

Is It Operation 'Enduring Chaos'?

by Hussein Askary

As has been suggested that the stabilization of the situation in Iraq, and the Middle East in general, would be an easy task if there were an intention to do that. The American Administration would need to undertake several dramatic measures to reach that end.

First, it could invite the United Nations Organization and other major powers to Baghdad to discuss joint plans for immediate humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and the creation of a genuine Iraqi political regime representing the aspirations of the Iraqi people in independence and prosperity. Second, pressure would have to be placed on the government of Israel to accept the "Road Map." Many nations would join in this effort.

But more than one month after the "liberation" of Iraq, that country and the Middle East region are gazing into a dark abyss. It turns out that the coalition "liberation army" had no idea what to do once the war against Saddam Hussein was over; the only real plan in court is the one designed by the neo-conservative war party some years ago, as a policy document for the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu, called "A Clean Break." But is the Mideast region being "re-shaped" to fit the new Roman Empire as the Clean Break plan had intended? Probably the region has to go through more instability and chaos, before that catastrophic objective is achieved.

The current situation in Iraq itself, the Palestinian occupied territories, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan suggests that an uncontrollable, chaotic situation is breaking out.

Critical Situation Within Iraq

The humanitarian crisis has deteriorated further inside Iraq since major military operations ended in late April. The most dangerous aspect of this is proliferation of disease, due to the lack of clean water and adequate medical care. The other aspect of it is rapidly shrinking food supplies (see article following). The UN oil-for-food import program, on which 16 million Iraqis had become dependent, has been suspended, and goods already purchased have not been allowed to enter the country. Lack of basic security has forced many UN and related humanitarian organizations, such as the World Food Program and CARE, to suspend their operations.

On May 12, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that a cholera epidemic had started in the southern

Iraqi city of Basra. Dr. Claire-Lise Chaignat, director of WHO's cholera program in Geneva, said, "Cholera has not been diagnosed officially, but we are acting as if it was cholera because we cannot wait for the confirmation." WHO officials said that at least 55 suspected cases have been reported in recent days, and Dr. Denis Coulombier of WHO, on the scene, estimated that several hundred more cases have yet to be diagnosed. No deaths are reported yet. Said Coulombier, "Given the health and sanitation condition, it could spread very fast. I believe what we are seeing is the tip of the iceberg." And in fact, other cases of cholera were reported in Amara and Samawa north of Basra.

The cholera bacterium expresses a toxin that typically causes severe diarrhea; death from dehydration may be the result. One major problem, in addition to the lack of sanitation, is the lack of security for hospitals in this British military zone. Under chaotic conditions, even the 17 specimens sent from Basra to Kuwait for testing for cholera, were unfit for a diagnosis.

Earlier, doctors at the Al Tahrir Teaching Hospital in Basra told a WHO team that there has been a significant increase in cases of diarrheal diseases, gastroenteritis, and dehydration. Seven cases of clinically confirmed cholera were reported, mostly among children under 4. WHO cited the lack of clean water as the source of the cholera outbreak—sewage is not being disposed of, garbage collection occurs only intermittently or not at all, and people are using water from the polluted Shatt Al Arab River. Moreover, there is an almost total lack of surveillance and control of communicable diseases.

Hospitals in every part of the country remained almost non-functional in mid-May, due to the lack of water, electricity, and medical supplies. The little which has been done to restore electricity and water supplies, was thanks to Iraqi engineers who are fighting to restore some of the facilities and services destroyed during the war. The international media greet with much fanfare the occasional airplane arriving at Baghdad Airport carrying medical supplies and food. Though necessary, the amounts, in a country of 25 million inhabitants, are pathetic, when a "Berlin Airlift"-scale of operation is needed.

The Iraqi population's nutritional condition is worsening, and Iraqi domestic food production is becoming obsolete, due to the lack of seeds, artificial irrigation through water pumping stations that lack power, and other technical requirements for planting and protecting the crops. This means that there could be an acute shortage of necessary poultry products, fruit, vegetables, and rice, all started in the Spring. Few Iraqis are receiving salaries to spend in the markets in any case; most people working in services essential to the immediate survival of the population have been doing their jobs as volunteers in the past few weeks.

There is also a grave state of lawlessness and criminality



The chaos triggered in Iraq by the “coalition” conquest has spread—by design, according to the neo-conservatives’ “Clean Break” strategy—to Saudi Arabia and immediately targets Jordan’s King Abdullah II (above) for destabilization and possibly overthrow.

spreading, in the absence of efficient police and security forces. It is the responsibility of the American and British occupation forces to make sure that security is provided to the population. Apparently, there are two reasons for this problem. One is the lack of sufficient U.S. troops to maintain order. The other is the unwillingness by the occupation forces to seriously cooperate with Iraqis who have come forward for these kind of jobs. U.S. and Western media have started a debate on that situation which is reaching a scandalous level.

Bremer Starts Mass Roundups

Out of this debate has come the purge of the U.S. administration in Iraq. Paul Bremer, a State Department anti-terrorism senior official, with no experience in the Middle East, is Bush’s new civilian administrator, replacing retired American Gen. Jay Garner as the chairman of Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid (OHRA).

Bremer’s first response to the state of lawlessness, when he arrived in Iraq on May 11, was to suggest that the U.S. Army would be given orders to “shoot to kill looters.” This was described as the new, “far more muscular approach” of Bremer; the *New York Times* reported being told by officials that Bremer is being ordered to save the Iraq victory from descending into anarchy, and to do whatever is required. Much of the looting had taken place under the passive eyes of the U.S. troops. The only ones stopping the looting, were Iraqi vigilantes. Most of the criminal acts are taking place at

night or in areas where there are no U.S. forces. The core of the problem is that there is no organized police force. But lawlessness is not stopped by shooting at people and treating the population as terrorists, which will only provoke more violent reactions.

Meanwhile, in the U.S. and elsewhere, the fiasco created by the American war-hawks’ lack of interest in dealing with the situation, once the regime in Iraq had fallen, is becoming more obvious. In discussions with *EIR*, senior State Department officials, both retired and in active duty, provided horrific new details about the crescendoing chaos on the ground in Iraq, as the result of the Rumsfeld/Wolfowitz/neo-con bungling power trips.

One diplomat, with years of experience dealing with biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction, reported that the Pentagon refused to even consider the long list of experts in the field, offered by the State Department for the post-war weapons search, choosing instead to recruit a rag-tag team of former START weapons inspectors, who were given a two-week crash course in biological and chemical weapons. As a result, the initial team has been pulled out of Iraq, after one month of accomplishing nothing, and there is no way to determine whether this means that there were no weapons of mass destruction, or the search effort was just fatally flawed from the outset. Such incompetence, the sources said, is typical of the planning for the post-war stabilization.

A leading European Iraq expert told *EIR*, “They may have defeated Iraq, but the Middle East map is stubbornly refusing to change.” The situation is deteriorating by the day, he said, adding that the recurring chaos and criminality is starting to give way to “politically motivated violence,” as the killings of three Americans in the second week of May demonstrated. The U.S. has plenty of expertise in nation-building and logistics, this expert acknowledged, and plenty of Arab experts in the State Department and Pentagon, but they are being systematically kept out of Iraq, purely for ideological reasons. He compared the Cheney-Rumsfeld group to the “cabal that brought us the Vietnam War.”

Ironically, this source noted, the failure of Washington to stabilize Iraq has contributed to slowing down the chicken-hawks’ in their threats attack other countries. However, as long as the imperialist cabal is not reined in, the destabilization of the entire Mideast region would continue. The chaos could always be blamed on “bin Laden” terrorists, or sympathizers with the ghost of Saddam Hussein.

The Other Destabilization: Palestine

Observers see an intentional passivity by the American forces on the ground, meant to keep the situation rolling towards a disaster, at a time when the safe alternatives are being neglected. And the situation in Iraq is not the only one being driven to its limits by the manic believers in the “Clean Break”

strategy, which held that the elimination of Saddam Hussein would trigger “regime change” throughout the Arab world, to American-Israeli specifications. The U.S.-backed Israeli government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is actively contributing to the potential outbreak of regional, religious war. The failure of Secretary of State Colin Powell’s mission to jump-start the “road map” negotiations, was just the most prominent sign of this drive for further wars and destabilizations.

While Israeli incursions into the West Bank and Gaza continued, and intensified immediately after Powell’s visit, killing and wounding scores of Palestinians, the Israeli Interior Ministry issued a statement, that it is intending to begin allowing Jewish religious extremists to pray at the site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which they maintain is the site of Solomon’s Temple. This is an unprecedented move, ensuring a bloody religious confrontation with the Muslim Palestinians, potentially spreading across the Muslim world, which considers the Al-Aqsa Mosque as the second holiest site of Islam.

As *EIR*’s May 16 issue reported, a week earlier Israeli Tourism Minister Benny Elon was touring the United States advocating the mass deportation of the Palestinian population into Jordan. This is a long-standing scheme usually advocated by Israeli fanatics, but never before by a member of an Israeli government. The Jordanian Kingdom, almost half of whose population is comprised of Palestinian long-term refugees, is directly affected by whatever happens in the Palestinian territories. The government headed by King Abdullah II would be the first victim of such a dramatic move as Elon is demanding. Israeli extremists and American neo-conservatives have long contemplated overthrowing Jordan’s King while creating a “homeland” for the Palestinians, driven out of the West Bank and Gaza.

Jordan was simultaneously targetted for destabilization from a different flank, Iraq. Ahmed Chalabi, chairman of the Iraqi National Congress (INC) and close collaborator of the Pentagon’s neo-con hawks, threatened the King of Jordan and other members of the Jordanian royal family, claiming that he has damning information about King Abdullah’s dealings with Saddam Hussein. In separate interviews with *Newsweek* and the *New York Times* on May 5 and 6, Chalabi said that his group has seized “tons” of documents of the former Iraqi tyrant. “It’s a huge thing,” Chalabi told *Newsweek*. “Some of the files are very damning.” And some of the most incriminating, Chalabi implies, could tell a lot about the royal family in neighboring Jordan. King Abdullah, who has ruled Jordan since 1999, “is worried about his relationship with Saddam,” says Chalabi in the interview. “He’s worried about what might come out.” He hints there was an especially close tie—“a subsidiary relationship”—between then-Prince Abdullah and Saddam’s infamous elder son, Uday.

King Abdullah II had reportedly come under pressure from people within his government, urging him to drop em-

bezzlement charges against Chalabi, and thus clear the record of this banker being promoted by the Pentagon and Vice President Dick Cheney as the new leader of Iraq. The King refused to clear Chalabi, letting stand a 20-year prison term, to which Chalabi was sentenced *in absentia*, after he had looted his own Petra Bank in the 1980s, leaving behind a major currency crisis in Jordan in 1989.

Who’s Next for ‘Regime Change’

Chalabi’s move against the King of Jordan is not simple blackmail. It is part of a strategy to drive a wedge between Iraq and all its neighbors, especially those who opposed the war and the current occupation—especially Syria and Saudi Arabia. In his interview with *Newsweek*, Chalabi said: “We have some issues with those people who supported Saddam Hussein and tried their damndest to dissuade the United States from going to war.”

Saudi Arabia, one of the countries the neo-con chicken-hawks have targetted for regime change and “reshaping,” was hit with coordinated terrorist bombings on May 12 in the capital, Al-Riyadh. Although the targets were residential buildings of foreign companies, mainly American, the real aim of the attacks seems to be the government of Saudi Arabia itself. The government is coming under fire from two sides, the American imperialist faction which blamed the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on Saudi Arabia, and the allegedly Islamist terrorists, who claim that the Saudi government is collaborating with the Americans against other Muslim nations.

A Middle East intelligence source told *EIR* that such attacks were expected to take place in Saudi Arabia during the Iraq War. The fact that this occurred after the war indicates that Saudi Arabia is becoming a target. The neo-conservative hawks do not want Crown Prince Abdullah, the Deputy Prime Minister, who intends to implement genuine political reform, to become King of Saudi Arabia. The United States has virtually taken over Kuwait and Qatar, but not yet the Saudi Kingdom. In the meantime, Saudi Shi’ite groups are being politically activated in its oil-rich eastern province, demanding more rights in the Sunni- and Wahhabi-dominated Kingdom. The demand is legitimate; the timing of its resurgence is of concern, especially after Prince Abdullah made it an important part of the official discussion of reforms in the country.

Prominent members of the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Board, especially its former chairman Richard Perle, had explicitly singled out Saudi Arabia as a target in the reshaping of the Middle East map. Other countries on that list, with a large territorial size and populations, and strategic location, are Egypt, Syria, and Sudan. However, before the “reshaping” of the map of the Middle East could be accomplished, a great deal of killing and destruction would be taking place.

To prevent such a horrible outcome, the reckless war-hawks in Washington have to be stopped.