

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER KEEPIN' IT REAL...



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B'IRAQ OBAMA

AS SchNEWS PUTS A MUCH NEEDED PERSPECTIVE ON OBAMA VICTORY

So eight years of Bush madness are finally over, and mercifully the election result didn't turn into a battle over hanging chads or the matter of how many Hispanics and blacks were excluded from voting. But do you really think that Obama will send the troops home the day after he takes office? Out on the campaign trail he was suspiciously silent about the Iraq war. Could it be he was scared of looking unpatriotic compared to McCain, or have some well placed Washington power brokers been having a few quiet words in his ear?

A reality check: What Obama said before the election is a moot point now. The sign of a brilliant orator is the ability to hold a crowd spell-bound, without actually saying anything. On the subject of Iraq, he did announce that US forces would remain there against Iraqi wishes - although maybe without 'permanent' military bases - to train Iraqi personnel (death squads). He also stated that he will 'retain the right to intervene militarily, with our international partners, to suppress potential genocidal violence within Iraq.' All this equates to rehashed liberal interventionist arguments justifying a continued war on Iraq. But what we're really looking at was never a Bush plan, and isn't an Obama plan, but is the US Imperial plan for Iraq. There has been cross-party support for the Occupation since the beginning.

Further clues to the direction of the future Obama Administration's foreign policy comes in the shape of the advisers he's surrounding himself with such as hawkish favourite of conspiracy theorists and former

RAY BAN

Work was disrupted for the third time in three weeks at Raytheon Systems in Bristol. (See SchNEWS 653 for details of the other actions). On Wednesday 5th five protesters managed to evade detection by disguising themselves as workmen and as soon as they got to the door, one protester, a former British soldier - chained and D-locked himself to the front doors of their offices in the Bristol Business Park. Police finally arrived around 9am when agitated workers could not get into work, to plan the building of more illegal weapons which are being used in illegal conflicts around the globe including Palestine and Iraq.

* See <http://bristol.indymedia.org>

Carter advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, as well as such leading humanitarians as General Merrill McPeak (a backer of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor) and Dennis Ross (supporter of Israel's occupation of the West Bank).

To go into more depth about Team Obama's policy on Iraq, we need to take a look at his right hand man - soon to be Veep Joe Biden. Obama may have voted against the Iraq war but Biden was all for it.

Biden's take on the US plan is for a 'third way' between occupation and independence that reads like divide and rule colonialism of the old school. His plan for Iraq was hatched in 2006: partition Iraq into three separate sectarian statelets, Sunni, Kurd and Shia, all governed by US-friendly puppets instructed to provide an uninterrupted supply of oil to Western companies.

This 'third way' (where have we heard that before?) of 'soft partition' is designed to benefit first and foremost multinational oil interests - but is not so soft for those who would face death threats for being on the wrong side of a partition line.

Also central to this strategy is the Oil Law, written in July 2006 and re-drafted with the advice of nine multinational oil companies, the US and UK authorities and the IMF. Its primary aim is to sanction Production Sharing Agreements - privatisation deals - and create a Federal Oil and Gas Council made up of regional political elites.

The Law would allow regions to pass their own oil laws, run their own industries and sign their own contracts with international oil companies without any democratic oversight. What former policy boss of BP Nick Butler calls a 'parting gift of oil for peace' is really designed to create a race to the bottom, aimed to set the Iraqi factions climbing over each other to sell oil to the multinationals. If they ever pull it off the net results of this plan will be division, conflict and decades of dependency on foreign oil companies for Iraqis.

The Kurdish Regional Government is already ahead of the game, interpreting the Iraqi constitution as giving them the right to start signing privatisation contracts with foreign oil companies, passing their own



regional oil law and forming an autonomous ministry of oil. The Oil Law's devolution provisions would also economically empower the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Councils (the country's most powerful political party) intentions to form a 9-region super-state in the south of Iraq. Meanwhile the oil unions are vehemently opposed to any division of Iraq, the Oil Law, foreign oil control and the occupation itself.

ONCE BIDEN, TWICE SHY

But whoever's in the White House pulling the levers of power, all this might just turn out to be irrelevant after all. The Americans' arrogant disregard for Iraqis' sentiments has already caused a nationalist backlash that mobilised opposition to draft the 'Baghdad Charter' opposing any territorial division of Iraq.

One striking feature of Iraqi politics of late is just how little ability the Americans have to call the shots in the country, even with 150,000 troops there. Despite the passage of the Oil Law, Iraqi politicians (even former US allies) are showing worryingly independent tendencies. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) the Americans need if their presence in Iraq has even a token agreement from their puppets is foundering as the deadline for the UN Mandate runs out in December. Despite a mix of threats and concessions to the Iraqi government, even their hand-picked Prime Minister Maliki is still refusing to sign. US politicians, whether Democrat or Republican, just can't seem to grasp that they don't really control events on the ground. As much as they push for Oil Laws and agreements legalising their continued military presence, the truth is that the Occupation is hated too much for them to ever fulfil their ambitions in the country.

Spouting empty slogans for 'Change' and engaging in no-detail rhetoric in televised debates and speeches shouldn't make anyone optimistic that he'll deliver what most Iraqis (and Americans and Brits for that matter) want - an immediate end to the occupation.

For more see
www.handsoffiraqoil.org
www.redpepperobamablog.blogspot.com
www.zmag.org
www.counterpunch.org

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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CONGO MUCH WORSE

As fighting continues between rebels and pro-government militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the humanitarian disaster continues to descend. In the past week tens of thousands have been forced to flee their homes and three refugee camps - holding 50,000 people - were also destroyed and found empty. This year alone, a quarter of a million have become refugees internally within Congo.

Conflict in the DR Congo however is nothing new (see Schnews 407). Casualties are higher than any conflict the world has seen since the Second World War; over 5 million people have been killed since 1988. The leader of the rebel faction, Laurent Nkunda Batware, was indicted for war crimes in 2005 and is under investigation by the International Criminal Court. The conflict has seen massive human rights abuses conducted by both the government and rebel forces.

While there has been international outrage about the West's lack of help with aid or peace-keeping forces, the fighting in Congo is often layered with racist, or plain idle, clichés of 'tribal conflict' - when in fact there is no focus on the West's complicity in it. Those responsible for perpetuating the conflict runs from the local militia to government officials through to international corporations.

Complex international linkages, legal and illegal, public and private, fuel the war economy and direct the political organisations that perpetrate the violence. The DR Congo contains a wealth of natural resources - gold, diamonds, coltan, cassiterite - sold to corporations such as Anglo-American, Standard Chartered Bank, De Beers and over a hundred others. Those who exploitatively control and profit from Congo's resources feed it to consumer markets: Each of us carries a slice of Congo - from the coltan in our mobile phones to the cassiterite used in consumer disposables such as tin cans.

* Support the Demonstration against humanitarian crisis in DR Congo tomorrow (Nov 8th) at 11am, starting at Manchester University, Oxford Road, marching to Peace Gardens outside Manchester Town Hall. Organised by Congolese in Manchester. Contact 07507438424 / 07960617309.

* See www.ncadc.org.uk

* See www.schnews.org.uk/sotw/congo.htm

DAMP SQUIBB

Despite continued police pressure and current court trials involving charges of 'conspiracy to blackmail' (See SchNEWS 652), the SHAC campaign against vivisection lab Huntingdon Life Science (HLS) continues. Last week they held an international week of actions called Scary Science Week. Over fifty protests across Europe plus Chile and Israel targeted HLS related companies including AstraZenica, Barclays, Novartis, Syngenta, Glaxo Smithkline and many more. For details see www.shac.net

* There will be an international day of action against Bristol Myers Squibb - a major client of HLS - on Monday 24th November. For locations and more details see www.shac.net/action/diary_dates.html

TRICK OR TROT

Halloween night saw 250 anti-capitalist demonstrators of various stripes converge on Canary Wharf to 'Dance on the grave of capitalism' outside failed finance giant Lehman Brothers. It was to be a street party styled demo, organised by the Radical Anthropologists, with others from London street demo veterans Reclaim The Streets. But while groups such as the Anarchist Federation and Class War turned up, large numbers came from the Socialist Worker Party student group, SWSS.

Politics makes some strange bedfellows, and they don't come stranger than this demo's mutant hybrid of neo-Situationist Radical Anthropologists with a hankering for the good ole' days of RTS and the transit vanguardists of the Socialist Workers Party. But the way it turned out, it seems that the SWP's Trot leadership may be losing its vice-like grip on its members, with many of the Swerpy's young bloods being as up for a ruckus as a brew-crewed Class Warrior.

SchNEWS' roving and raving reporter donned her pointy hat and magic wand to join

in the action, saying, "As the sacred circle was cast, marked by carved pumpkins and much drumming, then the Four Horse folk of the Anti-Capitalist Apocalypse - namely Communist, Anarchist, Eco Warrior and Revolution - were invoked. While the fluffy creative types and Radical Anthropologists experimented with civilised disobedience, a group full of SWP students stormed the police line, causing the cops to feel duty bound to reciprocate the gesture. This cleared the field for the Anarchists who broke out into a spontaneous game of pumpkin football with the Eco warriors.

Faced with non-state sanctioned creative chaos the cops got twitchy and the snatch squad swooped in for bodies. One was arrested. The circle was broken and the pumpkins smashed. Copies of Socialist Worker, pronouncing capitalism dead, rolled like tumble weed across the wasteland outside Lehman Brothers.

The plan is to reconvene at the same spot at the next new moon. Up the revelation!"

* See www.graveyard.at

GUNPOWDER, CLASS WAR & PLOD

The bonfire bit of the Class War Bonfire Party at London Fields on Wednesday night didn't exactly happen this year, but that's not to say that sparks didn't fly. 200 people or so turned up at the park and in the nearby pub to 'remember, remember, the fifth of November...' They were met by up-for-it cops - as well as a few blatant undercover plod too.

After one van of firewood was confiscated, a second appeared, only to be searched and warned off from entering - so no bonfire. A few beers later, revellers sent police in all directions as they left the pub in two columns to reach the park for the fire-show. Someone let off a firework - only to be jumped on by police - but after a scuffle they managed to de-arrest her.

The next bout of trouble kicked off when sparklers were handed out and lit up, and police waded in trying to seize them. A brawl erupted, leading to more arrests, which were quickly de-arrested. While this was going on, others let off a few small rockets near another group of police, but avoided arrest after a chase.

The undercover police were easy to spot: they were the ones with radios which kept going 'Crrrrkkk - charlie tango oscar moonbeam four, over, crrrkkk'.

The old bill said that they were enforcing a Hackney parks by-law forbidding the use of fireworks in London Fields. In response, people moved further out into the park, letting off their explosives with hilarious consequences. In total two were arrested, with many more de-arrested.

Another fine evening of local park by-law enforcement and squiffy scuffling. Meanwhile elsewhere in Hackney there were quite probably a number of beatings, robberies, burglaries, maybe some rapes and muggings.

HOME FARM AND AWAY

As Sussex police continue their vicious crackdown on Brighton anti-arms trade campaign Smash EDO, two people arrested in connection with the 4th June demonstration (See SchNEWS 634) have been re-arrested at their homes. The house raids and arrests were made on Wednesday morning in Brighton and Southampton, both on suspicion of violent disorder.

A spokesperson for Smash EDO said, "Sussex Police were totally humiliated on 4th June by the determination of ordinary people to assert their freedom to protest. This crackdown on demonstrators is typical of their attempts to repress the campaign ever since it began. We will not be intimidated and the campaign will continue until the Brighton bomb makers close down for good."

But despite racking up the repression, Sussex Police's poor record in the courts continues: On Wednesday charges against a woman arrested for singing along to an acoustic guitar were dropped. Sussex police were using the spurious pretext of a Council noise by-law (originally brought in to deal with noisy drunks and buskers) to restrict freedom of speech outside EDO. This is the sixth of eight prosecutions that have been dropped. * **Regular noise protests** continue every Wednesday 4-6pm outside EDO, Home Farm Road, Brighton. www.smashedo.org.uk

PARTY & PROTEST

* Listings updated weekly *
www.schnews.org.uk/pap

* The SchNEWS website now has a comments box for each article. We look forward to seeing readers' responses, but will be quick to remove postings from nutters so don't bother.

* If you live in Brighton, fancying helping SchNEWS with printing and distro? Contact the office by phone or email...

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - alright he couldn't be worse than the last guy, don't get carried away with high expectations. You'll feel silly later. Honest!

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