

Bush wanted war from the beginning

From a forthcoming white paper, Joseph Brewda provides a documentary history of how the U.S. sabotaged negotiations among the Arabs.

The following is excerpted from an upcoming special EIR white paper on the Bush administration's systematic sabotage of every attempt at a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis. Many Arab states, the Vatican, and some forces in Europe wanted peace; Britain, the U.S., and the Anglo-American-dominated U.N. Security Council wanted war. In this excerpt we cover the crucial developments from Aug. 2, the morning that Iraq invaded Kuwait, through the Arab summit in Cairo of Aug. 10.

Within hours of the early morning Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, the Iraqi leadership had realized that it had been set up by the Bush administration, according to well-informed Arab diplomatic sources. Both President George Bush and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, appearing together at a conference of the Aspen Institute in Colorado that day, denounced the invasion as "brutal aggression." Bush said that this "aggression" confirmed his view that threats "can arise suddenly, unpredictably, and from unexpected quarters," particularly in the Third World. To deal with this threat, Bush stated, required the creation of a new military "capability . . . which is ready to act without delay."

According to some U.S. accounts, George Bush had not yet been totally convinced to go to war with Iraq despite this rhetoric. Whatever reservations he may have had, however, were removed by his lengthy discussions with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on that day and the day after. Since that time, the Bush administration was effectively committed to go to war.

Later that day, the U.S. and British governments teamed up to force Resolution 660 through the U.N. Security Council which condemned the Iraqi invasion, demanded that Iraq withdraw unconditionally, and implicitly threatened military action. While not everything that was attempted immediately thereafter is on the public record, enough of a picture has emerged to prove, without a doubt, that the Arab effort to find a diplomatic solution could have easily succeeded on several occasions prior to the Aug. 10 Cairo conference. Iraq was, for example, ready to withdraw by Aug. 3—if it were offered certain necessary guarantees. These diplomatic at-

tempts failed because of sabotage by the U.S. and British governments.

What are the publicly known facts?

August 3

On Aug. 3, King Hussein of Jordan traveled to Baghdad at the request of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, among other Arab leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to find an Arab solution to the Kuwaiti crisis. The King's meeting with Saddam Hussein successfully led to an Iraqi decision to withdraw from Kuwait—which was announced by Baghdad radio. It also led to the agreement to hold an Arab mini-summit in Jeddah on Aug. 5 to settle the dispute.

Here is what King Hussein said about his meeting in Baghdad that day, in a statement to Jordanian television the same day. The broadcast began with the remarks: "His Majesty King Hussein has announced that a mini-Arab summit will convene in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia the day after tomorrow, Sunday, to find a final solution to the Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute."

The King then spoke: "I had the honor to contribute to the efforts. I contacted a number of my brothers. I visited Alexandria yesterday, and I met with President Mubarak. Today, I went to Baghdad and met with brother President Saddam Hussein. These efforts resulted in an agreement to hold a mini-summit. I hope that we will be able to tackle the issue within an Arab framework."

Asked by Jordanian television about the danger that the U.N. had not ruled out military intervention, King Hussein said, "I believe that any outside actions aimed at any part of the Arab world are not going to be very welcome. . . . I believe that it will be terribly wrong and the results could be devastating to the interests of all."

Even Mubarak, at that point, was deeply worried and opposed to an outside intervention. In a telephone call to President Bush that day, as reported by Beirut radio, Mubarak "asked the U.S. President to halt any military plan for direct intervention, stressing the need for the issue not to be internationalized."

Later on Aug. 3, a spokesman for the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council reported on Iraqi radio that troops would begin withdrawing from Kuwait on Aug. 5 "unless something appears which would threaten the security of Kuwait and Iraq."

Also on Aug. 3:

- An emergency meeting of the Arab League in Cairo, attended by foreign ministers from throughout the Arab world, voted 14-7 to condemn the Iraqi invasion and call for an immediate withdrawal. Yet, the same resolution, explicitly called "to categorically reject any foreign intervention or attempt to intervene in Arab affairs."

- King Fahd of Saudi Arabia met vice chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, Izzat Ibrahim, in the Saudi Arabian summer capital of Jeddah. According to Arab sources from several nations, Ibrahim told King Fahd the following: that Iraq honored the Iraqi-Saudi nonaggression pact; that Iraq hoped that the Saudis would not acquiesce to U.S. pressure to engage in hostilities with Iraq; that an Arab solution could be found to the Kuwaiti crisis.

- Following the Fahd-Ibrahim meeting, the Saudi kingdom announced that Saddam Hussein had agreed to meet with Mubarak, King Hussein, and King Fahd in Jeddah on Aug. 6.

The purpose of the meeting, the government radio of the United Arab Emirates reported, would be to find an Arab solution, "to study the new developments between Iraq and Kuwait calmly and in an honest and fraternal Arab spirit." The U.A.E. release noted the "dangers threatening Arab cohesion and solidarity."

The Saudi kingdom also announced that it would refuse a U.S. request of that day to cut the Iraqi oil pipeline that flows through Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea.

It seemed that a solution could be found.

How did the U.S. respond to these developments that day?

- The Pentagon announced at the noon briefing that 60,000 Iraqi troops had massed on the Kuwaiti-Saudi border. At the same time, U.S. satellite intelligence was sent to Riyadh substantiating this announcement. It was later shown that the report was a fraud, and there never was any danger of an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia.

- The Gulf Cooperation Council (whose members include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar) condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Much more importantly, the GCC condemned the earlier Arab League rejection of foreign intervention as invalid and not applicable to "collective international measures at the U.N.," as specified in Resolution 660.

- Senior Bush administration officials met with Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar, Arab sources report, to harshly condemn King Fahd's acceptance of an Arab solution, as implied by the proposed Jeddah meeting.

- Following the Bandar meeting, Bush dispatched a harsh

and threatening note to King Fahd expressing displeasure with the Saudi decision to negotiate with Baghdad. According to Egyptian sources, Bush asserted that now, at last, Saudi Arabia had international backing, and that if Saudi Arabia did not accept that backing it would be the worse for it.

- In Moscow, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and then-Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze issued a joint statement condemning the invasion, indicating that Moscow and Washington, and not just Washington and London, favored outside intervention.

August 4

In apparent response to this blackmail pressure, and immediately after receiving Bush's note, Fahd ordered Saudi troops to advance to the Kuwaiti border on Aug. 4. By Aug. 6, it was revealed that the Saudis had deployed their troops into the neutral zone where Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq meet. The troops were accompanied by U.S. military advisers. Also, on Aug. 3, word began circulating in Arab capitals that the Saudis were preparing to accept a massive deployment of U.S. ground troops on their territory.

One day later, on Aug. 4, the Saudis postponed—and subsequently canceled—the Jeddah summit, apparently under U.S. orders and on behalf of a plot to prevent a peaceful solution to the conflict.

In further international pressure against Iraq, the European Community imposed an immediate embargo on oil imports from Iraq and froze Iraqi assets in Europe.

Despite this sabotage, efforts for an Arab diplomatic solution continued on Aug. 4.

King Hussein publicly criticized the Arab condemnation of Iraq as premature. Meanwhile, the President of Yemen, Ali Abdallah Salih, met with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, and then embarked on a regional mediation tour.

Also on Aug. 4, Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in Cairo with a PLO-Libyan peace plan. After meetings with Egyptian officials, Arafat then flew to Baghdad and Riyadh.

The plan had the following major points: Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait; free elections in Kuwait; Iraqi retention of Kuwait's Bubiyan and Warba islands (thereby giving a virtually landlocked Iraq a port on the Persian Gulf); and economic support of the Iraqi economy.

Many Saudi and Kuwaiti officials, then—and even now—have publicly or privately described this plan as a perfectly acceptable compromise. For example, one leading Kuwaiti official close to the Emir who wished not to be identified, told *EIR* in October: "We don't want Kuwait to become cinders. We are ready to accept a compromise on territory and money. But what can we do? We know that there are already meetings between the CIA and State Department with the Kuwaiti opposition. If we do not go along with U.S. demands then the U.S. will put these people into power in some so-called democracy."

August 5

On Aug. 5, the Iraqi government announced on Iraqi radio and elsewhere that it had already begun to pull back some of its invasion forces in an initial stage of a phased withdrawal. It seemed that a negotiated settlement could still occur.

However, the U.S. intervened.

Defense Secretary Richard Cheney arrived in Riyadh that day in order to meet with Saudi officials and King Fahd in two days of talks. A main purpose of the meetings, Arab sources of several nationalities say, was to force the Saudi Kingdom to capitulate into accepting U.S. ground troops on its territory.

August 6

On Aug. 6, the *Washington Post* published remarks made by President Bush expressing "disappointment" with Arab reactions to the Iraqi invasion. "I want to see the Arab states join the rest of the world in condemning this outrage and doing what it can to get Saddam Hussein out," he said, adding, in a condemnation of King Hussein, "I am disappointed to find any comment by anyone that apologizes or appears to condone what's taking place." Ridiculing any attempt at an Arab solution, he concluded, "I was told by one [Arab] leader that I respect enormously . . . that they needed 48 hours to find what was called an Arab solution. That obviously has not happened."

On Aug. 6, the U.S. and Britain announced that they were considering organizing a naval blockade of Iraq—an act of war. The U.S. announced that it had dispatched three aircraft carrier groups to the Gulf. France announced it would join the blockade. The U.N. Security Council, under U.S. pressure, adopted Resolution 661, imposing an economic embargo on Iraq.

Meanwhile, in Riyadh, King Fahd on Aug. 6 agreed to allow the U.S. to dispatch ground troops and planes to its territory immediately following his two days of meetings with Cheney that began Aug. 5.

In Baghdad, Saddam Hussein met with U.S. chargé d'affaires Joseph Wilson for four hours. Reportedly, according to Baghdad radio, Saddam condemned the U.S. for fraudulently claiming that Iraq was threatening Saudi Arabia "to justify an aggression against Iraq." But the U.S. hardly wanted a deal, when it had just succeeded in arranging for the military occupation of the Gulf, a policy advocated by Henry Kissinger as far back as 1975.

August 7

On Aug. 7, Cheney arrived in Cairo where he met President Hosni Mubarak. According to a Radio Monte Carlo Arabic-language broadcast the following day, Egypt "categorically rejected" a U.S. demand to use Egyptian military facilities. Mubarak also reportedly "rejected any foreign intervention." Nonetheless, Mubarak did announce that Egypt

would be dispatching troops to Saudi soil. On Aug. 6, Mubarak had met with Arafat, who in turn had met with Saddam in Baghdad the day before. He later met Saddam's envoy, Revolutionary Command Council vice chairman Izzat Ibrahim on Aug. 7, who carried with him a personal communication from Saddam that asked the Egyptian President "to stop any attempt at foreign intervention," which would only "obstruct the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait," according to Radio Monte Carlo. Saddam Hussein denied there were any plans to invade Saudi Arabia.

In a televised address that day, President Bush declared that Saudi Arabia was being threatened by Iraq, and that the independence of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states was in the "vital interest" of the United States. Moreover, he continued, the disruption of Saudi oil supply deliveries would represent a threat to U.S. "economic independence."

This was the first of a series of contradictory justifications Bush evoked for the military deployment. The crisis, which the U.S. had created, was successfully "internationalized."

August 9

On Aug. 9, the U.N. passed Resolution 662, declaring Iraq's annexation of Kuwait "null and void."

That day, King Fahd delivered his first public speech since the invasion of Kuwait, deploring it as the "most vile aggression known to the Arab nation in its modern history."

Nonetheless, despite Saudi and Egyptian capitulation, an emergency Arab summit in Cairo which had been scheduled for Aug. 10 seemed to offer some way out of the impasse—a last chance for an Arab solution. Participants at the summit included not only Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, but also the Emir of Kuwait, and most leading Arab heads of state and their foreign ministers.

Well-informed Arab sources report that a deal satisfactory to all parties had been agreed to by all Arab parties prior to the summit. The plan seems to have been a variation of the one put forward earlier by the PLO. It had even been arranged that several Arab heads of state, apparently including Arafat, King Hussein, and Chadli Benjedid of Algeria, would travel to Baghdad following the summit, to present Saddam with a comprehensive settlement proposal that he had already been consulted on and was prepared to accept. Had this occurred, there would have been no excuse for the arrival of U.S. troops into the region.

To abort this peace plan, conference host Hosni Mubarak used the bureaucratic powers he had as the summit's host to block Arafat and others from presenting their agreed-upon plan for discussion and for a vote. Instead, Mubarak forced through his own resolution. This was the only resolution he allowed to be discussed or voted on.

Among the key features of the resolution was its endorsement of the U.S. and European imperial intervention into the region as stated under point 5, "to support the measures of

the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states taken in implementation of the right of legitimate defense in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of the joint defense and economic cooperation treaty among the Arab League states, Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, and the U.N. Security Council Resolution 661 of 6 August 1990."

Tensions high over U.S. pressure

On Aug. 12, Iraq's Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz stated that "the group that prepared the advance paper during the recent meeting in Cairo is known for its connections with the United States and used the Egyptian President to approve the paper."

The resolution, and various personal attacks on Saddam Hussein by Mubarak ensured the summit would not succeed.

The resolution passed by a majority of 12 votes, with Algeria and Yemen abstaining, and Libya, Iraq, and Palestine voting against. Jordan, Sudan, and Mauritania expressed reservations. Tunisia had boycotted the meeting. Article 6 of the Arab League charter expressly requires a unanimous vote on resolutions of the sort adopted. That requirement was also ignored.

Naturally, tensions at the summit were very high, particularly between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti representatives. At one point Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad, the Kuwaiti foreign minister, fainted during a meeting with Tariq Aziz, after Aziz accused him of being an "American agent." Shortly thereafter, the Emir of Kuwait stormed out of the meeting and returned to Riyadh. Iraqi representatives had been releasing documentation of his perverse sexual practices. The Emir had a practice of marrying a new girl on Thursday and, after a wild weekend, divorcing her on Tuesday. The Iraqis released dozens of the Emir's marriage certificates that they had found in Kuwait.

According to the Egyptian press, Sudanese President Gen. Omar al-Bashir denounced Saudi King Fahd during the closed session of the summit for "requesting foreign forces." For his part, Fahd asserted that the foreign forces would never be used in aggression against Iraq and would only be stationed in the kingdom to protect Saudi Arabia. "There is an agreement between us [the U.S. and Saudi Arabia] that no attack would be made from Saudi territories."

The breakup of the summit marked a dramatic shift in the crisis, making peace efforts far more difficult.

Arab commentary

Here is how several Arab spokesmen describe the U.S. sabotage of Arab peace efforts from Aug. 2-10.

● Jordanian Prime Minister Mudar Badran on Feb. 5 in an address to municipal officials in Amman, as quoted by the *Jordan Times*:

"I accompanied His Majesty King Hussein during his Baghdad visit on Aug. 3, one day following Iraqi troops' incursion into Kuwait, and the King's trip came in response

to a request by the Arab leaders including Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. We went to Baghdad with a dual purpose: to achieve the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and to discuss a solution for the problem. The Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council decided on Aug. 5 to withdraw from Kuwait and Iraq informed us of this decision. A few days later foreign troops began deploying on the Arabian peninsula and only then did we realize the conspiracy that had been hatched against the Arabs."

● Iraqi Ambassador to the U.S. Mohamed al-Mashat in a Sept. 12 interview with *EIR*:

"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 pre-conceived plan to occupy and control the area."

● Former Jordanian Foreign Minister Hazem Nusseibeh in an Oct. 28 interview with *EIR*:

"We are perfectly convinced, indeed we know that if the Arab mediation effort had been given a working chance, the Gulf crises would have been solved right from the beginning, in the early few days of the crisis. At the Arab summit conference held on 10 August, King Hussein, King al-Hassan of Morocco and Chadli Benjedid, along with other Arab heads of state were set to go to Baghdad, with the prior arrangement of President Saddam Hussein on withdrawal of Kuwait, to resolve the crisis to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, and, of the world community at large.

"Tragically, this effort was openly and deliberately sabotaged and aborted. A pre-arranged draft resolution, evidently at the prodding of the United States to give legitimacy to Anglo-American intervention, was hastily forced on the summit, and passed by a slight majority. The resolution strongly condemned Iraq and rendered a brotherly Arab solution impossible. Further mediation efforts by King Hussein and others became an exercise in futility."

● King Hussein spokesman Khalid Muhadeen on Sept. 27 in column in the Jordanian newspaper *Al-Ray*:

"Numerous facts that the future will reveal will show us the major role played by [Saudi Ambassador to the U.S.] Prince Bandar in pushing his country into a position unwanted by Arabs and Muslims. He wrote to the Saudi Foreign Ministry, even before U.S. Defense Secretary Cheney arrived in Saudi Arabia, asking for calling in U.S. troops, 'because I have been informed by the U.S. administration that its decision in this regard is final, whether or not Riyadh agrees to ask in U.S. troops. Therefore, I suggest that an invitation be extended so that it would not look like an occupation by force.' "