

Iraq: Lockdown, Beheadings, Bribes: It's "Democratic Election Time" Again

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In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

"Political language ... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidarity to pure wind." ("1984", George Orwell, 1903-1950.)

The period over which the Iraq elections were announced and were "campaigning" (read manipulation, threat, arrests, bribes and even death) could hardly have been chosen with greater crassness, trampling on sensitivities with disregard for remembrance and commemorations which are core to Iraqi society.

The election was announced on 12th February. Campaigning by six thousand-plus would be politicians began the following day. The night of 13th/14th February 1991, marked the nineteenth anniversary of the incineration of those in Baghdad's Ameriyah Shelter, one of the bombardment's greatest tragic crimes. The announcement could hardly have had more viciously insensitive timing.

The campaigning, ongoing through the commemoration period of the first Gulf War (17th January 1991-28th February 1991) with the inestimable loss of Iraqi lives that American Generals were "frankly not terribly interested" in counting. Iraq in fact agreed to a ceasefire on 21st February '91, brokered and announced by the Soviets. The US brushed it aside. Two full days after the official and agreed end to hostilities, on 28th February, the (US) 24th Mechanized Infantry Division slaughtered thousands of Iraqis, civilians and retreating troops, in the south.

Canvassing, until polling day on March 7th., was another period of grieving memories – when further thousands then died in an (a 1991) uprising, north and south, urged by Britain and America, the latter who then aided the bloody quelling of that insurrection.

As with earlier, invasion instigated "democratic" elections, Iraqis were "invited" to update their voter registration based on the "food ration database", according to the US Embassy FAQs on the election. As 2005, meaning that the precious, minimal rations can again be used as a weapon. Whether by pressure or affiliation, vote the wrong way and the distributor can withhold or withdraw the ration card. Before "liberation" the UN opined that the ration system in Iraq was the most efficient and equitable they had experienced. This in spite of the huge complexities and limitations created by the unique cruelty of the UN's own embargo.

For journalist and political observer, Steven Leser, the election date itself has a special cruelty. He writes that the 2003 invasion officially started on that date. "When March 7th comes around, I think of all the men, woman and children that have died (in Iraq) all the

anger directed at the US by the rest of the world and I think how easily all would have been prevented if we had had a President that was honest, interested in the truth history records that this latest Iraq war began on 20th March 2003, but the events that should have prevented (it) occurred on 7th March, 2003."

That was the date, Leser points out, that the leaders of the weapons inspectorate UNMOVIC delivered their Report to the UN, stating that since their arrival in Iraq on 27th November 2002, they had visited approximately three hundred and fifty sites, in over five hundred and fifty inspections. Access was provided promptly, with the Inspectors convinced that the Iraqis had no prior knowledge of their "impending arrival."

Hans Blix, wrote Leser, stated that "Iraq had displayed 'active' or 'pro-active' cooperation, which (allowed) the inspection process to make significant progress ... after three months of intrusive inspections ... no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons programme in Iraq" had been found.

Blix noted that Iraq had been "forthcoming in its cooperation ... and in making available evidence that could contribute to the resolution of matters of IAEA concerns."

Further, "significant effort" was underway by Iraq to clarify uncertainty regarding chemical and biological weapons. There was further, no evidence of any weaponry being moved around by truck or of underground facilities, as claimed by intelligence authorities.(1)

"Intelligence" authorities were, of course, often not a million miles from Ahmed Chalabi, convicted embezzler, founder of the CIA backed - and funded with eye watering amounts of US tax payers' dollars - Iraq National Congress, shamefully launched in the British Parliament.

Chalabi was also a friend from student days of such arch hawks as Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz and other infamous war mongers. (2) That the rubbish he peddled was believed above the IAEA Inspectors, surely beggars belief.

Molly Ivens has a view on this "intelligence" black hole. (3) Pointing out that what he "provided to the Bush administration before (the Invasion) was consistently proved wrong and fraudulent", her " ... theory is there is a terrible naivete about neo-cons that often deludes them in to believing what they want to be true." They: "fell for Chalabi for one reason: He said he would reinstate the Iraq-Israel pipeline (first mooted in the late 1930's) recognise Israel, trade with Israel ..."

Announcement of the pipeline was made within weeks of the invasion. However, since the resistance developed blowing up Iraq's oil infrastructure in to an art form to prevent others getting their hands on Iraq's financial life blood, it has so far as is known, come to nothing.

So, as Iraqis risked their lives by voting on the day Leser holds the invasion became carved in stone, Chalabi, convicted con man, honorary neo-con, who shared none of Iraq's tribulations, of wars, sanctions, resultant holocaustal death toll, a man who swore allegiance to other countries and holds their passport, heads the "De-Ba'athification" committee. Ba'ath is of course an aspiration for pan-Arab nationalism. If pan-Europeanism is acceptable in the form of the European Union, why not the same, should the majority wish, for the Middle East? That aside, under the government of Saddam Hussein, it was virtually mandatory to sign up to Ba'athism to obtain employment. This "Armani suited" fraudster,

and foreigner passport holder, now decides who can run as candidate, even vote, with his newest, very best friend, Ali Faisal al Lami, a persona risen without trace.

Anyway, back to the “democracy” imposed on Iraq. The elections, reportedly, have had bribes offered on a scale, as seldom before – anywhere. “Prime Minister” Nouri Kamal al Maliki gave out pistols “emblazoned with a personal stamp.” On television he reportedly defended his actions, saying: “Some people criticise me I wish I could give a pistol and a rifle to each one who stood beside the government ...” (New York Times, 2nd March.) Given the Ministry of Interior militias, reportedly under Maliki’s direct control, the cynic might think just such a scenario might possibly have happened.

In Babel province, further, reported the Times, local candidates imported sports equipment, running shoes, travelled for hours to give toys to children, phone cards to adults and blankets to the poor. In Baquba frozen chickens were distributed, which such a rush on this free bounty, that stocks were quickly exhausted. Stocks of heating oil and rice were lavishly donated.

Writing in the National, Nizar Latif writes in detail of people selling their votes to the highest bidder. A whole cottage industry flourished around the country with middle men (and women) handing out money for votes to pass on to election agents. One such vote trader remarked that: “None of them cares who wins, none of them think it will make any difference, so they give me their vote and I sell it.”(4) Iraqis seem to be grasping the principle of US/UK – style democracy pretty rapidly.

That democracy has so far, after just over a week descended in to allegations of fraud (gracious, surely not?) questions about an alleged extra seven million ballot papers surplus to requirement and a wrangling between Ahmed Chalabi’s cousin, former puppet Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and current puppet Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki for supremacy – the former, as his cousin, the CIA’s man (5) and latter, closer to Iran.

Allawi was also alleged to have shot six handcuffed “insurgents” at point blank range three weeks before he became Prime Minister in 2004.(6) His ties to the CIA in statements from ex-long term CIA operatives, go back to 1992. Patrick Cockburn details links to fifteen different intelligence agencies. (7.)

Sounds pretty much like that last great leaps for a “New Iraq”, the farce of ‘Viceroys’ Jay Garner, Paul Bremer, wranglings, chaos and the subsequent 2005 elections.

For those who believe in omens, one should keep both Maliki and Allawi awake at night. In a vast rally just prior to voting day, Nouri al-Maliki’s Interior Minister, Jawad al Bolani, released flocks of doves to signify reconciliation and harmony. Simultaneously a massive firework display began – barbecuing may of the soaring doves.

And the last colonially imposed Iraqi Prime Minister called Nouri came to a very sticky end.

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