

# Bush appoints a Terrorist as US Ambassador to Iraq

Who is John Negroponte?

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The Bush administration has appointed the US Permanent Representative to the United Nations John D. Negroponte to take on the the position of US ambassador to Iraq. Negroponte is slated to take on the position, when the coalition authority, headed by L. Paul Bremer, formally relinquishes control on June 30th.

Viewed as a “seasoned career” diplomat, the nomination of Negroponte is presented by the US media as “a bridge to the international community”.

He is expected to “smooth the way for a U.N. resolution that would boost the new Iraqi government’s legitimacy. The U.N. already is helping to lay the groundwork for the election expected in January, 2005, and is likely to oversee it.” (Business Week, April 26, 2004)

His mandate, however, is not assume the usual diplomatic functions of an Ambassador in a foreign country.

What is envisaged is not an “embassy” but a full-fledged occupation government, whose primary mandate will be to impose US military rule and curb the resistance movement.

In the absence of a real Iraqi government, to whom will he present his credentials as ambassador?

Negroponte’s “embassy” in Baghdad will, according to press reports, constitute the largest US “embassy staff” in the world with some 3000 employees, including up to 1,000 Americans.

In Washington, there is discussion as to whether the “embassy” should be under the jurisdiction of the State Department (which normally oversees US diplomatic missions in foreign countries) or the Pentagon. In practice, the embassy staff, including CIA and military attachés will be in permanent liaison with the Pentagon, the US military high command in Iraq and the CIA

## Who is John Negroponte

What is the background of John D. Negroponte and why is he being sent to Iraq?

John Negroponte served as US ambassador to Honduras from 1981 to 1985. As Ambassador in Tegucigalpa, he played a key role in supporting and supervising the Nicaraguan Contra mercenaries who were based in Honduras. The cross border Contra attacks into Nicaragua claimed some 50 000 civilian lives.

During the same period, Negroponte was instrumental in setting up the Honduran military death squads, "operating with Washington support's, [they] assassinated hundreds of opponents of the US-backed regime." (See Bush Nominee linked to Latin American Terrorism, by Bill Vann, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/VAN111A.html> )

*"Under the rule of General Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, Honduras's military government was both a close ally of the Reagan administration and was "disappearing" dozens of political opponents in classic death squad fashion.*

*In a 1982 letter to The Economist, Negroponte wrote that it was "simply untrue to state that death squads have made their appearance in Honduras." The Country Report on Human Rights Practices that his embassy sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took the same line, insisting that there were "no political prisoners in Honduras" and that the "Honduran government neither condones nor knowingly permits killings of a political or nonpolitical nature."*

*Yet according to a four-part series in the Baltimore Sun in 1995, in 1982 alone the Honduran press ran 318 stories of murders and kidnappings by the Honduran military. The Sun described the activities of a secret CIA-trained Honduran army unit, Battalion 316, that used "shock and suffocation devices in interrogations. Prisoners often were kept naked and, when no longer useful, killed and buried in unmarked graves."*

*On August 27, 1997, CIA Inspector General Frederick P. Hitz released a 211-page classified report entitled "Selected Issues Relating to CIA Activities in Honduras in the 1980's." This report was partly declassified on Oct. 22, 1998, in response to demands by the Honduran human rights ombudsman. Opponents of Negroponte are demanding that all Senators read the full report before voting on his nomination.[to the position of US Permanent Representative to the UN}" (See Face-off: Bush's Foreign Policy Warriors by Peter Roff and James Chapin, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/ROF111A.html>*

In a cruel irony, the Bush administration has appointed a bona fide "terrorist" to wage its "war on terrorism" in Iraq.

In the words of Human Rights Watch's executive director Kenneth Roth: "There are serious unanswered questions about his complicity with the atrocities in Honduras and the war in Nicaragua."

But "atrocities" are part of the Bush Administration's agenda in Iraq. Negroponte is "the man for the job". He has as the required skills from his stint in organizing death squadrons in Honduras.

The hidden agenda is to replicate in Iraq, the Central American death squadrons of which Negroponte was one of the main architects.

Negroponte is not being nominated for his diplomatic skills. His mandate does not consist in "peace-keeping" or "peace-making" in liaison with the UN, nor is it concerned with post-war "reconstruction".

His background is CIA. His nomination responds in a very direct way to the current situation, with a mounting resistance movement, which is challenging US military presence throughout Iraq. In other words, his mandate is to mount an effective counterinsurgency, using both overt and covert operations.

According to *The Los Angeles Times*, "he could begin to reverse occupation head L. Paul Bremer III's foolish decision to dissolve the entire Iraqi army. He could follow the recommendation of U.S. generals to allow some former members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party to occupy government jobs. As in postwar Germany and Japan, such ex-party members are usually the ones who have experience in running a government." (*Los Angeles Times*, 22 April 2004).

While the Administration's policy with regard to the Baathist party remains ambiguous, what is being envisaged is the recruitment of loyal collaborators. Under this scenario, part of the repressive apparatus (of course under US supervision to ensure "good governance") could be handed back to officials of the former Baathist police and intelligence apparatus.

Acting on behalf of the CIA and the Pentagon, Negroponte's mandate is to quell the insurgency by creating a reign of terror. It should come as no surprise that "on the day he was appointed to Iraq, Honduras decided to bring its troops in Iraq home." (*Financial Times*, April 21, 2004)

What form will the Iraqi death squadrons take under Negroponte's mandate?

In all likelihood, a new wave of covert civilian killings and targeted assassinations will be unleashed, to weed out civilian support for the insurgency. In this task, the "embassy" will attempt to enlist the support of officials of the former Baathist regime.

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