

Britain: Times leaks secret UN blueprint for post-war Iraq

Julie Hyland
8 March 2003

The United Nations has drafted a confidential blueprint for administering Iraq, following a US-led attack on the country. The London *Times* claims to have seen the plan and quoted sections from it in its March 5 edition.

According to the newspaper, the UN began secretly working on a plan for government in post-war Iraq last month. This is despite the fact that Security Council agreement for a military attack has yet to be given.

The *Times* alleges that “The UN is breaking a taboo, and arguably breaching its charter, by considering plans for Iraq’s future governance while it deals daily with President Saddam Hussein’s regime as a legitimate member... a clause in the UN Charter bars it from interfering in a member state’s internal affairs. When Mr. Annan wanted to discuss contingency plans for war-time humanitarian operations with the Security Council last month, Russia insisted that he do so informally in his own office rather than in the council chamber.”

But the newspaper reports that Louise Frechette, the Canadian deputy of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who ordered the report to be drawn up, held a 90-minute meeting on March 3 with Lieutenant-General Jay Garner, the former US Army general predicted to act as US governor of post-war Iraq. Garner is in charge of the Pentagon office of reconstruction and humanitarian affairs, which is currently assembling a number of Iraqi exiles and US advisers to act as a “government in waiting” and to take over “Iraq’s major ministries and public works agencies”, following war, the newspaper reports.

A six-member group drew up the 60-page document at the UN’s New York headquarters. The *Times* reports, “UN sources expected the plan to be implemented even if the US goes to war without a UN resolution authorising military action. It recommends that the UN

immediately appoint a senior official to co-ordinate its strategy, who would become the UN special representative in post-war Iraq.”

The blueprint envisages the US occupying Iraq for three months after a successful war, before handing over to a UN Assistance Mission in Iraq, (UNAMI). The UN has apparently ruled out establishing a full-scale administration, as in Kosovo. The plan states that the UN should “avoid taking direct control of Iraqi oil or becoming involved in vetting Iraqi officials for links to the President or staging elections under US military occupation.” This is a somewhat pathetic attempt to distance the UN from the predatory designs of the Bush administration towards Iraq, given the apparent intention to collaborate with all other aspects of Washington’s policies and to assume direct responsibility for a semi-protectorate.

The assumption that the US would be prepared to cede control to the UN after just three months is optimistic to say the least. More important politically is the UN’s open endorsement of a US occupation of Iraq. The document indicates that the UN is not entirely satisfied with outright occupation by the US, but sees little alternative to it. “The group found that, although a UN-led transitional administration may seem more palatable than an administration by the occupying power, there are key drawbacks to a transitional administration: the UN does not have the capacity to take on the responsibility of administering Iraq,” the document states.

Nonetheless, the UN clearly envisages playing a central role in post-war Iraq at some point. The document states, “The considered opinion of the pre-planning group is that, while public statements assert that the coalition forces will be responsible for military and civil administration in the immediate period

following the conflict, the likelihood of a more substantial involvement of the UN in the transition (post-three month) phase cannot be discounted.”

The plan is couched in the language of humanitarianism and democracy. “The preferred option for the UN is a UN assistance mission that would provide political facilitation, consensus-building, national reconciliation and the promotion of democratic governance and the rule of law,” it states.

“Full Iraqi ownership is the desired end-state whereby a heavy UN involvement is unnecessary. The people of Iraq, rather than the international community, should determine national government structures, a legal framework and governance arrangements.”

These are weasel words, however. The UN’s secret blueprint is presaged on a war carried out without any legal or moral legitimacy, and in flagrant violation of international convention, with the express aim of subordinating the Iraqi people, and the country’s resources, to the imperialist great powers. Having stood by and facilitated such action, the UN will not suddenly “rediscover” the Iraqi people’s rights. It will be exposed as complicit in these crimes.

The document hints at the UN’s real role under such circumstances. It foresees that pressure for greater UN participation will build: “As the extent of coalition force control becomes apparent, the Security Council and, indeed, members of the coalition forces may feel that UN involvement may be welcome in certain areas.”

In other words, as the neo-colonial character of the US takeover of Iraq becomes ever more apparent, the UN will be required to step in and provide a cloak of international legitimacy.

The document describes the UN’s role in post-Saddam Iraq as being based around the “Afghanistan model”. The plan presents this as an example of enlightened and altruistic self-governance, explaining how in Afghanistan the UN worked with US officials to set up an interim administration through which to run the country.

In reality the present Afghanistan administration functions as a smokescreen to obscure the fact that the country’s future is decided not in Kabul, but in Washington. An unstable mix of rival warlords has been imposed over the heads of the Afghani people. Not one of the 29 ministers of Afghanistan’s

transitional administration was elected. They were all appointed by the transitional president, Hamid Karzai, who himself was selected by the US.

The UN has not disputed the existence of the plan. Stephane Dujarric, a spokesman for Annan, confirmed that a “small working group” had been established “in case there is a conflict”, but denied there was any “assumption of war”. US officials said that no decision had yet been made as to whether there should be an interim UN period between a US-run administration and a new Iraqi government.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact