
Book Review

Enough Lies To Sink A Rotten Administration

by Lawrence K. Freeman

State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III

by Bob Woodward

New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006

560 pp., hardcover, \$30.00

Let me be honest with the reader. I don't have much respect for Bob Woodward, after his duplicitous behavior in the Valerie Plame affair, but his latest book on the Bush Administration's Iraq War, *State of Denial*, played a helpful role in securing a peaceful regime change in the U.S. Congress. *State of Denial* is a sharp break with Woodward's two previous books on the Bush Administration, and is coherent with a dramatic policy shift typified by the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group, which represents a top-down attack against the neo-con cabal occupying the White House—a White House that has brought the United States close to the point of complete destruction.

President Bush would not allow himself to be interviewed for this book by Woodward, (although he was interviewed by Woodward for his two previous books), because it was understood that the release of *State of Denial*, weeks before the Nov. 7, 2006, election, would help to bring about a Democratic majority in the Congress, and that this would lead to an all-out political brawl after the swearing-in on Jan. 4, 2007.

For those who want to know what all the major personalities and actors in the military, State and Defense Departments, and White House said leading up to the initiation of the War on Iraq, about the conduct of the war through the Spring of 2006, and all the personal attacks and tidbits of gossip, Woodward provides hundreds of pages of sometimes tedious reading. Woodward easily proves the truth of the title of his book: that our poor, dissociated President George W. Bush, was and continues to be, in a state of denial.

One conspicuous omission is that Woodward makes no mention of the central role of George P. Shultz, as the "godfather" who personally created the entire Bush/Cheney imperial White House. This fact alone should help the reader gain some insight as to how authors like Woodward are deployed. Shultz's name is brought up only once in the book, but in a

crucial reference, to be discussed in a later section of this review.

What Weapons of Mass Destruction?

Because of the sheer volume of reporting by Woodward, certain conversations and reports are brought out that give the insightful reader an opportunity to understand more about the policy of the Iraq War than was perhaps intended.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction, WMD, was never taken seriously by the Pentagon, except as a means to bludgeon a weakened and frightened Congress and American population to go along with the war. At a National Security Council meeting conducted on the very day of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks against the United States, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld suggested that the U.S. response should go beyond retaliating against Al-Qaeda and include Iraq as well.

In November of 2001, President Bush had asked Rumsfeld to prepare a war plan against Iraq. For almost the next year and a half, until the war to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein was launched on March 19, 2003, the neo-conservatives, led by Undersecretary for Defense Doug Feith, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Vice President Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff Lewis Libby, and, most especially, Cheney himself, conducted every form of duplicity, including the "stove-piping" of intelligence, to manipulate the Congress and the American people into supporting their illegal, and essentially anti-American war.

But without the threat of Saddam's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction, the neo-cons would not have been able to force their war on America. The propaganda of a smoking gun in the form of a "mushroom cloud" was essential to terrify a population, still living under the horror of the 9/11 attacks, to get them to acquiesce to the Bush/Cheney war drive. However, very early on, before the war began, it was known that a list of locations where WMD allegedly existed was specious, and was never given much credibility.

On Oct. 4, 2002, Army Maj. Gen. James "Spider" Marks, was given the top intelligence assignment of finding and neutralizing Saddam's WMD. According to Woodward, when General Marks asked the "smart guys" at the Defense Intelligence Agency what we knew about Saddam's WMD, they handed him a list of 946 sites where WMD were produced or where material was stored; this was known as the Weapons of Mass Destruction Master Site List. General Marks soon realized that no serious thought had gone into this list of 946 sites, that the so-called intelligence for "the list" was ten years or more old. Yet, Cheney had lied to the world on Aug. 26, 2002, when he said: "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us."

How unserious the Pentagon took the issue of Saddam's possession of WMD is revealed by Woodward in reporting exchanges between a believing General Marks and the nonchalant attitude of the civilian command of our military.

When General Marks asked if the WMDMSL was prioritized, the staff answered: “Of course, General. Why wouldn’t it be?” When General Marks responded: “ ‘No, my point is this: Where physically is 946? Is this prioritization based on the likelihood of WMD being there?’ No answer.” General Marks kept digging. He posed the following questions concerning what procedure his soldiers should follow upon finding the sites on the master list.

“The very first site might be right here, right across the border. But it might be site 833. So, does he [the soldier] blow by it? Do you want him to stop? Is it important? I mean, there’s an operational requirement, and I need you to give me a sense. But I’ve got to be able to give the operators a sufficient sense of importance and priority of that site. And just by putting it 833 on the list tells me nothing.”

Woodward reports that after several such non-responsive meetings, General Marks’s catchphrase became “we’re on our ass” on this mission.

On May 11, 2003, 53 days after the invasion, General Marks wrote in his journal, “No WMD,” as he continued his futile search to check out the list of 946 sites where Saddam Hussein had allegedly stored or produced chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. Indeed, no WMD were ever found, because none existed—but the deception was effective. The ruse worked, unbeknownst to General Marks, who, in his dedicated way, conducted the tireless search for the nonexistent WMD.

But through fear and manipulation, caused by the absolute certainty of the existence of WMD, America embarked on its own version of the Peloponnesian War, a war that led to the destruction Athens, previously the most culturally advanced city in the world at that time.

By Stupidity, or Was It by Intention?

Anyone familiar with classic military procedures for dealing with a defeated army, knew immediately after observing Paul “Gerry” Bremer’s first two orders when he assumed command of the situation in Iraq as the President’s Special Envoy in early May 2003, that Iraq was going to explode in an escalation of violence against the occupying forces. On May 16, 2003, Bremer signed “Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1—De-Baathification of Iraqi Society.” This order banned not only the upper ranks of the Baath party, but hundreds of thousands of Baath Party rank-and-file members from employment in the present or future Iraqi governments.

The next day, Bremer issued Order Number 2, which disbanded the entire Iraqi military. Any sane leader would have used the most stable institutions, especially a well-trained and disciplined military, to assist in the reconstruction of a defeated nation, a principle which General MacArthur demonstrated in his rebuilding of Japan. Instead Bremer’s order all but guaranteed that Iraq would slide into chaos and civil war through the widening of asymmetric warfare—exactly what is happening today.



White House Photo/Eric Draper

President Bush refused to be interviewed for Woodward’s book, which gives a detailed look at the lies used to get Congress to go along with the Iraq War.

Where did these two insane orders come from? Was it monumental stupidity as some have argued, or was it derived from an intentional policy to break up all of Southwest Asia, and in fact rule the region through the spread of chaos, permanent war, and a series of regime changes?

Woodward’s account is that Bremer was contacted for the job by Libby and Wolfowitz, which obviously put Cheney’s office at the center of the decision. But Cheney is too much of a lower level thug to shape this type of policy without direction from above. Far more significant is Woodward’s exposure of Bremer as a protégé of Henry Kissinger, who, after leaving government service, took over as managing director of Kissinger’s Associates for ten years. Filling out Bremer’s pedigree, we find that Bremer was vetted to his position in Iraq by none other than George Shultz, who begat the entire Bush Administration, including Condoleezza Rice, in 1998. Shultz and Kissinger represent the higher echelons of the Synarchist International in the United States, who helped guide the Bush/Cheney Iraq policy from the beginning to the present.

Bremer’s issuance of his first two orders was opposed by three-star Army General Jay Garner, who had made a name for himself as a colonel in the first Iraq-Gulf War by efficiently running a logistical supply and humanitarian operation for the Kurds, called Provide Comfort. Garner, who served two tours of duty in Vietnam, and retired from the Army after 33 years, was picked by Rumsfeld in January 2003, to run the postwar reconstruction in Iraq. Garner realized right away that there were no serious plans for postwar Iraq. His planning group wrote in a report produced a month before the war: “Current force packages are inadequate. We risk letting much of the country descend into civil unrest [and] chaos whose magnitude may defeat our national strategy of a stable new Iraq, and more immediately, we place our own troops, fully engaged in the forward fight, in greater jeopardy”—which turned out to be precisely what happened,

leading to the deadly fiasco that our soldiers face today. In a meeting in the White House on Feb. 28, just weeks before the U.S. invasion, Garner told President Bush and his advisors that he planned to use the Iraqi army of 200,000 to 300,000 in the postwar phase because “they have the proper skill sets.”

Before Bremer’s arrival, General Garner was using Iraqi government officials—Baath Party members—under the leadership of U.S. personnel to operate many of the reopened ministries. This effort was immediately wrecked by Bremer’s counter-productive orders, which actually helped ignite the flames still scorching Iraq today. When Garner read the de-Baathification order, he objected immediately, saying: if you do this, “You will put 50,000 people on the street, underground and mad at Americans.”

Bremer’s account is that Doug Feith, one of the architects of the Iraq War, wrote the de-Baathification order. Gen. Tommy Franks, commander of Central Command-CENTCOM, who helped plan and execute the Iraq War, told Garner that Feith was the “dumbest bastard, dumbest mother-fucker on the face of the earth.” General Franks was undoubtedly right.

Garner thought that the disbanding of the Iraqi military would be even a bigger disaster than de-Baathification. He told General Abizaid, then the deputy of General Frank: “If you do this it’s going to be ugly. It’ll take 10 years to fix this country, and for three years you’ll be sending kids home in body bags.” Months later, General Abizaid told Bush, Rice, and Rumsfeld that he needed officers from Saddam’s army, and in November he even requested experienced Sunni officers.

Woodward recounts in his book how Garner thought about Chinese Gen. Sun Tzu’s book *The Art of War*, which cautions: “that you don’t want to go to bed at night with more enemies than you started the day with in morning. By Garner’s calculation the U.S. now had at least 350,000 more enemies than it had the day before—the 50,000 Baathists, and 300,000 officially unemployed soldiers from the army and a handful from the now defunct Iraqi leadership group.”

This was the result of Shultz’s and Kissinger’s lackey, Bremer, and his two sweeping orders. The consequence of these actions was easily foreseen and objected to in advance by competent civilian and military professionals. Can we allow anyone to naively attribute these consequences to stupidity, or poor planning, out of fear of using the word conspiracy, i.e. intention? No! These actions lit the fire that ignited the nightmare that has evolved before us today.

Whose War Is It, Anyway?

As Wolfowitz stated publicly after the invasion of Iraq, the allegation of WMD was what everyone could agree on as a convenient excuse for the Bush/Cheney policy of regime change. But where did this evil and ruinous policy come from? Our pathetic President Bush is too empty-headed to come up with any ideas, and Cheney, although more ideologically

fanatical, doesn’t have the brain power to be the initiator, even when he is allowed off the leash by his more intelligent and evil wife, Lynne Cheney.

Woodward reports that while the bombing of Afghanistan was still going on, Wolfowitz asked his friend Christopher DeMuth, president of the American Enterprise Institute (the crypt that serves as the most preferred nesting ground for Lynne and Dick Cheney and their fellow neo-cons), to pull together a group of top strategists to plot out the administration’s campaign for a global “war on terror.” DeMuth obliged, but only if his group remained secret. The most significant personality in this secret grouping was none other than “Cheney favorite” Bernard Lewis, the grand-daddy of the Clash of Civilizations, who was deployed to the United States from the British Arab Bureau.

In late November 2001, about 16 months before the Iraq invasion, DeMuth’s secret group produced a document, which stated that “Baathism is an Arab form of fascism transplanted to Iraq,” and concluded “that a confrontation with Saddam was inevitable.” Thus, plans to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein were launched from the bowels of the AEI—the “brainchild” that doomed the Bush Presidency to failure, and is today the driving force behind the troop escalation announced on Jan. 10, by our statue-like President

When excerpts from *State of Denial* started to make their way into the media, one of the most sensational items was from Woodward’s 2005 interview of Dick Cheney, where Cheney blurted out: “Of the outside people that I talk to in this job, I probably talk to Henry Kissinger more than I talk to anybody else. He comes by and I guess at least once a month, Scooter [Libby] and I sit down with him.”

Kissinger “had a standing invitation” to meet with President Bush when he was in town, and Woodward reports that Kissinger met every couple of months with President Bush in private. Kissinger, junior to Bernard Lewis in the pecking order of geopolitical strategists for the British Empire’s world view who are operating in the United States, was an early enthusiast of the Iraq War. Thus, the policy guiding the invasion of Iraq, with all of its known destructive consequences, should properly be seen as apart of a larger British-sponsored geopolitical game to overturn all the Arab and Muslim nations in that region, from Pakistan west to Turkey, including Southwest Asia, then south into the Gulf, and the Horn of Africa.

Whenever doubts were expressed about the success of the war/occupation policy, or grim news of casualties filled the press, President Bush, the college cheerleader, was never in doubt. Always in his state of denial of reality, he once told his team: “Hold it. We know we’re doing the right thing. We’re on the right track here. We’re doing the right thing for ourselves, for own interest, and for the world. And don’t forget it. Come on, guys.”

Even a person of dubious principle can play a useful role in a transformed political geometry. Such is the case with Woodward in his *State of Denial*.