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War drive

The dubious victory

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"Victory was achieved by the world's most powerful army, supported by 45,000 British soldiers and a handful of Polish commandos, enjoying absolute control of the air. Opposing them was an Iraqi army which had been largely destroyed at the time of the Gulf war of 1991, subjected since then to an embargo, partially disarmed by the UN weapons controllers, and whose anti-aircraft equipment had been regularly bombarded for more than ten years. Such a result should have constituted a surprise for nobody."

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/02pow.jpg>]

By occupying Iraq after three weeks of conflict, the United States has asserted its undeniable military superiority in front of the world. The political and media impact of the invasion of Iraq allows it to retake the political offensive on an international scale and in the immediate future weakens those who had been opposed to this war, decided on unilaterally by the Bush administration. The latter is determined to impose a new world order. 'Foreign Affairs', the influential review close to the US State Department, carries an article in its May-June issue which noted the end of a 20th century experience aimed at subjecting the use of force to the rule of law and called on the US administration to build 'new international mechanisms'. [1] A vast project.

Nonetheless, the US military victory in Iraq took place in a context of international isolation of the superpower, a weakening of the competitiveness of its industry and the rise of a powerful popular movement opposed to the war throughout the world. The occupation of Iraq itself is far from being stabilized and the United States is already facing attempts by the Islamic opposition to build independent administrations in the cities. The object of this article is to consider the elements which condition the US's hegemonic project.

The military 'triumph'

Victory was achieved by the world's most powerful army, supported by 45,000 British soldiers and a handful of Polish commandos, enjoying absolute control of the air. Opposing them was an Iraqi army which had been largely destroyed at the time of the Gulf war of 1991, subjected since then to an embargo, partially disarmed by the UN weapons controllers, and whose anti-aircraft equipment had been regularly bombarded for more than ten years. Such a result should have constituted a surprise for nobody.

What is more surprising is that during the first fortnight of combat, the US-British forces met strong resistance in spite of their capacity to inflict an onslaught of fire and bombs on the enemy. There was strong Iraqi resistance in the port of Oum Qasr as well as in Basra, Nassiriya, Najaf and Kut. In Oum Qasr, occupied on the first day of hostilities, urban guerrilla warfare continued for a week. Only strong national, religious or other convictions could cause such a desperate resistance. On the other hand, the battle of Baghdad, predicted to be decisive, did not take place; apart from the resistance of small groups of foreign volunteers, the Iraqi army and in particular the Republican Guard (presented as the spearhead of this army) did not put up resistance. Was that due to the destruction of their command mechanisms? Or the fact that air bombardment led the soldiers and their surviving leaders to give up positions that had become indefensible? According to US military figures, up to 60% of their air force was engaged against certain Iraqi military concentrations. General James Amos, in command of the US marines' air forces, said that their apparatuses had struck "massively", "day and night", "for seven to eight days" against the Baghdad and Nida divisions of the Guard. Or, should we believe certain rumours - in particular on radical Islamic Internet sites - suggesting a deal between the Iraqi military leadership (indeed Saddam Hussein himself!) and the attackers, which would have led the Saddamite leaders to exchange their lives for the abandonment of resistance?

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/03ustroops.jpg>]

Between March 20 and April 13 (the occupation of Tikrit without Iraqi resistance) the 1,100 US planes carried out 30,000 sorties, with 500 missions per day and firing a total of 24,000 munitions. About 800 cruise missiles were fired on Iraq (including about thirty British missiles), according to US military commanders. [2] Far from carrying out a 'clean' war, the attackers used ammunition with depleted uranium, famous since the 1991 war for having caused disease among soldiers, 'daisy cutter' bombs which remove oxygen from an area of approximately 1.5 square kilometres, [3] as well as cluster bombs which can kill well after the combat is over. [4]

In total, 163 soldiers of the 'coalition' were killed during the combat (73 - 44% - from 'friendly fire' or accidents!). The Pentagon estimates Iraqi military losses as at least 30,000 dead. Nobody has yet counted the thousands of destroyed buildings, including hospitals, schools, power stations and water processing centres. The number of Iraqi civilian victims remains the major unknown factor.

Before its overthrow, Saddam Hussein's government had announced 1,252 civilian deaths. A pacifist internet site iraqbodycount.com, estimates the number of dead as between 1,600 and 1,900. Tens of thousands of civilians were wounded. As of the second week of the war the hospitals - including in Baghdad - no longer had the essential drugs to look after the wounded. Neither the Saddam regime (whose Minister of Information became famous for minimizing the Iraqi losses), nor the 'coalition' occupiers have had an interest in reporting high figures for Iraqi civilian and military losses.

The Bush administration however needs to emphasise its 'military triumph'. This is not only to prepare for the presidential elections of 2004, but in particular because the victorious aggression against Iraq, after that of Afghanistan, is supposed to testify to the 'hegemony' of the superpower.

The dream of the New American Century

The Bush administration is undoubtedly the most conservative and aggressive that the United States has known since the McCarthy era. At its centre is the small group which characterizes itself as 'neo-conservative' (or 'neocon' in the prevalent jargon) which, especially after September 11, 2001, has acquired a dominant position.

In 1997 this group founded the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), a 'think tank' based in Washington, which published a White Paper in September 2000 arguing that the United States should reposition US permanently-based forces to Southeast Europe and Southeast Asia; modernize US armed forces, in particular by reinforcing air and naval capacities; develop and deploy global missile defences; develop strategic domination of space and 'cyberspace'; and increase military expenditure to a minimum of 3.8% of GNP. Among the tasks that the White Paper proposed for the US army, two in particular deserve to be mentioned: "to fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars" and "perform the 'policing' duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions". [5] The neocon project is that the US army will fight and win these wars one way or another, and will establish American domination for all to see.

Vice-president Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Defense Policy Board member Richard Perle are founders of the PNAC. Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of Defense, is the spiritual father of the group. The director of the PNAC, Bruce Jackson, who occupied a significant position at the Pentagon under Ronald Reagan, is today a director of Lockheed Martin, manufacturer of military aircrafts and missiles.

The PNAC recently founded a new group, the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, in order to convince the US

people of the need for war and to finance the Iraqi National Congress and its leader Ahmed Chalabi, a long time Iraqi exile who has been sentenced to 22 years in prison for banking fraud in Jordan. He has now returned to Iraq in the wake of the US invasion and is recruiting candidates for his 'Free Iraqi Forces'.

In the strategic vision of the PNAC, the occupation of Iraq is only the beginning of a reorganization of the Middle East. Richard Perle stated in August 2002, according to The Washington Post and The Nation: "Iraq is the tactical pivot, Saudi Arabia is the strategic pivot and Egypt is the prize". According to Donald Kagan, another central member of the PNAC, the United States must establish permanent military bases in Iraq after the war in order to "defend peace" in the Middle East and to guarantee oil supplies. [6]

The PNAC's White Paper was used as a basis for the development of US national security strategy. In the document adopted in September 2002 by the Bush administration one can read: "For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not wait for an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of pre-emption on the existence of an imminent threat-most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack.

We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means... In exercising our leadership, we will respect the values, judgment, and interests of our friends and partners. Still, we will be prepared to act apart when our interests and unique responsibilities require." [7]

Isolation of the US

The invasion of Iraq thus seems the practical application of the strategy of the neocons; to benefit from the undeniable military superiority of the United States [8] to establish their absolute domination of the planet and to impose what the White House regards as being the interest of the United States. But if its military supremacy makes it possible to guarantee a US 'military triumph' against an adversary such as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein's Iraq and if this example of the use of the force could intimidate the ruling classes of other Third World countries, the unilateral decision (admittedly with the devoted support of Tony Blair) to invade Iraq and the beginning of the occupation of this country have already brought to light the 'collateral damage' - in particular a political isolation on the international scene that the US has not known since the Vietnam war - which a US administration numbed by its superiority had apparently not envisaged:

– international institutions, in particular, of course, the UN Security Council, but beyond that all the formal structures (the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and so on) and informal structures (the G-7/G-8) which had in the 1980s and 1990s allowed successive US governments to take the head of the process of neoliberal capitalist globalization and to guarantee the unity of the dominant classes to legitimate military interventions throughout the world, have been deeply weakened and divided;

– the aggressive unilateralism of the US has stimulated the efforts by Paris and Berlin to take a step towards a European supranational State by equipping it with a capacity for military intervention. The recent decision by the German, Belgian, French and Luxemburg governments to advance towards an integrated armed force, open to other states of the Union but embarked upon without their agreement, constitutes the first sign of this. The acceleration of the work aimed at equipping the EU with a constitution and, within this framework, the pressure from Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, chair of the Convention, for a stronger European executive deciding on the majority of questions of

international politics through majority voting, is another; [\[9\]](#)

– the efforts by the US administration, in particular since 1999, to reorganize NATO, whose principle of unanimity seemed to it excessively constraining on its liberty of action, failed and three member states (Germany, France and Belgium) blocked Bush's desire to satisfy the appetites of the Turkish military by invoking article 4 of NATO's statutes (which envisage assistance to a member state in danger, in this case Turkey which was supposedly threatened by Iraq). The US thus appears as tributary to the goodwill of secondary European imperialisms when they wish to employ NATO;

– the opposition of the German and French governments to Bush's diktat made it possible for the Russian and Chinese leaders to defend their interests without aligning themselves with the US. Chirac and Schröder, being identified with the European core, could thus build a Paris-Berlin-Moscow-Beijing axis that was opposed to the Bush administration;

– the leaderships of US imperialism's client states were also able to take their distance: the members of the Turkish parliament thus dared to prohibit the passage of US forces which were to be deployed in order to open a second front in the north of Iraq, because of a number of fears including the possibility of a reinforcement of the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan and the pressure of the anti-war sentiment of the people. The Saudi regime held firm, at least apparently, in its opposition to the war, fearing that its commitment would reinforce even more the radical Islamic opposition in the country;

– the conflicts around Iraqi oil already promise to be sharper than was envisaged by the Bush administration and could help block the new measures of deregulation - a new step in capitalist globalization - that the US planned to impose on the WTO at the Cancun summit in July of this year (in particular the deregulation of services);

– last, but not least in terms of its importance for the future, the movement for global justice, which had already led people to question the legitimacy of neoliberal globalization, was boosted by the massive rejection of the warlike policy of US imperialism. Anti-imperialist feeling extended to tens of millions of people across the globe and anti-war demonstrations flooded the principal cities of the world, exceeding even those which had accompanied the US war in Vietnam.

The US political-military victory nevertheless attenuated these contradictions. It makes it possible for the Bush administration to again take the initiative at a series of levels: control over oil movements, installation in Iraq of an administration largely autonomous of the UN, new initiatives in the Middle East with respect to Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis... With this victory, the United States ensures itself new margins of manoeuvre to renew pressure on the secondary imperialisms as well as on the peoples. The reorientation of the policy of French imperialism and the Chirac government constitutes a first consequence of the US victory.

The occupation of Iraq and its dangers

One month after the entry of US tanks into Baghdad, the majority of the bombed Iraqi cities still lack drinking water and electricity. According to the delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Basra, interviewed by RFI on May 4, essential services were better protected during the actual fighting than after the occupation, because there was an administration to take care of their functioning, whereas since 'liberation' nobody is playing that role. The occupier was unable to replace the overthrown administration and it was only at the beginning of May that US military engineering units began to repair the damaged services.

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The Red Cross was still not authorized to go into the prison camps, contrary to all conventions. The Iraqi weapons of massive destruction - the pretext of the invasion of the US-led coalition - were still not discovered, but president Bush can quietly affirm that they will be found: his army is omnipresent in the country and controls all access to it so, if he feels the need, it could borrow some weapons from its own stocks and 'discover' them. But the exploitation of oil has already begun again, albeit on a small scale.

The priceless collections of Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian and Abbasid antiquities held at the national Museum, the books in the large Koranic library of Baghdad and innumerable other antiquities were plundered or destroyed - the looters profiting from a surprising tolerance on the part of the occupier - which immediately recalled the Mongolian invasion of the 13th century, whose destruction of a flourishing Abbasid civilization became a symbol of cruelty. [10]

Whether they were surprised themselves by the speed of their military victory or they were unable to plan in advance measures necessary for administering a largely urban population in a country of 20 million inhabitants, the fact remains that after the first month of US occupation the state of Iraq is summarized in one word: chaos.

From the point of view of the future US role in Iraq, such a situation is not without danger. The majority of the Iraqi population (about 60%) is Shiite. The Shiite interpretation of Islam is strongly marked by messianism; the social order and the state regime are perceived as illegitimate if not exercised by the 'mahdi' - the hidden imam - the legitimate descendant of the house of the prophet Mohammed, issued from the line of Ali (the fourth caliph, assassinated in 681). This rejection of illegitimate authority as well as the veneration of the sacrifice of the imam Hussein, eldest son of Ali, who died in an unequal combat with 72 of his partisans, encircled close to Kerbala in 681 by thousands of partisans of the Ummayyad caliph Jazid, after having refused to capitulate to the 'usurper', has historically often led the Shiite people into revolt. Today this tradition of revolt inspires the ideology of radical Islamic Shiite organizations, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah. But another, more pragmatic, tradition has marked Shiite history for centuries. This latter - the 'tajiya' - authorizes 'believers' to mask their convictions and to find an accommodation with the existing regime with the aim of preserving the essential: the continuity of Shiite society in waiting for the arrival of the mahdi. According to whether historical conditions do or do not allow the flourishing and enrichment of the more privileged Shiite social layers and the hierarchy of the ulemas, it is one or the other of these traditions that has dominated the behaviour of the Shiite population. We should note that this coexistence with a regime considered as illegitimate, 'blasphemous' and 'impure', was always regarded as preferable to 'anarchy' and chaos. [11] Thus the chaos which accompanies the US occupation of Iraq can become a catalyst for the radicalisation of the Iraqi Shiite population and push it to undertake the fight against the occupier.

The future of Iraq in the 'neocon' projects of the Bush administration was supposed to meet two goals whose incompatibility does not seem to have been noticed by their authors. On the one hand Iraq was to become the 'tactical pivot' of US domination in the Middle East, making it possible for the US to secure control of the management of Iraqi oil - at the same time allowing the 'junior' Texan and Californian oil companies (in which the Bush administration has many interests) to grow rich and to secure control of OPEC - and to establish a US military presence in the centre of the area in order to secure the submission of the Arab dominant classes and to contain, even threaten, the local 'rogue states' (Syria and Iran) and the 'terrorists' (Hezbollah and so on). In addition Iraq was to become an 'exemplary democracy', inspired by the US model, in the hands of the Iraqi National Congress, with the banker-swindler Ahmed Chalabi, friend of the founders of the PNAC, at its head. The difficulty is that whereas a small 'neocon' group can secure control of an imperialist society such as the United States, within which the relations between the classes and bourgeois domination are historically established, the export of this model to a Third World society, exhausted by twenty years of wars and of embargo, shaken by the overthrow of the dominant bureaucracy, and moreover having to guarantee the plundering of its principal resource by the US amounts to a squaring of the circle.

The two only 'partners' the US has on the ground - the two parties that share control over the Kurdish autonomous zone - have the defect of being confined to a secondary zone of Iraq. Moreover, if they have played the US card up

until now, their first priority is guaranteeing their leadership over the Kurdish people, increasing the zone of Kurdish influence if possible and avoiding the appearance of a stable and strong regime in Baghdad which could threaten them in the long term. As for the 'Free Iraqis' of Ahmed Chalabi, they have been quickly deprived of any influence in the country and excite hostility from all the elites. The meetings of the 'Iraqi opposition' held initially under the supervision of Jay Garner, the US 'proconsul' in Iraq, already replaced by a 'viceroy' in the person of Paul Bremer, [12] clarified the incompatibilities between even the most moderate local elites, the Kurdish nationalists and the 'external oppositionists' brought back by the US troops. They have moreover been massively opposed by the more radical Islamic groups, which refuse to participate and have organized street demonstrations with cries of "down with Saddam, down with Bush, long live Islam". The will of the radical Islamic groups to transcend divisions between the Shiites and the Sunni is to be noted. And this in spite of the attempts of the occupier to carve up the Iraqi political scene according to traditional national and religious divisions. Thus, the election in Mosul of a local advisory council was done according to these fractures: Kurds electing the Kurdish delegates, the Shiites the Shiite delegates and so on. Such a system makes it possible to associate local notables with the occupation. To present it as 'democracy' is a bad joke.

Before the proven failure of the Iraqi projects of the neocon ideologists, the Bush administration is orienting increasingly clearly towards a long occupation. To this end, Bush has announced the division of Iraq into three or four zones of occupation, entrusted respectively to the US military, the British [13] and the Polish mercenaries. [14] Wishing to reduce the presence of US troops in Iraq, both because their presence is expensive and to limit their exposure to the effects of the Iraqi radicalization against the occupation of the country, Washington has in addition called upon the mercenaries of several other countries to integrate themselves into the army of occupation. [15] It is, then, armed foreign forces that will, for an unspecified time, be in charge of the everyday policing and administration of the US protectorate.

Dangers for the occupier

As soon as the forces of the US 'coalition' penetrated into Iraqi territory, it could be observed that, far from welcoming the self-proclaimed 'liberators', the Iraqi population in the South of the country kept a careful distance from them. The pro-interventionist media then explained that the local population continued to fear the revenge of the Saddam regime. The demonstrations demanding the departure of the occupying troops, which multiplied after the fall of Baghdad and the end of the engagements with the Iraqi army, were also presented as the work of those nostalgic for the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. If such lies, repeated ad infinitum, can disorientate a population that is not seeking other sources of information, in particular in the United States, [16] they are far from modifying the situation in Iraq.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/07planes.jpg>]

On April 15, 2003 some 20,000 Shiites demonstrated in Nassiriya against a meeting organized by Jay Garner and Ahmed Chalabi with the aim of setting up an 'Iraqi administration'. "Yes to freedom, yes to Islam!" and "No to America, No to Saddam!" "Nobody represents us at the conference" were their slogans. In Mosul on April 13, the leader of the Patriotic Party, installed by the occupiers in the buildings of the prefecture, was shouted down at the end of a meeting with the Americans; the US soldiers opened fire, killing 14 people. On Friday, April 18 in Baghdad, tens of thousands of demonstrators flooded the streets after the end of prayers at the mosques, with banners saying: 'Down with the USA!' "Don't stay here, go home!", "No to Saddam, no to Bush!", "USA, you are not welcome!", "USA = modern Mongols". [17] The organizers of the demonstration identified themselves with an Iraqi Unified National Movement, telling a Reuters representative that they included Shiites and Sunni Muslims in their ranks. [18] More recently, 17 Iraqis were killed and several dozen wounded, including children, in Fallujah.

On April 22 hundreds of thousands, perhaps more than one million, Shiites participated in the pilgrimage to Kerbala,

the 'holy city' where the imam Hussein died in 681. The Saddam Hussein regime had since 1991 forbidden such pilgrimages, therefore the massive mobilization could be because this amounted to a 'first'. The pilgrimage did not lead to massive political demonstrations, proclamations or appeals. The attempts by radical Islamic groups to mount such actions appeared very much in the minority among the great flood of people. Nonetheless, those pilgrims who took refuge in the 'holy city' in search of an authority capable of preserving them from chaos or helping them in a situation where the state could no longer provide them with vital services, became aware of their strength. The fact is that the US authorities, sensing the danger of an 'Islamic Republic', preferred to evacuate their troops from the city.

The principal figure of the Shiite clergy in Iraq, the ayatollah Ali Sistani, based in the 'Holy City' of Najaf, had initially called on the people on April 8 not to intervene in the combat between the forces of Saddam and the invader, which Paul Wolfowitz had immediately interpreted as "the first pro-American fatwa". [19] One week later, however, Sistani explained that Iraq must be led "by its best children" and his eldest son, considered as his spokesperson, added: "the Americans are welcome, but I do not believe that it is good that they remain a long time". His envoy in Baghdad, sheik Al Fartusi - whose arrest by the US soldiers immediately led to a demonstration of 5,000 people in front of the Palestine Hotel, forcing the occupiers to release him - said in a sermon in front of 50,000 faithful on April 21 that the United States cannot impose a formal 'democracy' in Iraq which would limit itself to granting individuals freedom of expression but would deny the Iraqis the right to choose their own government. [20]

The clergy in Najaf seem to have built up a special relationship with the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) led by the ayatollah Mahamad Baqir Al Hakim. Resulting from a radical pro-Iranian split from the traditional Islamic party Al Da'wa Islamiya, founded in 1950, and believed to be close to the Iranian ayatollah Ali Khamenei (successor of Khomeini), the SCIRI has a brigade of 12,000 fighters (the 'Al Badr brigade') which was stationed in Iran before the invasion; it is made up of refugees, emigrants and Iraqi officers and soldiers who deserted during the Iraq-Iran war). The Al Badr Brigade has crossed the border and taken the control of the town of Baquba (160,000 inhabitants), near to the Iranian border, and that of Kut (360,000 inhabitants). Initially part of the Iraqi National Congress of Ahmed Chalabi, the SCIRI broke away in January 2003, when the US internal security adviser, Zalmay Khalilzad, declared in a meeting of Iraqi oppositionists that the United States did not plan to establish a provisional government immediately, but intended to run Iraq themselves. Favourable to neutrality during the military operations, a spokesperson for the SCIRI told Arab News on April 5: "[the Shiites] must remain on the sidelines to prevent damage, until they are sure that the repressive machine of the Iraqi regime is destroyed. When this point is reached, they will have to start to organize themselves." [21]

Shiite administrations

In Baghdad, the Shiite population, reduced to poverty and proletarianized, is largely concentrated in the suburb that bore the name of Saddam City. It was immediately renamed Sadr City, after the ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq Al Sadr, assassinated on the orders of the regime in 1999. His son, Muqtada Al Sadr, the main rival of the ayatollah Sistani, went underground after the assassination of his father.

He organized the poor Shiites of Najaf and Kufa and established his authority in the shantytowns of the suburbs east of Baghdad, where two to three million Shiites live. Muqtada's armed militia have imposed their control on Sadr City and are trying to organize the restoration of public services there. His movement favours an Islamic republic in Iraq, without being related to Iran. According to Juan Cole, "The Sadr movement appears to be intolerant and authoritarian, and to have a class base in the poverty-stricken neighbourhoods brutalized by Baath Party goons... Like most other Iraqi Shiite clerics, Muqtada wants the Americans out of Iraq on a short timetable." [22] On April 25 100,000 people gathered in Sadr City for prayers, at the initiative of the Sadr movement.

"It is the attempt of Shiite clerics (though far from united in their efforts) to consolidate administrations in Iraq's cities

independent of the US - which is behind White House accusations of "Iranian agents" interfering in the country. Shiite mosques are providing centres for the organization of a post-Baathist political force independent of Washington's control" writes Rohan Pearce. [23] According to Juan Cole, "Among major Shiite population centers, only Basra appears to have resisted this trend, in part perhaps because of different policies pursued by the British commanders there, and in part because of the influence of the secular Shiite middle and working classes". In the principal Shiite cities, the clergy and the radical Shiite organizations took the administration in hand, ensuring safety and taking responsibility for the rebuilding of vital public services. It is not irrelevant to stress that the ability to ensure the population with social services had been one of the pillars of the popular success of another radical Islamic Shiite movement, the Lebanese Hezbollah.

ZM Kowalewski writes on this subject: "The establishment of its own legitimacy and that of the movement of armed resistance among the masses and at the institutional level was Hezbollah's goal. It tried to create its own networks of social assistance in the impoverished areas of the country. These networks were established during the civil war, when the state was unable to ensure any assistance in this field. But as the state was still not able to fulfil its functions in this field, in a context of abandonment, corruption and socio-economic stagnation, [Hezbollah] undertook the installation of its own programmes, independently of the state. In those areas where government aid was insufficient, indeed non-existent, the department of Hezbollah called Jihad Al-Binaa (Jihad of construction) provided the population with a broad spectrum of services. It ensured free schooling and health care, helped peasants to learn new agricultural techniques and offered them seeds and manure at prices lower than those of the market, provided stores with subsidized goods, organized the distribution of drinking water and electricity generators, provided endowments for students and dealt with rubbish collection". [24]

The example of Hezbollah, whose guerrillas forced Israel to withdraw from South Lebanon after eight years of occupation, inspires many Islamic movements. The leading article of April 16, 2003 in 'International Muslimmedia', the internet site of the Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (pro-Iranian), after having presented the American project to transform Iraq into a vassal State, indicated: "There can be, nevertheless, a short window of opportunity for the Iraqi popular political movements, between the collapse of the old regime and the establishment of a new one. Whatever the care with which the United States prepared their plans, a period of political uncertainty is inevitable. That can be the best moment for the Iraqi people to affirm their own aspirations. The challenges will be immense, both with regard to the positioning of the organization of the Islamic movement in Iraq and the opposition it will attract from those who have their own plans for the future of Iraq. It remains to be seen whether it will be able to seize this moment; the alternative will be a new black period for the Iraqi people." [25]

The edition of May 1 of the same internet site, after having underlined the influence of the leader of the SCIRI, advises: "To their great credit, the Shiites did not fall into an orgy of revenge killings after the fall of Saddam. They must build on this basis and gather all the Iraqi groups, including the Kurds, who were alienated for such a long time. In the chaos which grips Iraq today, the ulemas must mobilize their supporters to relieve the people, to help restore the distribution of water and electricity, as well as law and order, but under their own leadership, and not to help the Americans to consolidate their influence on the country. They must follow the example of Hezbollah in Lebanon, which acquired the confidence and the admiration of everyone, including the Christian community with which the Moslems had fought for such a long time." [26]

On April 25 Donald Rumsfeld declared: "This much is certain. A vocal minority clamouring to transform Iraq in Iran's image will not be permitted to do so. We will not allow the Iraqi people's democratic transition to be hijacked by those who might wish to install another form of dictatorship." [27] How? By force, of course. "America's war of 'liberation' may be over. But Iraq's war of liberation from the Americans is just about to begin", reports Robert Fisk, [28] correspondent of the British 'Independent' newspaper in the Middle East for twenty years, on April 17, 2003. Donald Rumsfeld seems to bear him out.

Iraqi oil

Last December, the Heritage Foundation, a group of neoconservative experts close to the Bush administration, wrote in a report devoted to the post-war period in Iraq: "The road to economic prosperity in Iraq will not be easily paved, but the Bush administration can help the new Iraqi government achieve fundamental structural reform with massive, orderly and transparent privatisation of various sectors of the economy, including the oil industry". [29] According to Reuters, during a conference organized in London by the US State Department on April 4-5, "Iraqi exiles and senior US officials agreed ... that international oil companies should take a leading post-war role in reviving Iraq's oil industry". [30]

Having immense reserves of high quality oil which is easy to exploit, [31] Iraq whetted the appetites of the Bush administration, closely linked to the 'junior' Texan and Californian oil companies. However in order to survive these companies need high oil prices, because the cost per barrel resulting from their activities is one of the highest in the world. In addition, they do not have the financial capacities necessary for the repair of the existing installations - more than a billion dollars, according to Yahya Sadowski - or to raise Iraqi production to 6 billion barrels per day, which the same expert estimates at 30 billion dollars. [32] It is however levels of production such as this which would allow Iraq, i.e. the United States, to secure control of OPEC - another dream of the American administration, already formulated by Henry Kissinger in the 1970s and an obsession of the neocons.

The solution could well consist in offering these 'junior' companies part of the Iraqi reserves and the Iraqi oil industry, while ensuring at the same time that the American giants, Exxon-Mobil and Chevron-Texaco, as well as Shell and British Petroleum, are given sufficient shares to prevent these powerful companies causing trouble, while ignoring the French (TotalFinaElf), Chinese, German and Russian protests - the axis guilty of not having supported the US war effort. According to Le Monde [33] "the US administration would like to establish a new legal framework" to "offer a kind of legal immunity protecting companies against court proceedings".

However, all this will not be easy. To bring about the privatization of Iraqi oil, the Bush administration recently offered the position of head of the Iraqi national company to Fadhil Chalabi, director of the Centre for Global Energy Studies, bound by family links to Ahmed Chalabi, Washington's man at the head of the Iraqi National Congress. Not wanting to appear as an underling of Washington, he declined the offer. Iraq's oil, nationalized in 1972, is the only true resource of the country. Its sell-off will meet with popular opposition in Iraq, beyond that caused by the presence of foreign troops in the country. Fadhil Chalabi is not a candidate for suicide.

As for the oil companies which undertook negotiations with Iraq under Saddam, Russia's Lukoil, best placed because it concluded contracts with the old regime for the exploitation of Iraqi oil reserves, threatens to take the affair before the Court of Arbitration in Geneva, which according to international treaties should lead to the immediate freezing of these reserves. TotalFinaElf, not having a signed protocol, is also demanding that agreements previously entered into are respected. [34] The eagerness of the Chirac government to get the UN back on the ground in the rebuilding of Iraq is not unconnected to these agreements, whose realization would guarantee the French oil company a solid pole position at the head of the group thanks to the exploitation of the five giant oil fields of Majnoun and Bin-Umar, among the most profitable in Iraq. The Chinese company CNPC, which signed an agreement for a share of the production of the Al-Adhab field in 1997, is also enjoying the support of its government.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/09usmarines.jpg>]

All this could lead to an international crisis of much greater breadth than that which preceded the invasion of Iraq. It could see Japan, principal consumer of Gulf oil, join the Paris-Berlin-Moscow-Beijing axis. The Bush administration would then be opposed to three secondary imperialist powers and three states having nuclear weapons. The international structures which underpinned neoliberal globalization could then fall apart. It is not certain that the oil giants, Exxon in particular, are ready to consider quietly the possibility of an open inter-imperialist conflict and the

contraction of the world market that that would cause. And it is not sure that George W Bush is ready to start his campaign for re-election in such a climate. Once more, the dreams of the neocons and their and their 'junior' oil company backers seem over ambitious. "The Bush administration - writes Yahya Sadowski - conceived its campaign against Baghdad without the least participation from these companies (Exxon-Mobil and Chevron-Texaco) and in absolute ignorance of the bases of the oil economy". [35]

The US occupation of Iraq, if it can be stabilized, will undoubtedly lead to at least the partial privatisation of Iraqi oil. The exploitation of new fields and the modernization of existing exploitations will require foreign investment. Fadhil Chalabi has explicitly said so to the Christian Science Monitor: "We need to have a huge amount of money coming into the country. The only way is to partially privatise the industry." [36] Such an operation would not necessarily meet too much opposition in Iraq - the principal forces of the opposition, the Islamist organizations, are not enemies of private property and the Iraqi left is weak and disorientated. [37] Nonetheless, its realization implies an inter-imperialist agreement.

The persistence of the neocons

"The minister of national infrastructure, Joseph Paritzky, has asked for an estimate of the state of the old pipeline from Mosul to Haifa, envisaging the resumption of the transport of oil when a friendly regime has been installed after the war in Iraq", reports the Israeli daily Haaretz. [38] This pipeline was put out of service following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and replaced by the Syrian pipeline. Even in the very unlikely event that the 'roadmap' drawn up by the 'quartet' (US, EU, Russia, UN) yields results, the reopening of this pipeline would imply that the Palestinian state envisaged is totally in hock to Israel. The goal of this roadmap is to force the Palestinian Authority to put an 'unconditional end to violence' and resume security cooperation on the basis of the Tenet plan with Israel, that is to turn its back on the aspirations of the Palestinian people. Its effect cannot be other than to deprive the Palestinian Authority of the legitimacy it still has and to reinforce the legitimacy of the radical Islamists, in short to prolong the unequal and endless war of which the Palestinian population is the first victim, but from which the inhabitants of Israel also suffer.

Shortly after the fall of Baghdad, Bush publicly declared his belief that Syria had chemical weapons and his spokesman, Ari Fleischer, added that the Syrian programme of chemical weapons "was well known" and that Syria was a 'rogue state', informing the country that they should "seriously ponder the implications of their actions" [39] After the invasion of Iraq, is that of Syria next?

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/10awd.jpg>]

The imaginations of the neocons and their friends on the Israeli right have no limits, but an attack on Syria is not (yet?) on the agenda of the Bush administration. However, Syria, allied today - after having tried without success to contain it - with Lebanon's Hezbollah, is an obstacle to the US-Israelis plans for reorganization of the Middle East. Washington is thus trying to benefit from the impact of its 'military triumph' to encourage the Syrian regime to cooperate. At the time of his visit to Damascus on May 3, Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, demanded that Syria closes the offices of the Palestinian organizations qualified by Washington as 'terrorists' - Hamas and Islamic Jihad - and puts an end to Hezbollah's anti-Israeli activities. He also demanded that Syria hand over to the US authorities the Iraqi funds deposited on its territory, together with Iraqi leaders or scientists taking refuge in Syria - both demands contrary to international law. Finally, stopping in Beirut, he demanded that Lebanon get rid of all foreign forces on its soil - in other words that Syria removes its 20,000 soldiers from the country.

The US offensive has for the moment produced a 'collateral' effect: at a meeting in Riyadh on April 19 the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain and Egypt - apart from Syria and Iran, all clients of the United States - adopted a common official statement noting "the obligation of the occupying forces,

under the terms of the Fourth Geneva convention, to withdraw from Iraq and to allow the Iraqis to exert their right to self-determination". They affirmed that they would "not accept any interference in the internal affairs of Iraq" and stressed that the exploitation of Iraqi natural resources "should be in conformity with the will of the legitimate Iraqi government", insisting finally on "the central role of the United Nations". Finally, the conference gave its "support to the Syrian initiative calling for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East", which relates to the nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons held by Israel. Then, on April 29, Donald Rumsfeld announced the withdrawal of US troops from Saudi Arabia. The US reorganization of the Middle East thus starts with an apparent rejection front, bringing together regimes until now strongly opposed to each other, like the Saudi and Iranian governments. Let us add, finally, that the British Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, considered it useful to take his distance from Bush, declaring that Syria is not on the hit list and that Great Britain does not know anything about prohibited chemical weapons Syria may have.

A structural weakness

The passion of the Bush administration for military shows of force conceals the relative weakening of the foundation of US imperialism. One of the perverse effects of 'Reaganomics', whose goal was to restore the rate of profit to the detriment of wages, was the excessive development of the services sector to the detriment of the industrial sector. The economic policy initiated by Reagan - and continued since, even if with fluctuations - led to an explosion of inequality: "In the companies quoted in Fortune business magazine's classification of the top 500, the ratio between annual wages to CEOs and the workers, which was 1 to 40 in 1970, was now in a ratio of 1 to 531, according to Proxinvest". [40] These inequalities, while reducing the demand of wage earners, have produced an explosion of services of a certain type: "In the United States, the development of services is no longer that of a modern tertiary sector, but the return to the old chaos of the aristocratic societies of the past", comments Emmanuel Todd. [41] The structure of US GNP reflects this: in 2000, [42] manufacturing industry contributed only 15.9% of GNP, extractive industries 1.4%, construction 4.7% and agriculture 1.4% - in other words productive activities as a whole represented only 23.4% of GNP. If one adds services essential to the realization of surplus value - transport (12.3%) and wholesale and retail (15.9%) - the total barely exceeds 51.6% of GNP. And the remainder? 21.9% is accounted for by 'personal services', 19.6% by finance-insurance-real estate and finally 12.3% by the state. "Personal services", or domestic services, relate largely to the "chaos" stigmatized by Todd. The state, in addition to the productive activities that it ensures, plays 'yoyo' with its Treasury bills and thus imposes a world tax. As for finance-insurance-real estate, it relates in part to the financial bubble whose virtual character has been exposed by the collapse of Enron and other jewels of the 'new economy' and in part to the effects of the redistribution (the word 'plundering' would be more suitable) of social product (in the US but also the world) to the profit of financial and speculative capital. The biggest army in the world is not there to deal with Bin Laden, but in the final analysis to maintain a world order that allows this plundering.

Between 1994 and 2000 however, the growth of this virtual sector (finance-insurance-real estate) was more than twice as fast as that of industry, largely masking the accumulated backwardness in the productive sector, in particular in the area of productivity. This was testified to recently by the decision of the Bush administration to establish tariff barriers for iron and steel products, the American iron and steel industry being unable to deal with competition, in particular from Europe. The US trade deficit is the symptom of this weakness. America needs more than one billion dollars of financial income per day to cover its trade deficit. Emmanuel Todd again: "It is the movement of financial capital that ensures the equilibrium of the US balance of payments... If one takes account of the fact that the majority of the goods bought outside are intended for consumption, corresponding to an infinitely renewable demand in the short run, whereas the financial capital invested in the United States should correspond in its majority with investments in the medium and long term, it must be admitted that there is something of the paradoxical, not to say the structurally unstable, in the mechanism." [43] Indeed, "foreign investors hold more than 18% of the stock exchange capitalization of American long term credits and 42% of the stock of Treasury bills". However, "these sums could leave the country instantaneously at the flick of some keys on a computer keyboard" [44] During the 1990s

there was a slow evolution of foreign investments: for example in 1993 Japan invested 17,500 billion yen in the United States and only 9,200 in Europe, but in 2000 the proportions were reversed - 13,500 in the US and 27,000 in Europe. [45] The continuation of such a tendency and its generalization would put an end to the financing of American growth by the rest of the world.

The appearance of the euro - a potential currency of refuge - complicates the handling of the exchange value of the dollar, which until now made it possible for the US economy to 'regulate' according to its needs the variations of the trade deficit and foreign investments. One thus understands why Bush does not look favourably on the possibility of the entry of Great Britain within the monetary union - to which the City of London in its majority aspires and which was one of the projects of the Blair government. "The rise of the euro - writes Emmanuel Todd - can symmetrically support American industry in the long run, but on the other hand drain the supply of financial capital of the United States, brutally, in the very short term". [46] The safeguarding of a field of negotiation and co-operation with the secondary, Japanese and European imperialisms, thus appears crucial. But this does not seem to be Bush's way. [47]

Faced with these issues, the policy of the neocons in Bush's administration is to increase the US deficit through a simultaneous increase in (in particular military) expenditure and a national tax cut for the richest (Congress voted for a tax cut of 550 billion dollars, but Bush initially wanted a reduction of 725 billion!) - a doubtful means of attracting foreign investment, because the increase in the deficit and the consequent fall of the dollar are likely to reduce to nothing the possible net benefits, but a form of redistribution of income to the benefit of the 'upper middle class' to which the neocons largely belong.

One however should not confuse tendencies of average and long duration and a completed process. The structural weakening of the US economy in the world economy is compensated for by the strategic domination of the United States. Political-military victories can contain contradictions, make it possible to mark points against competitors, delay certain processes and even overcome certain contradictions. The long-term tendencies are not written in stone. There are times of crisis, where History can take different roads, or be diverted from its course.

The movement for global justice faces new challenges

The inter-imperialist tensions revealed by the preparation for the Iraqi war and the competition exacerbated by the decline of the US economy and the downturn in the business cycle in the principal world economies, point to a period when the imperialist bourgeoisies will develop a 'chauvinistic' propaganda, developing 'their' area of influence and devaluing that of their competitors. This has already started in the United States with a campaign orchestrated by the Bush administration against 'France' and 'Germany', which is reminiscent of the propaganda developed before 1914 among the future belligerents.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/11ta.jpg>]

The movement for global justice essentially managed to preserve its independence, avoiding aligning itself with any of the protagonists in the inter-imperialist conflict. The anti-war movement in which - at least in Europe, Latin America, Japan and the United States - it played a driving role did not fall into the trap of alignment with the 'institutional anti-war camp' of Chirac, Schröder, Putin and company. Nevertheless this movement, in certain European countries at least and especially in predominantly Moslem countries in Asia, largely exceeded the field of influence of the global justice movement, mobilizing hundreds of thousands of new demonstrators. The anti-war revolt for some originated in religious conviction - Islam, but also Catholicism because of the position taken by the Pope - or in national identities. In certain Arab and Asian countries, where the movement for global justice did not experience a development similar to that it acquired in the Americas and in Europe, the radical Islamic organizations

confronted the state bureaucracies with 'nationalist' pretensions for hegemony within the anti-war movement. The fact that in Iraq the fight against the US occupation is carried out under the flag of Islam will reinforce the hold of reactionary Islamic currents over certain sectors of the anti-war movement.

The role played by the Security Council of the UN - the closed club of the great powers and their clients - in the debates preceding the war on Iraq also spread illusions about 'international legality', contributing to blunting the anti-imperialist edge of the anti-war mobilizations, suggesting that it was possible to force the ruling classes to adopt a 'legal' approach at a time when Bush and his team had decided to pass to the argument of force, whereas in the framework of world political relations, the UN is at the same time an area of expression of inter-state contradictions but also an instrument in the service of neoliberal policies of recolonization.

Such diversions do not stop the development of the anti-war movement where they occur. On the contrary, the religious feeling of the masses can constitute in certain countries a powerful lever of mobilization against war. But it weakens solidarity and the international unity of the movement, opposes one national sector to another and, in the final analysis, weakens the anti-war movement where its mobilization could be most effective: at the heart of the US superpower. The attacks by Al Quaida against the people of the United States on September 11, 2001 allowed the most bellicose and imperialist neocon groups in the US to impose their projects within the US administration "the attacks of 11 September... have given American imperialists the added force of wounded nationalism - a much deeper, more popular and more dangerous phenomenon, strengthened by the Israeli nationalism of most of the American Jewish community. Another attack on the American mainland would ignite this nationalism and strengthen support for even more aggressive and ambitious 'retaliation'", writes Anatol Lieven of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. [48]

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/12fwh.jpg>]

The strength of the movement for global justice stems from its opposition to neoliberal policies - which Capital seeks to impose on the whole world under the label of 'globalization' - and its claim that 'another world is possible' which tend to naturally unify revolts across the globe and lend them a spontaneously internationalist orientation. Fractures appear in this uniform aggression, inter-imperialist conflicts sharpen which forces the movement to pass on a higher level of unity, under penalty of falling into the traps of defence of its country, its area, its identity and to regress from the internationalism which characterizes it into a form of neo-chauvinism.

In Europe in particular the movement for global justice should beware of "the assertion of different European values". [49] The aggressively neoliberal policy of dismantling of state pension systems and more generally the rolling back of the 'social state' [50] led by the European Union go parallel to its attempts to oppose to the United States a 'European power' and should warn the movement against any idealization of 'European values'. Its engagement in the more traditional forms of the class struggle, alongside the historical labour movement, represent a healthier direction.

It remains true that on an international scale only the capacity of the movement for global justice to flesh out its claim of 'another possible world', i.e. its capacity to invent a socialist project for the 21st century and to learn the lessons from the historical failures of the labour movement of the previous century, will be able to arm it for the ideological battle which it must carry out against the 'neo-chauvinist' radical Islamic movements and currents. By doing this it will reinforce its international bonds and will be capable of an even more effective opposition to the warlike drift of imperialism. A new 'August 1914' is not inevitable. The movement for global justice can prevent it.

[1] Quoted in 'Le Monde', May 9, 2003.

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[2] 'Le Monde', April 26, 2003.

[3] According to the 'Guardian' of April 3, quoted by Ahmad Musa, 'Reality of America's 'clean war' emerging despite propaganda', Muslimedia.com of April 16, 2003.

[4] (In a report of April 29, 2003, Human Rights Watch says that: "The U.S. Department of Defense has acknowledged using nearly 1,500 air-dropped cluster bombs, but has not revealed any information about ground-launched cluster munitions, which may have been much more numerous... The U.K. Ministry of Defence admitted on April 24 that its forces had used 2,100 cluster munition artillery projectiles and at least 66 BL-755 cluster bombs in the conflict".

[5] William Rivers Pitt, "The Project for the New American Century", The author, a journalist with the 'New York Times', has published "War on Iraq", Context Books (with Scott Ritter) and "The Greatest Sedition is Silence", Pluto Press.

[6] *ibid.*

[7] 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America', a document whose authorship is attributed to Condoleezza Rice: ref: www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

[8] The US military budget, after the increase of 47 billion dollars for 2003 and 74.7 billion dollars to meet the cost of the war which has been just voted for, exceeds that of the whole of the 191 other countries of the planet, according to Fareed Zakaria ('Newsweek', March 24, 2003). The objective of exceeding 3.8% of the GNP, fixed by the PNAC in September 2000, was attained.

[9] See on this subject the article by François Vercaammen, [America Inc vs Europe plc](#), IV 349, May 2003.

[10] The destruction of the library in Baghdad deprived humanity of part of our history. The US army allowed the lootings, organized by specialists and not the fruit of a revolt of the poor. According to the 'Washington Times' of April 20, 2003 the heads of the occupying army had a list of 16 sites whose protection was regarded as priority, established by the Pentagon on March 26. The Museum of Baghdad appeared as number 2 on this list. But General Brook, in command of the troops in Baghdad during the looting, 'did not know about it'.

[11] (See Zbigniew M Kowalewski, 'Hezbollah - szyicki Islam rewolucyjny' (Hezbollah - revolutionary Shiite Islam), 'Rewolucja', number 2, Warsaw 2002.

[12] Bush's appointment of Paul Bremer testifies to the panic which reigns in Washington before the proven bankruptcy of the neocon projects for Iraq.

[13] The chief of staff of the British army, the admiral Michael Boyce, had announced that his troops "were overworked" and that they "cannot be committed in another conflict before the end of the next year" ('Le Monde', May 2, 2003).

[14] Faced with financial crisis, the Polish army is demanding "missions" financed by those who need "cannon fodder". The government of the social democratic and post-Stalinist ex-bureaucrat Leszek Miller aspires to filling its coffers by renting out its soldiers.

[15] According to 'Le Monde' on May 6, a Pentagon spokesperson has stated that in addition to the three countries mentioned, troops from the following countries will take part in the occupation of Iraq under the leadership of the United States: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In addition, the Philippines, Qatar, Australia and South Korea were committed to providing civil, logistic or medical help.

[16] The effectiveness of the propaganda diffused from Washington, hammered home daily by chains like Fox-TV or CNN, should not be underestimated; between 42% and 56% of Americans (the surveys vary) are convinced that Saddam Hussein was directly implicated in the attacks of September 11, 2001!

[17] Quoted by Praful Bidwai, 'A New, Angry, Pentagon colony', 'Frontline', vol. 20, number 9, April 26, 2003.

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[18] Quoted by Rohan Pearce, 'Iraqis demand: 'Invaders out now!'' , 'Green Left Weekly', April 23, 2003. 'Green Left Weekly' is the weekly newspaper of the Democratic Socialist Party of Australia.

[19] (The fatwa is a religious document having the force of a law. Wolfowitz showed his ignorance, because an oral speech cannot be a fatwa.

[20] Juan Cole, 'Shiite religious left fill vacuum in southern Iraq', 'Middle East Online', April 22 2003 . Juan Cole teaches the history of the Middle East and South Asia at the University of Michigan.

[21] Rohan Pearce, 'Shiites lead opposition to US occupation', 'Green Left Weekly', May 7 2003.

[22] op cit.

[23] 'Green Left Weekly', May 7, 2003, Op cit.

[24] Op cit.

[25] Op cit.

[26] Zafar Bangash, 'Iraqi Muslims facing grim future, as US joins long line of invaders to have raped Iraq', Muslimedia International, May 1-15 2003.

[27] Quoted in 'Le Monde', April 27-28, 2003.

[28] Ref: [Independent](#).

[29] Quoted by Doug Lorimer, 'Oil and the Bush plan for total domination', 'Green Left Weekly', April 23, 2003.

[30] ibid.

[31] See 'Inprecor' n° 480/481, mars/avril 2003, p. 8.

[32] Yahya Sadowski, 'Le Monde Diplomatique', April 2003.

[33] Marc Roche, 'Le Monde', April 24, 2003.

[34] Marc Roche, 'Le Monde' May 4-5, 2003.

[35] Op cit.

[36] Quoted by Doug Lorimer, 'Oil and...', Op cit.

[37] The Iraqi Communist Party has resurfaced, with offices in several cities (often in buildings abandoned by the old political police force) and has started to publish a newspaper. A few dozen people responded to its call for a May 1 demonstration in Baghdad. But neither its writings, nor the reports of its journalists, seem to indicate that it has understood what is at stake in the installation of an administration independent of the occupier - which the Islamists have understood - nor that it has involved itself in popular self-organization to restore water and electricity. Its leaders dream of a Swedish style socialism, which inspired wan Indian progressive to comment: "At this time it is a little difficult to look at this city, still smoking and torn by tanks and kalashnikovs and to imagine that it could ever be transformed into a kind of Stockholm. But it is also difficult to look around and imagine it transformed into a new Kansas City or a new Des Moines. If Jay Garner can dream, why not Malik?" In any case, it is not from the CPI that an alternative to the Islamists will emerge.

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[38] Akiva Eldar, 'The pipeline to Haifa', Haaretz, April 1, 2003.

[39] Quoted by Laila Juma, 'US increases political pressure on Syria after deposing Saddam', Muslimedia International, May 1-15 2003,

[40] Frederic F. Clermont, in 'Le Monde Diplomatique', April 2003.

[41] Emmanuel Todd, 'Après l'Empire', Gallimard, Paris 2002, p. 114.

[42] According to the Office of Economic Analysis, quoted by E Todd, Op cit., p. 83.

[43] E Todd, Op cit., p. 107.

[44] Frederic F Clermont, Op cit. One remembers how, in the middle of the Vietnam war, the French administration of Charles de Gaulle greatly annoyed the US Treasury by converting its reserves of dollars into gold. The realization of US Treasury bonds or stock exchange credits by the Japanese and European capitalists could produce a similar crisis today.

[45] Op cit, quoted by E Todd, Op cit. p. 225.

[46] Op cit, p 229.

[47] "I wonder whether the UN is essential in the 21st century. My colleagues are thinking about the question", Bushsaid in February to the Turkish Foreign Minister, according to the Turkish daily newspaper 'Äumhuryet' (quotedin 'Le Monde Diplomatique', April 2003). Ron Paul, a Republican representative from Texas and a radical neocon, went further, proposing to Congress and 'American Sovereignty Restoration Act' involving the US leaving the UN and other international institutions where it does not enjoy an absolute majority.

[48] Anatol Lieven, 'A Trap of Their Own Making', 'London Review of Books', vol. 25, nÂ° 9 of May 8 2003.

[49] This is what Bernard Cassen, a well-known leader of ATTAC appears to be proposing in an article published in 'Le Monde Diplomatique' in May 2003. Is this a slip of the pen or the symptom of an orientation? "L'Union europ enne malade de l'atlantisme', 'Le Monde Diplomatique', mai 2003.

[50] Op cit.