



PERLES OF WISDOM

“There are a lot of people getting rich during war.” - *Chuck Lewis, Centre for Public Integrity.*

“If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we embrace it entirely, and we don't try to piece together clever diplomacy, but just wage a total war...our children will sing great songs about us years from now.” - *Richard Perle.*

Despite whimperings from Prime Minister Blair, US corporations look set to single-handedly rebuild the health, education, transport and political systems of Iraq - with the UN and international aid agencies not getting a sniff of the £60 billion worth of contracts being dished out by the US government. As fat corporate cats lick their lips at the money to be made from building airports and modernising Iraqi telecommunications and oil wells, SchNEWS can reveal that this is indeed a war of liberation - liberating Iraq's resources from Iraqis and handing them over to caring US companies.

A spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain, Inayat Bunglawala, warned that these contracts will stoke anti-US sentiment and cause further violent resistance in Iraq. “People will believe the US is there to loot the wealth of the Iraqi people and draw money from Iraq back to the US, benefiting US corporations.”

And what do you know - the reconstruction of Iraq will be awarded to a coalition of Bush's closest cronies! Overseeing rebuilding and humanitarian relief (if Bush has his way) will be Jay Garner, a retired US general who is, incidentally, the president of an arms company! Garner, a firm supporter of the Israeli military, has spent the last few years building weapons systems now being used in the Iraq war. How handy! And then there's Halliburton, the firm who'll get the job of putting out oil fires and making emergency repairs to Iraq's oil infrastructure, who oddly enough used to be run by US vice-president Dick Cheney. Cheney was chief executive of Halliburton until three years ago and still receives up to a million dollars a year from them. Union-busters Stevedoring Services of America have been handed the \$4.8 million contract to run the port of Umm Qasr, while bidders for other contracts include Fluor, whose board includes a former director of the National Security Agency and deputy director of the CIA, and the Bechtel Group, whose boardroom boasts a former secretary of state and a former defence secretary!

But where is all this money coming from, one may well ask? After being bombed back to the Stone Age by the non-coalition US forces, Iraq certainly won't be able to cough up the money to pay the non-coalition US companies for its reconstruction. But here's

the most beautiful part of all - it's the very people who Bush refuses to give a decent healthcare and education system to (i.e. the US taxpayer) that will line his mates' pockets. A significant chunk of the money being paid to US firms to rebuild Iraq was made available by the Iraq war bill, passed by Congress and giving Bush a \$75 billion budget to wage war with taxpayers' money. Half of the money goes to blow things up, while the other half goes to make the rebuilders rich. According to Charles Tiefer, author of a book on US government contracting, this is naked evidence that the Bush administration has used 'shortcuts' and 'exceptions' to put billions of taxpayer dollars into the pockets of its mates. Tiefer believes “a large credibility gap looms between the administration's plausible excuses that tight deadlines and exceptional security needs compelled them to forgo the usual competitive safeguards and the critics' observations that it is awfully convenient for juicy plums to land in the lap of the vice president's former company.”

Diamonds & Perles

That credibility gap grew even wider last week following Richard Perle's resignation as chairman of the Defence Policy Board. Though the board does not pay its members and is technically not a government agency, it wields tremendous influence. Perle decided to leave after revelations of a fairly huge conflict of interest - he is in line to receive \$600,000 from bankrupt telecommunications company Global Crossing for helping it to 'overcome Defence Department resistance' to its proposed sale to a foreign company. The person he is being paid for persuading is none other than his old pal and a man he regularly advises, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld.

In 1996 Perle helped write a study for an Israeli think tank entitled, 'A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm', calling for regime change in Iraq and a redrawing of the geopolitical map of the area. Just before the current bombing began, Perle spoke at a conference sponsored by Goldman Sachs titled, "Implications of an Imminent War: Iraq Now, North Korea Next?" At the conference, he advised business leaders about possible investment opportunities that might arise from the war.

Perle is also on the board of British firm Autonomy Corporation, a Cambridge based computer company that, surprise surprise, recently won a huge contract with America's new Department of Homeland Security, set up after September 11th to increase public monitoring and surveillance. Autonomy has developed high-tech eavesdropping soft-

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being poor...
A Californian man who stole videos for his kids including Cinderella and Free Willy has had his 50 year jail sentence upheld by the American Supreme Court. Under the US's "3 strikes and you're out" law, he is serving a 25 year minimum sentence for each theft.

ware that is capable of monitoring hundreds of thousands of e-mail and phone conversations at the same time. Add to all this the fact that Perle was one of the 'brains' behind the Project for the New American Century think tank whose demands included the establishment of a global American empire with the US policy of 'total war' and 'full spectrum dominance' (See SchNEWS 387) and it's hard not to feel sick to one's stomach.

And now our beloved Perle stands to do very nicely out of the foreign policy he has campaigned so strongly for. His own pockets are sure to be lined by his role in the venture capital firm Trireme Partners, which invests in homeland security and defence projects. SchNEWS is sure that the fear of terrorism stoked by bombing other countries does a handy job at helping his investments to prosper. For daring to insinuate that Trireme's and Perle's agenda might not be strictly altruistic, journalist Seymour Hersh has himself been labelled a "terrorist" by Perle and threatened with a libel suit. Apparently not confident enough to face US courts, however, Perle plans to bring his case to the UK, where libel laws are more relaxed.

As Chuck Lewis points out, "A defence contractor class that was already well fed is now getting bloated because we have so increased the defence budget in the last couple of years...(it is) the military industrial complex that Eisenhower warned this country about 40 years ago, the former generals and the former defence security experts that serve in government then go into the private sector. They go to work for contractors and people see their names, they're impressed, it has credibility. And that's how they get their contracts. And it just is a continuation of itself. And then they tell us what weapon systems we need, and they tell us what wars we should be fighting, and it's a self-perpetuating situation. And it's been going on for years, but what we're seeing in this instance is absolutely unabashed."

* To read the full interview with Chuck Lewis www.alternet.org

* To read more about fingers in dirty pies <http://cryptome.org/iraq-booty.htm>

* Check out 'Corporations and War' - by Corporate Watch £1 inc postage from

16b Cherwell St, Oxford, OX4 1BG
www.corporatewatch.org/newsletter/issue11/issue11_part1.htm

Reclaim the Bases! This weekend will see loads of actions at military bases across the country. Details from 07887-585721 www.reclaimthebases.org.uk. ** On Sunday 6th, protest at Northwood, the British Military HQ. This is where the war in Iraq is being planned! Meet 11am, Pretty Corner, Sandy Lane/Watford Road (North London, nearest tube Northwood). www.thed10group.org.uk 0845 458 2564. Tickets for coaches from Brighton to the Cowley Club, London Road. ** **March on the US Embassy**, this Saturday (5). Assemble 2pm BBC Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London. 020-7538 2521 www.stopwar.org.uk ** **Peace Soup – A new Anti-War CD** featuring music and poetry by people from Brighton is out next week. Launch Cabaret Tuesday (8), Marlborough Theatre, Pavillion St, Brighton. £4/3. 01273 672354 ** **Day of direct action against army recruitment centres**. Meet this Wednesday (9) 11.30am, Burger King, Charing Cross Road, London. ** **Rant against the War** – an evening of songs and poetry to raise funds for the anti-war movement, Hobgoblin Pub, London Rd, Brighton, next Thurs (10) 7.30pm. £5/£3.50 ** **Mayday 2003: Weapons of Mass Construction**. Plans are underway for this year's May Day. A map is out now with details of targets for possible pre-emptive strikes against capitalism. Send an SAE to BM Mayday,

London WC1N 3XX www.ourmayday.org.uk ** **The Labour Party have a Freepost address**, which means they have to pay the postage on anything you send them. Please don't send bricks or heavy phone directories to: The Labour Party, FREEPOST LON 10417, London, SW1P 4UT. All the local party offices also have freepost addresses that can be found on election leaflets ** **3 US military vehicles in Italy have been firebombed**. No one has claimed responsibility yet, but SchNEWS lays odds on: Friendly fire 2-1; Anti-War Activists 4-1; Al-Qaeda 5-1; Local Hooligans 10-1. ** SchNEWS has heard rumours that one of the US Air Force's smart bombs hit the run-down **West Pier** in Brighton last Friday, leaving it a burnt out shell. What a Noble act! ** For an in-depth look at **how the US treats international weapons treaties** see "Rule of Power or Rule of Law?" at www.lcnp.org/pubs/RuleofLawPDF.pdf ** **The Working Class Movement Library** in Salford, a national collection of the history of British and Irish radical and labour movements from the 1790s to the present day, is continually collecting material and would love to receive any books, pamphlets, leaflets, videos, press cuttings, photos or newsletters from the current anti-war movement. Send them stuff at Jubilee House, 51 The Crescent, Salford M5 4WX Tel: 0161-736-3601, enquiries@wcml.org.uk

Organisers of the World Water Forum in Kyoto, which ended on March 23rd, were expecting a rubber-stamping session of their plans to put the planet's most precious resource in the hands of the corporations.

Instead they got no resolution, no agreement and no common ground thanks to the robust determination of activists who crashed their party from all over the world.

More than 200 of the regular delegates lost their appetite for workshops with tasteless titles like "How the Poor will become Customers" and signed up instead to "Water is Life" – a statement condemning plans to privatise water supplies in the developing world and stating that access to clean drinking water is a basic human right.

When World Water Council chair Michael Camdessus, ex Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, took to the platform to champion the Global Water Grab, people jumped up waving home-made lie-detector tests.

When Camdessus advocated that corporations should start their water grab by seizing control of ground water supplies, activists spoke up from the floor, telling the forum that in Brazil, where underground water is owned by private companies, the water often ends up getting bottled for sale as mineral water while the people have to make do with polluted surface water.

Activists also brought up the riots in Bolivia in 2000 which left several dead and over 200 injured when peasant farmers took to the streets to protest water privatisation. The Bolivian privatisation had resulted in 200% hikes in water costs, with some families paying \$20 a month for water out of an average wage of \$100. Shocked delegates also learned that poor families in South Africa, where water supplies are privatised, routinely get their water cut off if they can't pay the bills.

Meanwhile, alternative Social Water Forums sprung up in Florence, New Delhi, New York and Brazil. The latter was the largest, attended by 400 delegates who resolved to take the case against water privatisation to the International Court of Justice. They also initiated a co-ordinated defence of water reserves in the Amazonian jungle and river systems extending into Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.

As the bloody war in Iraq continues, writer Norman Mailer issued a water wake-up call, pointing out that control of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in a region where water sources are scarce could be very important for the US's intentions of future domination in the Middle East.

More info: www.blueplanetproject.net

...and finally...

Never mind that they've been sent to fight a war that's illegal and which nobody wants, and that they're more likely to be killed by the person sitting next to them than by an Iraqi soldier, American soldiers are now being told that they must pray daily for the chimp of a President who sent them there. George W, who successfully managed to snort his way out of fighting in the Vietnam War, is now asking for pledges from his soldiers to pray daily for him, his family, and his staff. The pledge comes from a pamphlet given to US marines called "A Christian Duty". Maybe somebody should send them an insert to pray that they suddenly discover a conscience and get the hell out of there. Or that a smart bomb finally finds its way to the White House. Or that Bush himself becomes the next victim of friendly fire. Hmmm, let's see now... Dear God... www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s819685.htm

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers that any resemblance to reality in this issue is Perly imaginary.

UNFAIRFORD

The area surrounding Fairford airbase in Gloucestershire is now a mini-police state where, depending on your political persuasion, you are either left alone to get on with your day-to-day life or harassed continuously for your beliefs. For the past 28 days, Section 44 of the Terrorism Act has been used to stop and search people who are opposed to the US Air Force using Fairford to launch bombing raids on Iraq. In a clear case of intimidation, Section 44 has been used by the police to search people living at the local peace camp up to nine times a day. The police are physically preventing anyone who looks like they are going to stay a while (carrying rucksacks, tents, water, whatever), from going anywhere near the camp... And what legislation are they using to justify this? Er, the boys in blue don't really seem to know and usually say "common law" or "we're not telling you". The Section 44 order runs out tomorrow (Saturday) but is likely to be extended for another terror-filled 28 days.

Despite all this blatant police harassment, the peace camp is still there, so try and visit them if you can! Mail is also getting through, and they could use money and postcards, so write to people at: Peacewatch, Gate 10, USAF Fairford, Near Kempsford, Fairford, Gloucestershire GL7 4EJ. www.gwi.org.uk

* There is a weekend of independent weapons inspections and the world's first ever sponsored Stop and Search at Fairford this weekend (5-6). According to the creators of the event, "If you are in the vicinity of the base, visiting G10 Peacewatch camp or observing the bombers, you will likely be stopped by police and searched. This can easily occur several times in one day. So get your mates to sponsor you a fixed amount or an amount per search. Once you've collected your sponsorship money send it direct to the charity of your choice. A list of charities working in Iraq can be found at <http://www.casi.org.uk/info/charities.html>." SchNEWS top tip to increase your tally: Be sure to mask up and wear a white boiler suit with padding! But PLEASE don't carry any bin bags filled with manure, as the poor old police would be sure to get their hands dirty searching them!

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SchNEWS In Brief

What's happening in Palestine? This Saturday (5th) 2pm-5pm, people fresh back from Palestine talk about their experiences there. Cornerstone Community Centre, Church Rd, Hove 07776 183619 ** **Benefit night for the people of West Papua** featuring Papuan Musicians, Matt Black from Coldcut and the showing of new film 'Merdeka'. 15th April, The George IV - Brixton, London.

OBJECT OF DEFECTION

As the current UK/US war on Iraq has no United Nations backing, it is an illegal invasion. Any British soldier fighting in Iraq may find themselves hauled up in front of the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague and SchNEWS would advise all of them to down their guns and come home.

And that's exactly what two have done! The two soldiers have been sent back from the Gulf after refusing to take part in a war where innocent civilians are being killed. Under British law, you are legally entitled to an honourable discharge as a conscientious objector, but the procedure can be difficult and prolonged. Lawyers for the two servicemen believe that rather than looking at a long summer's break, the two could be looking at two years inside for showing concern about who's at the receiving end of their bullets.

If you know anyone in the Armed Forces who's struggling with their conscience, there's an organisation called At Ease who will provide free, totally confidential advice. At Ease, c/o 28 Commercial St, London E1 6LS. 020 7247 5164, atease@advisory.freereserve.co.uk www.ppu.org.uk/special/co_stuff_03.html

* See Bush's excuses for not serving in the Vietnam war: <http://awolbush.com/>

POSITIVE SchNEWS

This weekend, the Centre for Alternative Technology in Llanelli, NorthWales, will be turning on the first ever community managed wind turbine. At the moment, all the wind turbines in this country are owned by big energy companies, but CAT's turbine is different in that it is owned and managed by a local community. About half of the energy produced will be used to power the CAT site, while the rest will provide green energy for the local grid www.cat.org.uk 01654 705950