - and which are appended - to the resolution 'will serve as the fora for the multinational force and Iraqi government to reach agreement on the full range of fundamental security and policy issues, including policy on sensitive offensive operations, and will ensure full partnership between Iraqi forces and the multinational force, through close coordination and consultation.' In other words, **the IIG has no real control over the 138,000 US forces that will continue to occupy Iraq after 30 June - save the option of slitting its own throat by asking them to leave.** This should be of particular concern to Tony Blair, who on 25 May had dramatically declared that if there were a 'political decision as to whether you go into a place like Fallujah in a particular way, that has to be done with the consent of the Iraqi government and the final political control remains with the Iraqi government. That's what the transfer of sovereignty means' (*Independent*, 26 May). No control, no sovereignty.

### "Full sovereignty"

On 7 June British foreign secretary Jack Straw 'told the House of Commons that the [new UN] resolution would give the interim government ... the power to pass laws [and] rescind laws passed by the [US]' (*Guardian*, 8 June) – two powers the US had previously been seeking to deny the IIG – though in fact there is nothing in the text of the resolution to this effect.

In any event **the US has been 'quietly building institutions that will give the U.S. powerful levers for influencing nearly every important decision the interim government will make'** (*Wall Street Journal*, 13 May). 'In a series of edicts issued earlier this spring, [the US] created **new commissions that effectively take away virtually all of the powers once held by several ministries'** (*WSJ*, 13 May) and '110 to 160 American advisers will be layered through Iraq's ministries, in some cases on contracts signed by the occupation, extending into the period after June 30' (*NYT*, 2 June). 'In many cases, these U.S. and Iraqi proxies will serve multiyear terms and have significant authority to run criminal investigations, award contracts, direct troops and subpoena citizens' and according to US officials and others familiar with the plans **the new Iraqi government will be ... unable to make major decisions within specific ministries without tacit U.S. approval'** (*WSJ*, 13 May).

The new UN resolution also grants the IIG the authority to 'conclude and implement' agreements regarding Saddam's outstanding \$120bn debts – raising **the possibility that 'the unelected transitional government will sign binding agreements with the Paris Club and other creditors forcing the future elected government to repay a large part of Saddam's odious debt and submit to economic conditions from the IMF in return for receiving partial debt "forgiveness"'** ([www.jubileeiraq.org](http://www.jubileeiraq.org), 24 May).

### Killing Democracy

The deadline for Iraq's first elections is not until 31 January 2005. This, of course, falls conveniently *after* November's US Presidential election, allowing Mr Bush to claim, in the meantime, that Iraq is *en route* to democracy without the potential embarrassment of having to

stage-manage Iraq's elections in front of the world's media. That these elections – if they ever take place - will be meaningless is now almost certain. **Since the invasion the US has consistently stalled on one-person-one-vote elections in Iraq, seeking instead to 'put democracy on hold until it can be safely managed'** (Salim Lone, director of communications for the UN in Iraq until Autumn 2003, *Guardian*, 13 April).

With just weeks to go before the transfer of “sovereignty” **the US has just passed yet another new law, this time barring, with immediate effect, members of 'illegal militias' from “holding political office for up to three years after leaving their illegal organisation”** (*Guardian*, 8 June) – a move plainly aimed at the Sadrist movement which draws many of its followers from the desperately poor Shia underclass. Since the US decided to crack-down on the Sadrists in late March, US and British forces have been killing members of its militia in large numbers - along with anyone else who gets in their way - with **U.S. military officials estimating that they have killed more than 800 Iraqis in Sadr City alone over the past nine weeks** (*LA Times*, 7 June). Prior to the recent escalation it had been estimated that Sadr's followers would obtain 'a good third of the seats from the Shi'ite areas' in free elections (Iraq expert and Professor of History at the University of Michigan Juan Cole, *DemocracyNow.org*, 14 Jan) and according to a recent poll by the Iraq Center for Research and Studies '32 per cent of respondents said they strongly supported Mr Sadr and another 36 per cent said they somewhat supported him', making Mr Sadr the second most influential figure in Iraq after Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (*FT*, 20 May). Nonetheless the US has apparently decided that Iraqis won't be able to vote for him.

### Forward to the past.

Following WWI the British Government 'naturally placed importance on establishing a friendly and co-operative Iraqi government which would be under its control' (*The role of the military in politics: a case study of Iraq to 1941*, Mohammed Tarbush, p. 36). Rhetoric aside this remains the driving imperative today.<sup>2</sup> The stakes are enormous: the Global Policy Forum recently estimated that **US and British oil companies stand to reap profits from Iraqi oil of anywhere between \$600bn and \$9 trillion over the next 50 years**, even if Iraq's oil industry remains nationalised - so long as Iraq enters into production sharing agreements with the companies on favourable terms ([www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org), 28 Jan). Social movements in the US and Britain that can raise the social costs of occupation for their respective governments could act as a countervailing force. In their absence the prospects are grim and bloody indeed.

voices uk has been campaigning on UK policy towards Iraq, in solidarity with the Iraqi people, since February 1998. For more information, to receive further updates or to join our free mailing list, contact: voices in the wilderness uk, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth recalling that in the 1920s British-occupied Iraq had all the paraphernalia of elections but 'democracy had little practical reality' and 'Iraqi cabinets were powerless to enforce legislation without the co-operation of the British' (*Independent Iraq*, Matthew Eliot, I.B. Tauris, p. 6 and 8). The British-installed monarch, Faisal, was even endorsed in 'a bogus referendum' ... in which it was claimed that 96 per cent of the population accepted him (*A history of Iraq*, Charles Tripp, p. 48) – just a few percentage points short of the results Saddam himself used to enjoy.

# 30 JUNE

## THE OCCUPATION CONTINUES

A voices in the wilderness uk briefing.

10 June 2004

According to the US and British governments, on 30 June the occupation of Iraq will end and “full sovereignty” will pass to a new Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). In reality the IIG – a body chosen by the US and its proxies - is headed by a former CIA asset, its ministries are riddled with US 'advisers' and appointees and, dependent upon US money and military power for its survival, it will possess no meaningful control over the 138,000 US military personnel that will remain in Iraq after 30 June. In what follows we examine these realities in more detail, updating our previous briefing (*Why the Occupation of Iraq Isn't Ending: the bogus 30 June 'sovereignty transfer in Iraq*, 5 May 2004) whilst paying particular attention to the new Interim Government and the 8 June UN resolution endorsing the “transfer.”

### Meet the new boss ...

Tony Blair hailed the naming of the new Iraqi cabinet as a “historic day for Iraq”, ‘dismissing as “nonsense” suggestions a “puppet” Iraqi government was primed to take over on 30 June’ (*BBC*, 2 June). In reality the new Interim Government ‘is dominated by [members of the old US-appointed Governing Council] in key political posts’ (*Economist*, 5 June) and **the most important position, that of Prime Minister, went to Ayad Allawi, a ‘long-term protégé of the CIA and MI6 who has spent much of his life in exile’** (*Observer*, 30 May). A former Ba'athist, Allawi heads the Iraqi National Accord (INA), an “opposition” group ‘created in December 1990, on the initiative of Saudi Prince Turki ibn Faysal, with the support of the CIA, and Jordanian and British agencies’ and is ‘largely made up of Ba'athists and former military officers’ (*Iraq's major political groupings*, [www.middleeastreference.org.uk](http://www.middleeastreference.org.uk)). **During the '90s the INA conducted a bombing campaign in Iraq which killed as many as 100 civilians** (*Saddam Hussein*, Patrick and Andrew Cockburn, p. 211 - 215). It was also the CIA's favoured vehicle for precipitating a military coup inside Iraq.

Clearly no puppet then.

### The ‘popular candidate’

The White House was quick to claim that Mr Allawi ‘had emerged as a ‘popular candidate’ (*Observer*, 30 May) though the *Financial Times* notes that he ‘is the least popular of 17 prominent Iraqi political personalities monitored by the Iraqi Centre for Research and Studies’ (31 May), an Iraqi group ‘considered reliable enough for the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority to have submitted questions to [them]’ (*FT*, 20 May). In fieldwork conducted in late April ‘nearly 40 per cent of Iraqis strongly opposed Mr Allawi’, beating even the despised Ahmed Chalabi (*FT*, 31 May). Back in April the US and Britain were keen to present the UN – in the person of its envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi – as the driving force behind the selection of the Interim Government. However as it turned out his choices were ‘overruled in humiliating