

Iraq – “sovereignty” at gunpoint

The Policy of Occupation after the “transfer of power” – Iraq on the road to a colonial dictatorship

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The interim government of Iraq was installed almost clandestinely on June 28 in its boss's office. Two days earlier than announced and without the expected fanfare, the withdrawing U.S. governor, Paul Bremer, issued his last decree and immediately sneaked out of the country. This officially terminated the occupation of Iraq and initiated a “transition process,” which within 18 months is supposed to result in the election of a government on the basis of a new constitution. Although the occupation troops further exercise military control over the country, the UN-Security Council accepted this procedure with its resolution 1546.

Its success is questionable. Even after June 30, the USA will only be able to maintain control over the country with the use of brutal repression and military force against the growing resistance. The development is not headed toward sovereignty and democracy, but rather toward a colonial dictatorship dependant upon the USA, to be terminated only when the USA is forced from the country.

This newly defined “transition process” does not correspond to the U.S. government's original plan. The decision to transfer direct control over the country to an Iraqi interim government by the end of June 2004 was taken by the Bush administration in November 2003, which meant that it significantly altered its original plans. [The author explains this in more detail in another publication.¹] According to the original plans, the U.S. intended to remain – after having disbanded the institutions of the old regime – until conditions were ripe enough to hand over power to an Iraqi government. After transforming the Iraqi economy into a radically neo-liberal version of free market economy, Iraq was supposed to become a federal, demilitarized state with a weak central government – “protected” by perpetual presence of U.S. troops.

The consequences of this plan are disastrous for Iraq and its population. The living conditions in all areas of life are worse than before the war and under UN sanctions. The U.S. soon encountered a rapidly growing resistance. The assumption held by U.S. strategists and their advisers from the ranks of the Iraqi exile opposition -- that the Iraqi population would tolerate political and military occupation after the long years under the rule of Saddam Hussein and the deprivations suffered through war and sanctions -- has proven to be an illusion.

Other countries furnished little support because of the occupation's lack of legitimacy and Washington's unwillingness to grant them a say. This is why, even inside the USA itself the possibility of success of the Iraq mission was put more and more into question around autumn of 2003 and the problems increased for the Bush-administration.

Without relinquishing some of its control over Iraq, the U.S. would not win additional allies and international support. This is why in mid-November 2003 the U.S. government was forced to announce the transition of power to an interim government and an end to the occupation by June 30, 2004. But the occupation troops were to remain in Iraq – in the future at the invitation of the Iraqi government. The date was so chosen in order to deflect some criticism at the beginnings of the hot phase of the presidential election campaign.

¹ The article is an extract of a larger study about the US occupation of Iraq and the resistance against it: "Im Treibsand Iraks: Von 'Auftrag erfüllt' zur unerfüllbaren Mission?" (In the quicksand of Iraq: From 'mission accomplished' to mission impossible), IMI-Study 2004/03, August 2004, <http://imi-online.de/download/IMI-Studie-2004-03JGTreibsand.pdf>

The call for general elections

Initially, the “interim government” was to be appointed by a national assembly, whose members were to be chosen by local commissions acting under auspices of the occupying power. This was to create the illusion of a sort of representation, but this plan had to be abandoned due to decisive Iraqi resistance to it. Even the conservative circles around the Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani, who had, up to that point, held themselves back and on whose acceptance the U.S. had been counting, came out in opposition to the “appointocracy” with the call for immediate free elections.

But elections were the last thing the U.S. administration needed at that time. It was evident that its opponents would win. Governor Bremer insisted that elections should be done “in a way that takes care of our concerns.”²

The US-government turned down the idea of elections, claiming that technical problems would permit elections in two years at the earliest. Iraqi officials and UN- personnel who are familiar with the conditions there immediately refuted this argument. Even Carina Perelli, director of the UN election support department, thought elections were feasible within six months. If correctly prepared, elections of an interim government would have been possible.³

The argument that the armed resistance prevented the necessary security convinced no one either. This situation would not change as long as the occupation troops remain in the country. But if elections were held at the beginning of a transition process that actually leads to the retreat of foreign troops, security would be no greater a problem than even at the present time, according to the opinion of many Iraqis. All Iraqi patriots, they reason, would support such a solution. This was shown not only by a survey of high ranking Iraqi personalities carried out by a UN-team lead by Kofi Annan’s special envoy, Lakhtar Brahimi, that examined the possibilities of elections in Iraq,⁴ but also confirmed, for example, by the results of the research by Robert Colliers, foreign correspondent of the San Francisco Chronicle. In December 2003, Collier interviewed dozens of Shiite leaders, Sunnite clerics and Baathists of all ranks. All of them signaled their acceptance of free elections under the condition, that the whole transition process be carried out under UN control and the occupation troops be replaced by UN-troops coming from neutral states. But the candidatures of all parties would have to be admitted, including the Baath Party, after the purge of their compromised former leaders.⁵

Still the UN team conceded to U.S. demands. After setting the requirements for successful elections very high, they concluded that elections of an interim government are impossible to accomplish. According to their estimates elections could be possible by the end of the year not the two years that would be necessary according to the U.S.

Transitional constitution

Another important element of the U.S. strategy has met with broad disapproval: the interim constitution signed on March 8 by the “Governing Council.” The “Transitional Administrative Law (TAL)” was drawn up by U.S. jurists. In spite of its name, it is a comprehensively elaborated document, destined to serve as a blueprint for a permanent constitution. The reasoning is that even a constitutional assembly convened at a later date could not simply overturn this constitution and a durable U.S. influence would be subtly guaranteed.⁶

² Herbert Docena, “In Iraq, the show must go on”, *Focus on the Global South*, 26.4.2004, <http://www.focusweb.org/main/html/Article289.html>

³ J. Guilliard, “Im Treibsand Iraks ...” l.c.

⁴ Report of the UN Fact-finding Team, 23.2.2004, UN-Dokument S/2004/140,

⁵ Robert Collier, “Democracy How?”, *The American Prospect*, March 1st, 2004, <http://www.prospect.org/print/V15/3/collier-r.html>

⁶ see “Im Treibsand Iraks ...”

The Western media celebrated the new constitution as a democratic milestone. Drafted in the small circle of the “Governing Council,” with the U.S. in charge, it was anything but democratic.

While granting ample space to civil rights, the new constitution falls far behind existing law concerning the social domain and – as was to be expected – it abolishes all barriers preventing foreign capital from taking over the country.

The large majority of Iraqis were excluded from the discussion and many therefore, reject the constitution as a concoction forced upon them by the occupying power. They reject particularly the planned wide ranging federal system because it aims at the break up of Iraqi society and the weakening of the nation.⁷ Also controversial is the reference to Islam as “a source” of jurisprudence and the provision that no law can be in contradiction to Islamic law. It is not at all clear what this will mean in terms of individual rights, especially of women. The TAL is also indirectly granting the two Kurdish parties, i.e., the closest allies of the USA, the right to veto the adoption of final version of the constitution:⁸

November plan in shambles

The occupying power ran into trouble when for its interim government and projected constitution, exactly those Iraqi forces, on whose collaboration – or at least toleration – it was counting rejected its legitimacy. It was, however, the armed resistance, which reached a new quality in March and April, that really spelled disaster for their plans.

A large-scale retaliatory strike against Falluja, a city of 300.000 inhabitants, proved a failure, in spite of the massive ground and air attacks, due to the fierce resistance put up by local guerilla forces and urban militia. The large number of civilian casualties – estimates range from 800 to 1,200 dead – provoked an outcry the world over. The besieged city became an international symbol both for the brutality of the occupying power and the strength of the resistance.

After the occupation force launched provocative strikes against the movement of the Shiite religious leader Muktada al-Sadr, the situation became explosive also in some districts of Baghdad, in Najaf, Karbala and other Shiite cities to the south. The battles between the occupation forces and members of al-Sadr’s “Mahdi-Army” became real uprisings with other Iraqis joining the resistance. The occupation forces have not been successful in retaking complete control of all cities.

The political damage was considerable: the uprisings in the formerly calmer south completely contradicted the propaganda about a resistance supported exclusively by remnants of the old regime or by foreign Islamists entering from abroad. The support by large sectors of society and the mutual support between Shiites and Sunnites became too obvious.

Because of the brutal attack by U.S. troops on Falluja, unrest grew even within the ranks of Washington’s allies in Iraq. When the use of torture was exposed, U.S. occupation policy lost all credibility. The “coalition of the willing” began to crumble after José María Aznar, Bushs close Spanish ally, was voted out of office. Without the prospect of winning at least tactical support from important sectors of the Iraqi population, the plan from November lay in shambles, and the possibility of shaking off the label of being an “occupier“ by the end of June, dwindled.⁹

The UN to the rescue

Only the UN was capable of rescuing the U.S. from this debacle. If acceptance could not be won inside Iraq, the UN could help create a domestic and foreign sort of legitimacy by signing off on the

⁷ “Protests Mount Against Interim Law”, *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, 15 March 2004, http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/irq/irq_53_3_eng.txt

⁸ Phyllis Bennis, “The Iraqi Constitution & Events in Spain”, *Institute for Policy Studies*, 16 March 2004, <http://www.ips-dc.org/comment/Bennis/iraqconspain.htm>

⁹ Herbert Docena, l.c.

“transformation project.” The UN general secretary and his special Envoy Lakhtar Brahimi quickly answered the U.S.’s call for help.

Brahimi suggested that the “Governing Council” be completely dissolved and an interim government, consisting of independent, in Iraq, widely accepted specialists be created and backed by the moral weight of the United Nations. Initially Washington agreed and Brahimi took up the task of forming such a government, only to have suggestions rejected. The team he was finally allowed to present at the beginning of June was again made up of the same pro-American forces as had been represented in the “Governing Council.” This lack of independence of action angered Brahimi. When asked earlier about the influence of the U.S.-administration on the selection of a government, Brahimi pointed out that U.S.-governor Paul Bremer was pulling all strings in Iraq. “Bremer is the dictator of Iraq,” he said. “He has the money. He has the signature.”¹⁰ Two weeks after introducing the interim government, Bremer quietly left office.¹¹

The ‘interim government’ – sovereignty by definition

The highest posts in the interim government were given to men, who had already been members of the “Governing Council,” such as “Prime Minister” Iyad Allawi and “President” Sheik Ghazi Al Yawer, a businessman living in Saudi Arabia. In spite of his close ties to Washington, Al Yawer enjoys a good reputation in Iraq, because he is the nephew of the leader of one of the largest tribes in the country. His reputation is supposed to put the whole government in a better light.

But Allawi’s reputation is shady. He is suspected of having worked in London as an informant of the Iraqi Intelligence Service in the 1970s. Beginning in 1978, he worked for the British Secret Service, MI6, and later also for the CIA: With their support he formed, together with former military personal and high ranking politicians from the Baath party, the “Iraqi National Accord”(INA). Between 1992 and 1995 he organized terror attacks in Iraq causing numerous civilian casualties.¹² This CIA agent also furnished some of the “evidence“ material used by several secret services to pep up their reports concerning the threat posed by Iraq. His material was the source of Tony Blair’s lie about Saddam’s ability to deploy weapons of mass destruction in just 45 minutes.¹³

Most members of the new government are also citizens of other countries. Besides Allawi, there are at least seven others who are members of organizations directly financed by the U.S. government.¹⁴

It was clear from the start, that the interim government would have little authority. It will neither have control over the country's finances destined for the reconstruction, nor will it take control of the U.S. led prisons and camps. In spite of all the reports on the use of torture, the Iraqi judiciary will have no influence on the imprisonment of Iraqi citizens and will have no possibilities to prosecute crimes committed by soldiers of the occupation army on Iraqi soil, not to mention demand reparations for damage caused. Shortly before he left office, Bremer extended immunity to all members of western enterprises while on duty in Iraq. That means for example, that even private mercenaries cannot be prosecuted for murders they commit in Iraq.¹⁵

The interim government is explicitly forbidden to change essential laws. Opponents of the occupation also demanded this restriction. As it has no democratic legitimacy, the interim government should not be permitted to make any decisions that could be binding for a future elected government. But this has been counteracted by the occupation authority's “Orders,” which have set the agenda for years to come.

¹⁰ “Bremer the ‘dictator of Iraq’ in forming government”, Knight Ridder Newspapers, 2.6.2004

¹¹ “Brahimi quits post as UN envoy in Iraq”, *Haaretz*, 13.6.2004

¹² “Allawi’s rocky road to the top” and “Hard man for a tough country”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17.7.2004

¹³ “Exiled Allawi was Responsible for 45-Minute WMD Claim”, *Independent*, 29.5.2004

¹⁴ “New leaders in Iraq have deep ties to U.S.”, *International Herald Tribune*, 8.6.2004

¹⁵ “Public Note” of the CPA, June 26, 2004.

During his term in office, Bremer issued over 100 “Orders” and complementary memorandums that became law. One fifth of these were enacted during the last two months of his term.¹⁶ Most of them will remain in force after the occupation authority has been dissolved. As long as Iraqi institutions play by the rules, these “Orders” can be annulled in due process only by an elected government.¹⁷

Bremer and his collaborators had reason to express their optimism to the *Guardian* concerning the long lasting effects of their work. The U.S. jurists, who drafted this constitution, will remain in Iraq even after the dissolution of the CPA in order to “keep their laws alive” as “advisers” of the interim government. Over 200 U.S. “experts” are employed as “advisers” in the 28 Iraqi ministries. Like colonial functionaries they assure that everything is taking the desired course. Bremer appointed “general inspectors” as head supervisors for every ministry.¹⁸

He appointed judges to the highest courts,¹⁹ installed an “election commission,” that decides which candidates and parties will be admitted, a “media- and communication commission,” responsible for television licences and the regulation of the mobile phone network. This body has authority to decide over sanctions against or the closing down of newspapers. All of them with a term of 5 years.

As the Wall Street Journal remarked, Bremer has “quietly” built institutions “that will give the U.S. powerful levers for influencing nearly every important decision the interim government will make,” far beyond the so called “period of transition.”²⁰

Legitimacy through the UN – the Security Council Resolution 1546

In spite of its limited power, Lakhtar Brahimi and Kofi Annan did not hesitate to describe such a government as “sovereign.” Brahimi accused those, who, for example, referred to the ongoing U.S. military control of the country, of being “too legalistic.” For him “sovereignty” means “the formal end of occupation.” “There will be a government that will be sovereign, that will exercise this sovereignty.” “Sovereignty” per definition not on the basis of real power.²¹

Explicit UN aid is an expression of support for U.S. policy in Iraq by other major powers that had been critical of the war. Even though Germany and France do not mind seeing the U.S. and Great Britain encounter difficulties because of their unilateral policy of aggression, they fear, for reasons of self interest, a complete defeat of the U.S. and Great Britain, because this would mean a major setback for all Western states in a region very vital for them economically.

Like Russia, they too demanded more authority for the interim government, a timetable for the retreat of the troops and more influence for the UN and therefore themselves. The EU foreign policy spokesman, Javier Solana, even announced a “big confrontation” in opposition to the proposed U.S. Iraq resolution, placing Iraqi security forces under U.S. command.

It was a tempest in a teacup. The Europeans did not exploit the distress of the U.S. administration to win more concessions. With a few minor changes in the U.S. and British-proposed draft, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1546, sanctioning the planned “transition process.” The resolution “endorses the formation of a sovereign Interim Government of Iraq,” and “welcomes that the occupation will end and the Coalition Provisional Authority will cease to exist, and that Iraq will reassert its full sovereignty.” The timetable for the transitions process was also agreed upon. It previews elections to an “interim national assembly” by January 31, 2005. This “interim national

¹⁶ All Regulations, Orders, Memoranda of the CPA can be found on <http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/>

¹⁷ “Im Treibsand Iraks ...” l.c.

¹⁸ see CPA-Order 57

¹⁹ Phyllis Bennis, “Left Behind: The False ‘Hand-Over’ of Iraq & Saddam Hussein”, *Institute for Policy Studies*, July 5th, 2004, <http://www.ips-dc.org/comment/Bennis/aftertrans.htm>

²⁰ “Behind the Scenes, U.S. Tightens Grip on Iraq’s Future,” *Wall Street Journal* May 13, 2004

²¹ Joint press conference by Lakhtar Brahimi und Massud Barzani in Baghdad am 14 April 2004, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusnewsiraq1.asp?NewsID=723&sID=19>

assembly” should, among others, assign a new representative interim government and draft a permanent constitution, on the basis of which a constitutional government should be elected by January 2006.

After the already more than questionable Resolutions 1483 and 1511, this was the third massive support that the members of the Security Council – in disregard of the UN Charter – accorded states that, in violation of international law, had invaded Iraq. They conceded to the aggressors the right to dispose of their war loot and relieved them of their obligations as occupying powers.

Already in May, the occupation forces had declared the ministries for health, education, water supply, electricity, public works, science, technology and culture, “independent.” In effect, this made them solely responsible for the misery in their domain.²²

Not quite yet in office, the new Prime Minister Allawi submitted a letter that cleared the way for the Resolution. In it he zealously asked that the troops remain in the country just as his master expected. The U.S. foreign minister assured in a letter, from his side, that the occupation troops would “coordinate” common military operations with the interim government.²³ This exchange of letters represent – according to the resolution – the basis for the founding of a “security partnership.” This is a “partnership” between master and slave: The U.S. Army will maintain complete control over the “multinational troops” – as the occupation forces are referred to in UN documents – and the Iraqi security forces will be placed under the command of the U.S. Army.

The mandate runs out as soon as a constitutionally elected government takes office in Baghdad in the beginning of 2006. That shouldn’t worry the Bush administration, any more than the provision that “this mandate will end earlier, if the Iraqi government asks for it.” By the end of 2005 a treaty regulating the further presence of troops should be signed and because the interim government couldn’t survive a single day without the protection of the occupation troops, a demand for their retreat is to be excluded.

According to Article 24 oil revenues have to flow into the “Development Fund for Iraq” (DFI), which under Bremer became a huge slush fund for the occupying power.²⁴ The moneys of this fund should be paid in accordance with instructions handed down by the transitional government. But the “Program Review Board” with the final say over use of the fund, the U.S. constitutes a majority.²⁵

The export of oil, gas and oil products should be carried out in accordance “to the best practice of the world market.” This means that Iraq is not allowed to comply with the price- and extraction regulations of OPEC. But if Iraq is forced out of OPEC, OPEC, the only trust for natural resources of the former Third World, would cease to function. The rules of the world market would win out again.²⁶

No doubt the adoption of the transition “program” was a diplomatic success for the Bush administration. But it was no outright victory because Washington was forced to accept a time table that didn’t correspond to its intentions. It can be expected that pro-U.S. forces will have no chance in free elections and Washington will be forced to put off or manipulate the elections. In both cases the political situation will come to a head, but only after the U.S. presidential elections and that is most important for Bush and his team.

But the most essential concession the U.S. had to make was to their opponents in Iraq. The

²² The leaders of these “independent ministries” remain as “ministers” of the interim government in office. See “Iraq’s interim cabinet”, IslamOnline, <http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2004-06/01/article01a.shtml>

²³ For the full text of resolution 1546 and the annexed letter see <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8117.doc.htm>.

²⁴ See “Im Treibsand Iraks”, l.c.

²⁵ Among the now 12 voting members of the board are two Iraqi, one Briton, one Australian und eight US-Americans. (see Regulation 2 und 3 plus annexes on <http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/>)

²⁶ Werner Ruf, “Resolution 1546 des UN-Sicherheitsrats oder: Wie souverän wird der Irak?”, *FriedensJournal* Nr. 4 / Juli 2004, <http://www.frieden-und-zukunft.de/friedensjournal/archiv/texte/jahr2004/ruf01.html>

resolution neither mentions the transitional constitution nor the federal system, as Ayatollah Al Sistani, for example, had demanded. In a letter to Kofi Annan, Al Sistani warned the Security Council and the USA against recognizing the Draft as a constitution. "Any attempt to bestow legitimacy on it through mentioning it in the UN resolution would be considered an action contrary to the will of the Iraqi people and a harbinger of grave consequences.." ²⁷

The Kurdish allies of the U.S. were extremely upset about this consideration and threatened to boycott the new government. Washington is obviously sitting between two chairs. It shows just how frail this whole project is.

'Sovereignty' at gunpoint – the reality of the 'transition process'

The majority of the Iraqis have not seen how the installation of the interim government has brought an essential change in the occupation of their country. ²⁸ Intellectuals like the former UN ambassador Dr. Mohamed al Douri rejected the concept of "limited sovereignty." Sovereignty means full control over the country, the airspace, the natural resources, the economy and the military. If this control doesn't exist, you do not have "limited sovereignty" but simply no sovereignty at all. ²⁹ "The same donkey, different saddle" explains Iraqi writer Haifa Zangana. "The Iraqis have lived this lie before," she continues, "The British transfer of sovereignty in the 20s was equally meaningless." ³⁰

From the very beginning the new government made clear which direction it was taking. Already before his appointment, Iyad Allawi announced drastic measures against the opposition. His minister of defense openly said, that "if necessary we will cut their throats." ³¹

According to the respectable daily Sydney Morning Herald, Allawi had given a "good example." Independent witnesses reported that, in mid June, Allawi, personally, shot and killed six suspects in a Baghdad police station. They were suspected of having participated in the rebellions. And he declared that "this is the only way" to deal with the insurgents. He would cover everyone, who would emulate him. . ³²

Ten days after taking office his Junta adopted a package of emergency laws providing him and the occupation troops extensive authority. With the consent of the President and his two deputies Allawi can declare martial law over any chosen "region of unrest." He can appoint military governors, ban meetings, impose curfews, block or place under surveillance access to communication for certain areas and detain suspects incommunicado for an unlimited period. ³³ The occupation forces can therefore continue their activities with formal authorization. Some would have us believe that Iraq is already on the road of becoming a nation under the rule of law. ³⁴

Given the present conditions fair elections until January 2005 seem unlikely. If they are not put off because of the security situation, as Allawi already hints, Washington will do everything to reach acceptable results by a strict selection of parties and persons allowed to participate in the elections. Bremer took the necessary precautions. In one of his last Orders (Order 91) he excluded members of "illegal militias" for three years from public office. This does not apply to members of allied organizations, because their militias will be integrated into U.S. lead security forces and therefore

²⁷ Juan Cole, "UN Resolution Passes Unanimously -- Sistani the Big Winner; Kurds Furious", *Informed Comment*, http://www.juancole.com/2004_06_01_juancole_archive.html#108676099298442267

²⁸ "The street speaks - Iraq's UN-backed government is made up of CIA pawns", *The Independent*, 10.6.2004

²⁹ "Iraq: Full sovereignty after 30 June" *Aljazeera*, 8.6.2004

³⁰ Haifa Zangana, "Iraqis have lived this lie before" *The Guardian*, June 29, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1249508,00.html>

³¹ *Der Standard* (Austria) 18./19. Juni 2004

³² "Allawi shot prisoners in cold blood: witnesses" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 June 2004 and "Geht die Willkürherrschaft weiter?", *telepolis* 17 June 2004, <http://www.telepolis.de/deutsch/special/irak/17896/1.html>

³³ "Iraq's PM poised for martial law", *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 June 2004

³⁴ "Der Irak ist ein Rechtsstaat", *Berliner Zeitung*, 8 June 2004.

“legalized.” This of course would not be applied for opponents to the occupation.

According to the “Political Parties and Entities Law” (Order 97), parties can be forbidden, if they “call for violence,” “preach hatred” or support “terrorism” or if they are suspected of being financed by armed organizations. The elections commission, installed by Bremer will decide.

The armed resistance not only continued after the “transfer of power.” It became more radical. According to an opinion poll by Oxford Research International (OR) the approval substantially grew among the Iraqi population for armed action against the occupation troops from 17% in February to 31% presently.³⁵ And according to a poll taken by the CPA (!) the support for the radical cleric Muktadar Al Sadr grew to 67%, just behind Ayatollah al Sistani with 70%. In this CPA poll Allawi only reached 23%.³⁶

The 138.000 U.S. soldiers, supported by 20.000 soldiers from other nations and about 20.000 mercenaries are the most important instrument for maintaining U.S. domination over Iraq. With their permanent base, they are “like having a gun constantly pointed at any future Iraqi government's forehead,” as Herbert Docena from the *Focus on the Global South* put it. Major efforts are being undertaken by the USA to create loyal Iraqi support contingents. They are supposed to stand on the frontline securing important centers and, in the name of “Iraqization” of the occupation, impose the authority of the occupying power.

But it is the U.S. embassy, built into a fortress in the center of Baghdad, that is ruling the country since July. It took over a large portion of the tasks of the occupation authority. Ambassador John Negroponte is the new governor, who, in Baghdad alone, has a staff of 1,700 collaborators at his disposal. He is well experienced for his new job. In the 80s he was U.S. ambassador to Honduras. He was not only co-ruler of his host country, he was substantial in creating paramilitary gangs, the so called “Contras” to fight against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. He began to earn his laurels in leading positions in Vietnam between 1964 and 1973.

Since autumn 2003, a reinforced effort is being made for the creation of paramilitary units and a new secret police. In this years budget, the CIA was allotted \$3 billion for its clandestine dirty war, a sum the president ratified immediately.³⁷ Sovereignty and democracy in Iraq are nowhere in sight. But a colonial dictatorship, a U.S. puppet regime is in the making.

In spite of all this, most politicians and media in those countries that had been critical of the war are now supporting U.S. occupation policy. Only the presence of the occupation troops can prevent a civil war, is the argument widely used. But in fact, it is the U.S. policy that massively pits Iraqis against Iraqis. As Sami Ramadani, who is teaching Sociology at the London University wrote: “The seeds of the Vietnam war were sown by the U.S. installing a client regime in Saigon. And unless Bush and Blair are stopped by the American and British peoples, a similar catastrophe is in the making in Iraq and the wider Middle East.” It would not be a war of Arabs against Kurds, Sunnites against Shiites, but a horrible war of a U.S. supported minority against the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi population. “The killing fields of this war could eventually stretch from Afghanistan to Palestine.”³⁸

It is very important that the antiwar movement rejects this propaganda about the danger of an end of occupation. The revelations of the U.S. using torture created an international scandal, shaking up the acceptance of the occupation policy. Now we have to largely inform about the other crimes of the occupation forces. In June 2004, the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) published a comprehensive report “Beyond torture – U.S. violations of occupation law.” It lists breaches of obligations and war crimes, from the refusal of essential services and the destruction of workplaces

³⁵ *junge Welt*, 30 June 2004

³⁶ Juan Cole, http://www.juancole.com/2004_06_01_juancole_archive.html#108736144801952076

³⁷ see “Im Treibsand Iraks” l.c.

³⁸ Sami Ramadani, “America has sown the seeds of civil war in Iraq”, *The Guardian*, 3 July 004

to the application of collective punishment and torture.³⁹ It is clear that these are systematic and conscious crimes with terrible consequences for the population. Therefore the evaluation is no question of discretion of the government. Whoever supports this policy, as did the German government through its vote in Security Council, is an accomplice.

Joachim Guilliard, 26.7.2004

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*) The Author was one of the spokespersons of the *German Campaign against the Embargo on Iraq* (<http://www.embargos.de/>) and is actually coordinating the German initiative for an international tribunal on the 2003 war on Iraq (<http://www.iraktribunal.de/>).

He is author of numerous articles as well as co-author and co-editor of several books on the question of Iraq.

The latest publication is: Göbel/Guilliard/Schiffmann (Hg.): Der Irak - Krieg, Besetzung, Widerstand (Iraq - War, Occupation, Resistance), PapyRossa, Cologne, 2004

³⁹ "Beyond Torture – U.S. Violations of Occupation Law in Iraq", CESR, Juni 2004, <http://www.cesr.org/beyondtorture.htm>