
Interview: Mohamed al-Mashat



Anglo-American Mideast occupation was 'preplanned'

The following interview with Iraqi Ambassador to the United States al-Mashat was conducted by EIR correspondents Fernando Quijano and Joseph Brewda at the Iraqi embassy in Washington on Sept. 12.

EIR: Mr. Ambassador, I was struck by a developing campaign by the U.S. and British media against Iraq, six months ago or so before the U.S. move into the Gulf, particularly after the Iraqi execution of the British spy Farzad Bazoft in March. There was the accusation made by the British that Iraq was secretly trying to make a nuclear bomb. This reminded me of the propaganda campaign against Iraq in 1980 and 1981, that was launched prior to the Israeli bombing raid against your Osirak nuclear research facility. I'm wondering if you could describe what your government feared the U.S. or British were preparing.

al-Mashat: Well, I would go further back than Bazoft. As a matter of fact, I would go to the point of the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq on the Aug. 20, 1988; the fact that Iraq came out the victor, and came out healthy and not destroyed, as the Israelis had planned. One has to bring in the Israeli question, because the Israelis wanted to destroy Iraq. That was made clear by how they helped Iran during the war. They were hoping that either Iraq's existence would be finished, or the war would continue forever, until the Iraqis were destroyed. And so when Iraq came out neither destroyed, nor the loser, but came out the victor—plus, Iraq in the meantime developed a new deterrent, our missile—that was the beginning of the big conspiracy against Iraq. And that was the beginning of this plan, of preparing the atmosphere, softening the public, as a prelude to war. That was the Israeli regional plan, because they were preparing the atmosphere as a prelude to an attack on Iraq.

On the American side, they went along with it, at least in some quarters. I wouldn't brand the entire administration, but some departments in the CIA, in the secret services. They worked on this plan in a clandestine way, by, number one, sending emissaries to the Gulf to frighten the Kuwaitis, the Saudis, and the Gulf people—this we know—and to set in motion a plan to destabilize Iraq. And if you survey their

propaganda campaign, their mass media campaign, it is always created out of the "blue sky," there is no incident. They created their incident out of the pretext of the human rights business, to smear Iraq as an outlaw, and to speak against our President, in a very organized, meticulous, preplanned fashion.

It started slowly, but the real takeoff started in November 1989. Out of the blue sky they started with Peter Jennings and Mr. [Charles] Glass. They made an ABC special program about supposed human rights violations in Iraq, the human rights report, and all of this. They began to open up an archaic book, this fantastic claim that we used chemical weapons against our own citizens. They deliberately confused the Iranian use of chemical weapons against Iraqi citizens during the war, with mop-up operations that we conducted against guerrillas and terrorists in Iraq who had helped Iran, mop-up operations which we conducted following the war. They used Halapja as evidence, falsely claiming that we used chemical weapons against terrorists in Halapja, Iraq, after the war. The American media tried to extrapolate this thing. They showed the picture of the Iranian massacre at Halapja, conducted during the war, and claimed that Iraq was responsible, and was using chemical weapons against its own people. It was established by the Pentagon that it was the Iranians who used cyanide at Halapja. We had no cyanide.

The campaign went into higher acceleration with the execution of the spy, and the hysteria around the so-called capacitor. The U.S. government could have said to the company not to export the capacitor to us. Why plant someone in the company from the FBI or the CIA to appear as a foreign sales manager? The capacitor has many uses. It can be used as a nuclear bomb trigger, but also for laser research and for rocket separation. We wanted it for laser research. The charge that Iraq is building a nuclear bomb is a big deception. We are signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Our facilities are subjected to continuous and regular inspection by the International Energy Agency. So there is no way that we could develop nuclear weapons, even if we wanted to. And then the question of the super-gun—all of this nonsense.

And then the overblown and fabricated propaganda against Iraq when we made the warning against Israel because Mr. [Rafael] Eytan—the principal Israeli Air Force figure responsible for the attack on Iraq in 1981—said on April 1, “We know how to take care of Iraqi missile and industrial complexes as we did in 1981.” Our President came out the next day with his warning, because we do not want have an exchange, we want peace, in order to develop our country.

But what happened in all the mass media here, except very few? They omit the first part of that warning—“that if Israel attacks us by nuclear weapons,” that “then we will burn up half of Israel with chemical weapons”—they always omit the first part. They say that Iraq is threatening to burn up Israel. This has all heightened the feeling of the Americans against Iraq.

And then, when we took military action against Kuwait, the master plan of subjugating the rising Arab went into action. This is what I call “neo-imperialism.” The U.S. deployment was done under the pretext of a false threat that we are not satisfied by taking action against Kuwait, but were threatening Saudi Arabia. This is the biggest deception in history. We had excellent relations with Saudi Arabia. We had a non-aggression pact with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was never in history part of Iraq. Had we harbored military designs against Saudi Arabia, we could have gone right through on Aug. 2, when we went into Kuwait, because there was no American soldier there until Aug. 8. Not only could we have gone into Saudi Arabia through Kuwait, but we could have made a multi-pronged attack—we have a 1,000 kilometers of border with Saudi Arabia. But for what? We have no reason to be in Saudi Arabia whatsoever.

So the Americans made this plan to occupy the region for two purposes. One, is to implement the Israeli objective of destroying Iraqi infrastructure. Israeli policy is to destroy any Arab country that has any potential, and to have intra- and inter-Arab wars, and to have schisms and destabilizations of every country in the region. This is part and parcel of their plan to have hegemony in the area and to build a “Greater Israel.” Unfortunately, the Americans are willing to sacrifice themselves for an Israeli expansionist policy.

The American part of it is to control the oil; as I said, a new form of neo-imperialism is coming into the picture. Now they have occupied Saudi Arabia—the Holy Land—they have occupied Qatar, and so you can see that this was a preplanned, premediated, well-orchestrated plan against the Arabs. Who are the people that are supporting them? The puppet governments of the Gulf, Mubarak, Morocco, and Syria. Syria, which during the Iran-Iraq War supported Iran, and which is still on the U.S. government’s terrorist list, the U.S. is now embracing.

But the Arab masses are on the Iraqi side. And the Arabs would like to have justice. The Arabs of today are not the Arabs of yesterday, and no longer will accept injustices in-

flicted on them for decades now. Iraq represents a new hope. That explains why we very much wanted to avoid war, but we want to have just peace.

In order to respect a Security Council resolution, it has to be implemented with the same standard as all other resolutions, not a double standard. So our President’s initiative on the Aug. 12 was that the Israelis must withdraw from the West bank and Gaza as called for in U.N. Resolution 242. The U.S. must respect this Security Council resolution, from the very council that issued this position against Iraq imposing these sanctions. Why not put sanctions on the aggressor that continues his aggression in the region: Who continues to occupy the West Bank and Gaza, the Golan Heights, and Lebanon? who continues to liquidate the Arabs and the Palestinians? who continues to divide the world community, and continues to be an outlaw? And we said also that the Syrians should leave Lebanon. That’s how we can establish peace once and for all. Then we will talk about the question of Kuwait.

The only way to solve this crisis is to implement all Security Council resolutions fairly. America should take the lead in this, because then it will be recorded in history: that the Bush administration solved the Arab-Palestinian, Palestinian-Israeli question on a just basis. The Arabs want peace, and Iraq wants a just peace. For this reason, Iraq took part in the Arab summit conference in Fez, Morocco in 1982, at which all Arab heads of state accepted the security of all states in the region, providing that Israel withdraws within its 1967 borders.

There is another thing that the Americans should know. The American government actually destroyed the Arab solution to the Kuwait problem. Before we took military action, the U.S. supported Kuwait in its refusal to respond to Iraq’s legitimate demands. After we took military action, the U.S. destroyed the Arab plan to have a mini-summit at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Aug. 6. The summit was to have been comprised of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, King Hussein of Jordan, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, President Mubarak of Egypt, and the head of state of Yemen. Suddenly, after the plans for the summit had been agreed to, U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney arrived in Saudi Arabia, and prevented the summit from occurring. This is further evidence of a preconceived plan to occupy and control the area.

I would also say that part of the motivation for this is the problem of a possible recession in your country, and the budget deficit. So in order to get support of the Americans for the budget, and thinking that this would overcome the possibility of recession, the American government took this action.

The irony is that three years ago, you re-flagged Kuwaiti ships in order to have the flow of oil, and you sent some war ships into the Gulf in order to guarantee the flow of oil from Iraq and Kuwait. Today, the U.S. and their troops are blocking the flow of oil by your blockade. Who is suffering from

Iraq's proposed comprehensive Mideast settlement

On Aug. 14, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein proposed that all outstanding territorial disputes in the region, including the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, be solved comprehensively. What follows are excerpts from that statement.

1) Any withdrawal arrangement should be based on one principle. This includes Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories of Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, the withdrawal between Iraq and Iran, and the special arrangements for the situation in Kuwait. Any military arrangement on the time and the

related political preparations should also be dealt with in accordance with the recognized basis, and principles, taking into consideration Iraq's historical rights over its territory and the choice of the people of Kuwait. The implementation of this proposal should take place in a priority order, beginning with the first occupation or so-called occupation—hence, beginning with the implementation of all the United Nations Security Council resolutions and all cases up to the most recent one. The same measures that were adopted by the Security Council against Iraq should be used against whoever refuses to comply with these arrangements.

2) In order to reveal the truth of matters to international public opinion so that it may judge objectively, away from American wishes and pressure, we call for an immediate withdrawal from Saudi Arabia of the American forces and their accomplices. The U.S. forces should be replaced by Arab forces whose size, nationality, mission, and deployment would be determined by the Security Council, assisted by the United Nations Secretary General.

this? The American consumer is suffering. Because, I would like to remind you that the price of petroleum was \$18 a barrel. We asked OPEC to increase it, and it was increased a few weeks before the crisis of Aug. 2, to \$21 a barrel, and we settled for this. Our policy regarding oil is to have stable prices—fair to the consumer and fair to the producer. Our policy is known in OPEC. In fact, we had a big fight with the Shah in the 1970s because he wanted to jack up the price. We are against jacking up the prices. We want to sell our oil to the West. We don't want the West to look to alternative sources of energy. Now the price is \$32 a barrel because of the American action. This is the irony of the situation.

EIR: Could you describe what the Iraqi infrastructural projects are, and what the Iraqi idea is for the Arab world in terms of development, industry, and so on?

al-Mashat: We went through a development plan that no other Third World country did, prior to the Iran-Iraq War. We believe in sharing our wealth, and we translate that into action. As a matter of fact, we have given Third World countries, in terms of a percentage of GNP, more than any country in the world—all before the Iran-Iraq War. During the Havana Non-Aligned conference of Nov. 4, 1979, for example, we allowed developing nations which had oil contracts with us the right not to pay the higher prices which had been agreed upon by OPEC, from June 1 to the end of that year.

If you had visited Iraq before the war, you would have seen that Iraq was a beehive. For any country to have real potential, in my opinion, three conditions must exist simulta-

neously: You have to have wealth, commensurate to the size of the country and population; you have to have a trained human infrastructure; and you have to have modern, non-corrupt leaders. Fortunately, in Iraq we have these three conditions existing simultaneously.

If you take Iraq, and see the wealth of Iraq, we not only have the second-largest proven oil reserves in the world, after Saudi Arabia, but we have huge deposits of phosphate, which we have already started to develop. We have huge deposits of sulfur, as a mineral, not only as a byproduct of oil; and then, last but not least, for these 17 million people: Iraq is Mesopotamia. It is agricultural land, the land of the two rivers. We have water resources. All of this fabulous wealth for 17 million people. So we have that condition.

We have the human infrastructure. We don't import people to run our factories; we have Iraqi people. Sometimes, we work with foreign experts, doing the development by themselves. We have eradicated illiteracy in our country. Since 1978 we made schooling mandatory for every child of six years of age. We have 12 universities, aside from technical institutes. Education is free from primary school to the Ph.D. level. So we have the people undertake the development by themselves. This is the second condition.

The third condition is that you have to have leaders who believe in using modern science and technology for the development of their country, and who are not corrupt. They are not using their money by putting it in Monte Carlo, or buying yachts, or investing it for their own personal pleasure and concubinage. We have clean leaders.

So if you survey any other Third World country, you rarely find these three conditions existing simultaneously, as is the case in Iraq.

Now the fact is that we have suffered eight years of war, and were attacked by Israel in an unprovoked way in 1981. This has made us learn that we have to have deterrence. That is why we have developed our missile and have developed chemical weapons. We have no biological or nuclear weapons, nor do we have any intention to have them. Our policy is that all mass destructive weapons in the area should be banned. We do not accept that Israel has nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in the area, and no one says anything about it, yet everyone is clobbering Iraq because we have the poor man's bomb, the chemical bomb.

After the ceasefire with Iran on Aug. 20, 1988, we wanted to reconstruct the country from the ravages of war and to restart this development plan. Naturally, we started with a huge debt. In order to reconstruct our country we needed the revenue from our oil. But then we faced the beginning of the conspiracy of the al-Sabah family, the former rulers of Kuwait. They were bent on destroying the economy of Iraq instead of helping Iraq—even though Iraq protected them during the Iran-Iraq War. They began to overproduce. The benchmark of oil prices agreed to over a year ago was \$18 a barrel, but the Kuwaitis and Emirates began to overproduce, in some cases doubling their production, in order to force a drop in the price of oil. There was no need for the Kuwaitis to overproduce—they have a minimum of \$400 billion investments abroad. They earn more income from those investments than from all their oil income per day. So when they were bent on overproduction, and cheated when they give their word to OPEC that they were going to uphold their quota, we suspected that there was something fishy in their insistence on overproducing and violating the quota. They were able to force a drop in oil prices from \$18 a barrel to \$11 a barrel. For every dollar dropping below \$18, Iraq loses \$1 billion a year, so when it reached \$11, we were losing \$7 billion a year—at the time when we had to service our debt and to reconstruct our country.

Furthermore, the Kuwaitis have occupied part of Iraq, and built an oil well to siphon oil from the southern Rumelia oilfield in southern Iraq, which they did with a slanted well extended into the heart of the oilfield in our land. After all the negotiations failed, we took military action. And we are not the first country or the last country to do that when a national interest was at stake.

So, our plan is to develop our country. We want to catch up with the modern world, we want to use our resources for the welfare of our people, and help other Arabs, and you can see that even at difficult times we have always helped the Arabs in various ways, and the Palestinians of course. And we would like to help the Third World, too. That is our policy.

EIR: Mr. Ambassador, Mr. LaRouche, who is the founder,

of our publication has proposed that the only basis for joint interest, for lasting peace in the Middle East, is through massive development projects to the advantage of Israel, Palestine, and the Arab world. All the U.N. resolutions must be implemented, the creation of a Palestinian state, and so on; but without some concrete interest which binds both sides together, there would not be long-lasting peace. We'd like your comments on that.

al-Mashat: Well, we had this plan in our mind before this crisis started, and we still have it. And I think it is in the best interests of the Iraqis, Arabs, the United States, and everybody in the region to have peace. War will get nowhere. War is against our interest. Instead of having all of these resources going into this defensive business, we would like to put it into construction, and massive projects—not only in Iraq, but in all Arab countries. You have to have the political will in the West and the United States to have some sense of justice, for your own interest. Because the Arabs are culturally oriented to the West.

It was our policy since I arrived here a year ago to have more trade with the United States, to have more American corporations working in Iraq. We used to buy 25% of all the rice exported from the United States. We would like to have American technology.

We hope that people in the United States realize that what they are doing is against their immediate and future interest—not only with Iraq but all Arab countries. Because we have the support of the Arabs. And we hope, we pray to God, that we do not come into armed conflict with the U.S. I want to stress here that such an armed conflict is in the hands of the United States. It is their decision to have war, not Iraq's. We are working to have peace. We made an initiative for peace. But if war comes, believe me, the U.S. will be the loser, and not only immediately, but in the long run as well. And this is a message I would like to send to Americans, through your gracious offer to talk to Americans through your magazine. We wanted peace, we wanted to negotiate. We wanted it to be recognized that we no longer accept being squashed. We want to have justice, the very justice that was enunciated by all Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. All Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict have to be implemented in order to have peace, and through following one standard, not a double standard—not by insisting on blockading Iraq, and beating the drums of war against Iraq, and refusing to negotiate unless Iraq withdraws first. No such sanctions have been imposed against Israel, which is still defying all Security Council resolutions pertaining to it to this day.

And that way, we can have peace and stability in the area, and you will have a flourishing economy.

EIR: Mr. Ambassador, several weeks ago Secretary of State Baker testified before the Congress where he proposed a new security arrangement for the Persian Gulf. He said the U.S.

Plan to occupy Saudi Arabia is an old one

A column by former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James E. Akins in the Sept. 12 *Los Angeles Times* reveals that a U.S. plan to occupy the Saudi oil fields was planned as far back as 1975. Iraq has maintained that seizing control of the Persian Gulf oilfields was one of the primary motivations for Bush's decision to send U.S. troops into the region.

According to Akins, "In January 1975, the neo-conservative publication *Commentary* carried an article proposing invasion of Saudi Arabia as a solution to the eternal Arab problem and to our own economic problems. A flurry of similar articles followed that proposed occupying oilfields on the peninsula from Kuwait to Dubai, pumping them dry, and in 50 years or so returning the properties to their original owners.

"I was Ambassador to Jeddah at the time, and I was appalled by the cynicism and the immorality of the suggestion. . . .

"I suggested that anyone who would take this proposition seriously was a madman, a criminal, or a Soviet agent. Henry Kissinger, the secretary of state, had another view, and my career in the Foreign Service did not extend much beyond that point. . . .

"Nevertheless, there are those in the Bush administration who will point out that conditions are more propitious now than in 1975 for at least a de facto military occupation of the Saudi oilfields. . . .

"Those in and out of the U.S. government—including Kissinger—who were serious about taking over the oilfields in 1975 surely will argue that we should not let these extraordinary resources go, now that they are in our control."

might create something like NATO in the region, perhaps a permanent base in Kuwait once seized from Iraq, a permanent base in Saudi Arabia, apparently something like CENTO of the previous period. There is a certain concern in Europe and Japan that this arrangement would be linked to NATO out-of-area deployments into the region. What is Iraq's view of this proposal?

al-Mashat: We would not accept that at all, because this is a new form of a new imperialism. Security could be established in two ways. First—which is what we prefer—is between and among the Arabs, and supported by the Security

Council, by the U.N. This is the security that would be fair to everybody. The security arrangement spoken about by Baker is a camouflage for the occupation of the Holy Land and the Arab land, to control the oil. It is a false control, because as I said before, we could make arrangements to have fair oil prices that would benefit everybody. We are against jacking prices too high, because we want to sell the oil, and make it cheaper than other sources. This is our official policy. We don't want you to develop alternative sources of energy.

So all of this is false pretexts for this planned military action in the area. It will not work; believe me, it will not work. The previous arrangements, like CENTO, the Baghdad Pact, did not work and it collapsed. Nowadays, the possibility of collapse is much more than before, because the Arabs have awakened. And if you think you have security with some puppet government, this is an illusion, a mirage. It is unfortunate, it will not work; with all the power you bring to bear, it will not work.

the arbiter. It never was before, even at the time when the Arab was not as awakened as today.

EIR: Iraq has played a crucial role in attempting to maintain the territorial integrity of Lebanon. And for this there have been many attacks and the blaming of Iraq for much of what has happened there.

al-Mashat: Those who claim this are making a false statement. We supported the legitimate government of Michel Aoun in Lebanon when it was appointed by Amin Gemayel, because it was appointed according to their Constitution. When one legitimate Arab government asked for help, we gave it to them. But then, when the tripartite Arab committee, which had been delegated by the Arab summit to solve the Lebanese question, asked us to stop helping them, we stopped; whereas the Syrians and Israelis have been destroying Lebanon for the last 15 years, and are still occupying their country.

EIR: It appears that Syria and Israel continue to do that.

al-Mashat: That's right.

But, to conclude, the problem is that we as Arabs do not feel that there is U.S. policy in the Middle East, but that there is an Israeli expansionist policy implemented by the U.S. with the American taxpayers' money. Through the Israeli lobby there is control of U.S. policy in the area to the detriment of the American taxpayer. It is high time for the Americans to wake up.

EIR: And the British role?

al-Mashat: This is the last breath of the British empire. They wanted to reestablish control by enhancing and supporting and pushing America to take this action. It is tripartite: Israeli, British, and American, together with the conspiracy of the al-Sabah family.