

The Role of Lebanon in the Bush Administration's Crusade for Empire

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Global Research, February 16, 2005

Global Outlook, No. 5 16 February 2005

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In September 2000, the *Project for the New American Century*, proudly published their blueprint for the direct imposition of US forward bases throughout Central Asia and the Middle East. The reasons for this program were stated quite openly: to ensure US political and economic domination of the world, while strangling any potential rival or any viable alternative to America's vision of a free market economy.

This insightful article by Chris Floyd was written barely two weeks after the military occupation of Iraq in April 2003.

Chris Floyd was among the first writers to examine with foresight the next phase of the US led war.

Syria is identified as a target of the Bush administration.

Chris Floyd examines in this article, the role of the United States Committee for a Free Lebanon (USCFL), which had demanded in 2000 for the US to intervene militarily in Lebanon.

The PNAC stated quite clearly in its military blueprint entitled "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century" that its strategic agenda extended to the entire Middle East region:

"The United States has for decades sought to play a more prominent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein ..."

Recent developments in Lebanon suggest that this US military intervention is a distinct possibility. The underlying consequences are farreaching since they would also imply a more direct role of Israel in military operations.

The invasion of Iraq (or as future historians will doubtless call it, "The Dawn of the Shiite Empire") was planned openly several years ago by a hard-right agitprop¹ cell led by Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. Now it turns out that the recent big-monkey chest-beating

aimed at Syria — threats of sanctions, surgical strikes, and regime change — was also carefully planned, by many of the same people, long before the Bush Regime seized power.

In September 2000, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), proudly published their blueprint for the direct imposition of US forward bases throughout Central Asia and the Middle East. They even foresaw the need for what they called a “Pearl Harbor-type event” to galvanize the American public into supporting their ambitious program. Their reasons for this program were also stated quite openly— to ensure US political and economic domination of the world, while strangling any potential rival— or any viable alternative to the rapacious crony capitalism favored by the PNAC extremists. This dominance would be enforced by the ever-present threat — and frequent application — of violence. (A tactic known elsewhere as >terrorism=.)

The PNAC was also very honest about the role of Iraq in this crusade for empire, stating plainly that the need for a US military presence in the area superseded the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein. There was no sanctimonious posturing about “liberation”, weapons of mass destruction or terrorist connections. To dominate the oil wealth centered in that region — and hence the economic/political development of the world in the coming decades — they needed a military presence in Iraq; it’s as simple as that.

And now they’ve got it. Again, it’s all quite open — for anyone who cares to look. According to the *New York Times*, the Pentagon has already announced that it “expects” (i.e., ‘demands’) to have “long-term access” to at least four major military bases in Iraq. Rumsfeld later issued a weasel-worded non-denial denial. Although the hundreds of thousands of armed and angry Shiite Muslims currently clamoring for an Islamic state in Bush’s new satrapy² may yet cause a spot of bother for the sahibs, for now the generals and arms dealers installed as Iraq’s new rulers believe they will still be sitting pretty in Fort Pretzel and Carlyle Air Base throughout the “new American century.” This was, after all, the purpose of the recent slaughter — as Cheney and Rumsfeld told us plainly years ago.

A few months before PNAC’s prophetic 2000 report, an allied group with an overlapping membership published a similar document outlining steps to be taken against Syria —first “tightening the screws” with denunciations and economic sanctions, then escalating to military action, as Jim Lobe of Inter-Press Agency reports. The architects of this document included Elliot Abrams, the convicted perjurer now running Bush’s Middle East policy; Douglas Feith, one of Rumsfeld’s top aides; Paula Dobriansky, undersecretary to Colin Powell, and influential Pentagon advisors such as David Wurmser, Michael Leeden and everyone’s sweetheart, Richard “Influence-Peddler” Perle.

The report sprang largely from the loins of the United States Committee for a Free Lebanon (USCFL), a curious grouping of right-wing American Christians, right-wing American Jews, and a sprinkling of Lebanese exiles.

The USCFL also provides highly insightful and very nearly literate analyses of vital regional issues, such as its seminal paper, “Even Arabs Don’t Like Arabs.” But the mind-set of the group — whose members now stalk the corridors of power in Imperial Washington — is perhaps best displayed in its thoughtful 2001 treatise, “A Petition Demanding War Against Governments that Sponsor Terrorism” (Except, of course, for governments who enforce their will by the ever-present threat and use of violence — i.e. terrorism — but are run by nice white men educated at Yale and Oxford.)

Here, the proto-Bushist group demands that six “rogue nations” — Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya and Sudan — “turn over their governments to the United States” on pain of massive military response. The United States will then “occupy these territories until proper governments” — ones that allow “long-term access” to major military bases, no doubt — “can be established.” And just how massive should that threatened US military response be? The USCFL is, as always, admirably — and brutally — forthright:

“America must set a clear example-identical to that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If you tread on me, I will wipe you off the face of the earth.”

Is this what the Bushists are really talking about in their fear-mongering diatribes about seeing “terrorism’s smoking gun in a mushroom cloud”?

Notes

1. **agitprop** – the dissemination of political propaganda, especially in plays, films, books, etc. From the Russian, as in >Agitation + Propaganda=.
2. **satrapy** – a province ruled over by a colonial governor as in the ancient Persian empire.

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The original source of this article is Global Outlook, No. 5
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