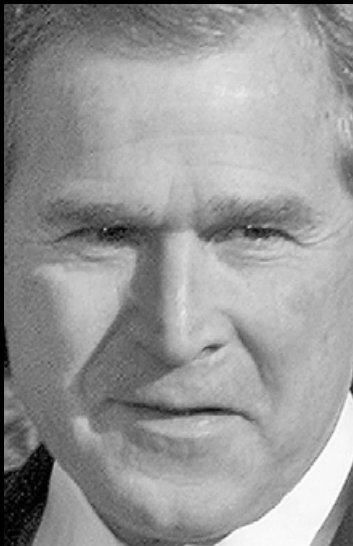


**Bush****Cheney****Rumsfeld****Blair****Powell**

# Axis of liars

**LIE** “We defend the security of our country, but our cause is broader. If war is forced upon us, we will liberate the people of Iraq from a cruel and violent dictator.”

■ George W. Bush, February 20, 2003

THE INVASION of Iraq wasn’t “forced upon” the United States. And it wasn’t an act of self-defense.

The Bush administration was determined to wage war against Iraq, regardless of the evidence and regardless of the consequences.

Why? Because Washington decided that the ability of the United States to dominate the globe militarily, economically and politically depended on reshaping the Middle East.

And Iraq was simply the easiest target.

The U.S. invaded Iraq, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman admitted, “Because we could.”

Bush and friends may talk about liberation and democracy.

But for years, Washington stood by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during his worst abuses, arming him and helping him to cover up his crimes.

He only became an “enemy” when he stepped out of line and threatened U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf.

**LIE** “Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.”

■ George W. Bush, March 17, 2003

THE CASE for invading Iraq was based on the idea that—in Bush’s words—it would be “suicide” not to respond to the awesome threat of Iraq’s “weapons of mass destruction.”

But months after the invasion, not a shred of evidence of the supposed threat has been found.

So far, the 1,400 scientists and military “experts” that Washington sent to scour Iraq for weapons have

**Socialist Worker’s Anthony Arrove, editor of *Iraq Under Siege*, counters Bush’s axis of liars with the truth.**

turned up nothing—except for headlines about arms “discoveries” that later turned out to be false.

Inspectors are not even finding “evidence that [weapons of mass destruction] were destroyed [immediately] prior to the war,” said former United Nations inspector David Albright.

**LIE** “Saddam has plans for chemical and biological weapons that could be activated in 45 minutes.”

■ Tony Blair, September 24, 2002

BRITISH PRIME Minister Tony Blair made headlines around the world when he claimed that Iraq was capable of launching an attack using weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes.

But the dossier of “evidence” that he presented turned out to be full of holes.

It was made up of hearsay, conjecture and material plagiarized from the Internet.

And the *New York Times* reports that “the [45-minute] claim applied only to short-range battlefield munitions, an important distinction lost in its repeated mention in a document about long-range unconventional weapons.”

**LIE** “Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al-Qaeda.”

■ George W. Bush, January 28, 2003

BUSH REPEATEDLY linked Iraq with al-Qaeda and the attacks of September 11, 2001, even though his own intelligence sources disputed the connection.

In fact, Hussein had every reason to oppose al-Qaeda, a group that had called for overthrowing his secular regime.

But this scaremongering was central to building the case for war.

Thanks to the repeated lies from Washington, more than half of the U.S. public believes that Saddam Hussein was behind the attacks.

**LIE** “It has nothing to do with oil—literally nothing to do with oil.”

■ Donald Rumsfeld, November 14, 2002

IRAQ HAS the world’s second-largest oil reserves and sits in a region with more than two-thirds of the global oil supply.

And the very first task of invading U.S. and British soldiers was to secure Iraq’s oil ministry and key oilfields. Iraq was in flames, but the oil was protected.

The U.S. military spends tens of billions every year to ensure that it controls the worldwide flow of oil—and to make sure that no country is able to use oil as a weapon against the U.S.

As Tim Predmore, a soldier in the 101st Airborne Division, put it bluntly: “This looks like a modern-day crusade not to free an oppressed people, or to rid the world of a demonic dictator relentless in his pursuit of conquest and domination, but a crusade to control another nation’s natural resource.”

“At least for us here,” he continued, “oil seems to be the reason for our presence.”

**LIE** “[The people of Iraq] will welcome as liberators the United States when we come.”

■ Dick Cheney, March 16, 2003

OF ALL the lies about Iraq, many U.S. soldiers now believe that this was the biggest.

More troops have died since May 1, when Bush boasted that “major combat operations are over,” than in the invasion itself.

Many Iraqis were understandably happy to see Hussein gone, but they immediately made it clear that they viewed U.S. troops as an occupying army.

The U.S. government blames “terrorists,” al-Qaeda, “outsiders,” “Baathist remnants” and “Saddam loyalists,” but the reality is different.

Protests have been held around the country—not only in areas dominated by Sunni forces once allied to the Hussein regime—where Iraqis from all walks of life regularly express their outrage at the U.S. occupation and call for self-determination, democracy and freedom.

The response of U.S. forces has been to break up the demonstrations—or even to fire on them.

**LIE** “[W]e’re beginning the difficult work of helping Iraqis to build a free and stable country. The immediate tasks involve establishing order, as well as delivering food and water and medicines. We will help Iraqis to restore electrical power and other basic services.”

■ George W. Bush, April 15, 2003

MANY IRAQIS say that their lives are worse today than during the U.S. invasion or the years of brutal United Nations sanctions that preceded it.

Most Iraqis are without work, and the country’s infrastructure remains in shambles.

Many parts of Iraq have *less* electric power than before the war.

On June 13, Sgt. David Borell was approached by an Iraqi “who pleaded for help for his three children, burned when they set fire to a bag containing explosive powder left over from the war in Iraq.”

But U.S. Army doctors refused to help.

“I have never seen in almost 14 years of Army experience anything that callous,” Borell said.

Major David Accetta, an Army public affairs officer, explained: “Our goal is for the Iraqis to use their own existing infrastructure and become self-sufficient, not dependent on U.S. forces for medical care.”

**LIE** “The specific institutions of a new Iraqi government will be decided by Iraqis. A free society should really not be imposed from the outside.”

■ Donald Rumsfeld, April 15, 2003

MONTHS BEFORE a soldier had set foot in the country, the U.S. government had drawn up plans for post-occupation Iraq.

The script, which is now being put in place, called for the privatization of Iraq’s main industries and establishing long-term U.S. military bases.

Meanwhile, Iraqis on the so-called governing council were hand-picked by the U.S. government.

Iraq today is effectively run by a colonial overseer, Paul Bremer, who U.S. officials insist will remain in charge, even if the United Nations is called in to help clean up the mess Washington created.

**LIE** “Nobody wants to turn sovereignty back to the Iraqi people as fast as the United States does... [But the U.S.] can’t suddenly just step aside and turn [political authority] over—to whom?”

■ Colin Powell, September 11, 2003

WHEN THE people of India demanded their freedom, British colonialists said that they “weren’t ready” for democracy. There would be “chaos” without a colonial administration, it was said.

Today, we hear the same myths about Iraqis.

We are supposed to believe that U.S. forces which destroyed Iraq are the only ones that can rebuild it—while ordinary Iraqis who have held their lives together through 20 years of sanctions and war are incapable of governing themselves.

Ultimately, these are elitist and racist arguments.

The only way for Iraqis to truly determine their future is for the U.S. to leave—not after several months or several years, but now.

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# No to war and occupation!