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Bush/Blair propaganda over the Iraqi elections

Anarcho

March 15, 2005

The Bush/Blair propaganda over the recent Iraqi elections has been taken over, more or less intact, by the media. Thus unpleasant facts such as Bush opposing elections in Iraq until forced otherwise by people power were skilfully placed into the memory hole along with the long and sorry history of US support for fake elections to secure good PR at home.

Then there is the idea that the apparent success of the Iraqi elections poses a problem for the anti-war movement. The massed crowds of Bush haters are, it is claimed, being forced to conclude that he was correct to invade and occupy Iraq in order to “liberate” (i.e. create a democratically elected government in) it.

The obvious response is no. Apparently we are being asked to forget the actual case for this war which was made in 2002. Back then the argument was not that it was worth going to war so Iraqis could have a nice democracy and wave purple fingers in the air. No, that would have been greeted with incredulous laughter.

The debate back then was framed in different terms, terms which have apparently been put, like so many other inconvenient facts,

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into the Memory Hole. Thus we find Bush rewriting history in his recent trip to Europe be asserting that “*some European nations joined the fight to liberate Iraq, while others did not.*” Sorry, but whatever happened to WMD and the immediate and massive threat that an impoverished third world state posed to the world’s only superpower? As Blair said at the time, “*I have never put the justification for action as regime change.*” And so “*we have to act within the terms set out in resolution 1441 — that is our legal base.*”

The various members of the Bush Junta made similar statements. So Bush, yet again, lied. The war was ostensibly over Iraq’s (non-existent) WMD. That debate has been over months ago. The same can be said regarding the wisdom of waging the war and its likely outcomes. The Bush Junta was proven wrong on every count. That will not change even if Iraq became a perfect democracy. Simply put, “to liberate Iraq” was not considered a good enough reason to go to war in the first place and it does not become, retrospectively, the reason for the war today or in the future. The “liberation” of Iraqis only took centre place once the first main rationale for war fell through.

So we have shifting goalposts in Iraq. For the Bush Junta, “democracy” has now taken over the role WMD once played, as Paul Wolfowitz so famously put it, as “*the one issue that everyone could agree on.*” Every other excuse for the war and the occupation (sorry, “liberation”) has been swept off the table and into the Memory Hole. Big Brother would be proud.

However, we must remember the facts in order to debunk hawk propaganda. There was a reason why Bush did not argue that he wanted to invade a country which posed no threat to the US, spend hundreds of billions of taxpayers dollars and get tens of thousands of people killed in the process, simply so that the Iraqis can get a democratically elected government. Simply put, the US people had to be lied to and scared into supporting an invasion of Iraq.

Thus it is deeply ironic to hear Bush justify the war in Iraq in terms of the democracy he so blatantly violated and abused at home

to get it in the first place. And now the Iraqis get to pick a bunch of politicians who will say one thing before getting elected and do another, while lying through their teeth, when in office while, all the time, pursuing a corporate backed neo-liberal agenda.

And what of the Iraqi election itself? Given the fact the ballot involved voting for unknown candidates and unknown platforms who ran under a state of emergency in a country under occupation, the obvious thing to conclude is that the election was not fair. With the need two-thirds majorities to secure government positions, the stage is set for US approved politicians to shape the make up of any new administration. As Donald Rumsfeld put it in April 2003, “*If you’re suggesting, how would we feel about an Iranian-type government with a few clerics running everything in the country, the answer is: That isn’t going to happen.*”

But no matter who wins, real power lies in American hands — both political and economic. Politically, the Bush Junta has the troops and the money, is deeply embedded in Baghdad’s heavily fortified Green Zone where a \$1–2 billion new embassy is to be built, there are up to 14 “permanent” military bases, the world’s largest CIA contingent and is openly talking about its troops remaining in Iraq at least through 2007. Economically, the Bush Junta has tied any new government’s hands, thanks to Bremer passing laws which locked in the neo-liberal reforms he imposed. Then there are the actions of Adel Abd al-Mahdi, the Interim Government’s finance minister and part of the main Shiite coalition, who only recently negotiated austerity budgets with the IMF and planning a new oil law very promising to the American investors.

In other words, the economic and political interests of the US elite will be served no matter who gets the most votes — just like at home. Isn’t democracy grand?