

## WAR IN IRAQ: ROAD MAP TO A NEW EMPIRE

The war in Iraq appears to be over, at least for the moment. However, the consequences of the invasion and occupation of a resource rich country in the crisis-ridden Middle East by the world's economic and military super power are likely to be felt for many years to come. As some commentators have pointed out, global politics has entered a new phase of imperialism. The Republican Right wing of the US has now given a new meaning to the old notion of empire. Such rhetorical slogans as 'war for peace' and 'war for democracy' are not even thin attempts to veil the corporate economic interests of the US that propel the new imperialist agenda into action through military invasion and occupation.

The Iraqi war generated outrage and anger throughout the world. It reactivated the anti-war and peace movements, bringing progressive forces together into alliance and action. The war also resulted in a sharp break in the US-Europe relations. It plunged the UN, the world body whose mandate is to maintain and ensure world peace, into a crisis of legitimacy. The Middle East, with the direct US occupation of Iraq, appears to be ripe for a major period of crisis and instability ahead. The political developments in the occupied Iraq

are far from being in the direction which the Bush and Blair administrations would have liked to map out. They will certainly find a new ruling class in Iraq from among those social forces that had suffered under the Ba'ath Party's long, autocratic rule. Yet, as much as democracy cannot be introduced to Iraq from outside and by military means, Iraqi society is most likely to find resistance to American occupation in religio-nationalist mobilization.

The war of Iraq is perhaps more crucial than September 11, in re-defining the dynamics of global politics. The event of September 11 may be seen as having provided an alibi, an impetus, for the right wing elements of the US corporate world to put in place an agenda that has been evolving since the fall of the Soviet Union in the mid eighties. The Afghan war after September 11 and now the occupation of Iraq, constitute a deliberate imperial policy that combines economic interests, military invasion and global control by direct military means.

The dynamics that led to the Iraq war as well as the profound consequences of the war and its aftermath have given rise to vast corpus of critical political literature.

This issue of *Polity* brings to its readers a selection of major contributions to the understanding of the Iraq war. **P**

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