

# State Department Joins Britain and Kuwait in Plot To Oust Saddam Hussein

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

There is a very dangerous operation being put together, by Britain and Kuwait, which aims at overthrowing the government of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and replacing it with a puppet regime. The plan is all the more insidious, as it is being cloaked under the expressed desire of Kuwait, to reestablish healthy, friendly relations with two of its biggest Persian Gulf neighbors, Iran and Iraq, in order to allow Kuwait to link up transportation networks with them, and thus gain access to Central Asia. Such a project for regional infrastructure development and integration, bringing Iraq—and Kuwait—into the great Silk Road, which Iran has been championing, is a magnificent idea. Such a perspective of reintegrating Iraq economically and politically into the region, has been put forward by a group of women's organizations, and is supported by political figures, economists, academics, and organizations throughout the world. This is the Women's Commission for New Silk Road, launched in 1999, and presented and endorsed at the conference of the General Federation of Iraqi Women, in Baghdad, in November (see *EIR*, Nov. 26, 1999).

But what was discussed, at a seminar organized by the Kuwaiti Umma Council (parliament), at the Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait City in the second week of May, was something quite different. Here, the line was, that Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations could be reestablished *only* in the context of the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein government. The leitmotif of the conference, was that Kuwait and Iraq are "natural partners" and should, together with Iran, join to build up railway infrastructure, to connect Kuwait to Central Asia and Asia.

Attending the seminar were former U.S. State Department official Anthony Cordesman; Kenneth Katzman, a specialist from the U.S. Congress on the Gulf and Iran; editor-in-chief of the Saudi paper *Al Sharq al Awsat*, Abdul Ahman al Rashid; Ibrahim Karawan, formerly of London's Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), now at the University of Utah, specialist in Middle East and Gulf issues, and Islamic movements; Mustafa Ani, from the Institute for International Strategic Studies in London; Iraqi dissident Rassan al Atiyya, close to royal circles in London; Fred Halliday from Britain; the Kuwaiti Permanent Envoy to the UN, Dr. Mohammad

Abu al Hassan; a representative of the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR); the host, head of the Kuwaiti Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee, Mohammad al Sakr; Dr. Faiza Ali Amani, daughter of Ali Zakr Amani, former Saudi Oil Minister; and Dr. Walid Khaduri, of the Cyprus-based *Middle East Economic Survey*. Seven Iraqi opposition groups, of those financed under the U.S. Iraqi Liberation Act, participated, along with the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), based in London, the United States, and Iran. Sheikh Nasr Sabah al Ahmad, son of the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, chaired the event and presented concluding remarks.

The main points presented at the seminar, according to press reports, were: 1) Kuwait, Iran, and Iraq should be linked with railways, to Central Asia; 2) this can happen only after Saddam Hussein has been removed from power; and 3) Iran is a key country to achieve both previous points.

To push through this line, it was necessary to establish that the current government of Iraq is unacceptable. Thus, a representative from the U.S. State Department insisted the Iraqi regime could not be rehabilitated, and must be replaced. Anthony Cordesman was most vicious, in making unfounded allegations about Iraqi military power. He said Iraq had more tanks than ever (2,700), 450,000 troops, and claimed that the population would soon reach 31 million. He argued that the sanctions must be kept in place, and said the oil-for-food funds were being diverted to purchase weapons. Kenneth Katzman said that Saddam Hussein could not be rehabilitated or reformed, because the Iraqi leader wants to control the entire Gulf with weapons of mass destruction. He said that the UN Security Council should use military power to force Iraq to comply with the sanctions and other resolutions. Katzman reminded the audience that the United States had adopted a policy to replace Saddam Hussein, by passing the Iraqi Liberation Act and by promoting the British idea, to establish a tribunal on crimes against humanity, before which the Iraqi President would be brought. Katzman, however, acknowledged that such an enterprise would not be easy. He acknowledged that the Iraqi opposition is not capable of overthrowing the government, and recalled attempts in the past, to organize

an uprising, which failed, leading to arrests of members of the Republican Guard and Armed Forces.

The editor of *Al Sharq al Awsat*, agreed that the opposition could not be expected to succeed, with the exception of the SCIRI. His view was that the SCIRI would require cooperation from the military, to pull off a coup. That the SCIRI is indeed involved in disseminating chaos through terrorism inside Iraq, was demonstrated dramatically during the conference, when the news broke of a major rocket attack on buildings in Baghdad, said to be part of the Presidential palace. Indeed, a leading personality of the SCIRI, while in Kuwait at the conference, claimed the group's responsibility for the attack.

The Kuwaiti speakers were explicit in promoting a coup. The Foreign Minister ruled out any talks or reconciliation with Iraq, until the government were overthrown. The Kuwaiti hosts said that, if such a plan were to succeed, it would require the acquiescence of Iran, the most important country in the region. The Speaker of the Kuwaiti Parliament stressed that Iran is the key to the whole scheme. Sheikh Nasr Sabah al Ahmad, referring to the project to build railway connections from Kuwait to Iran and Iraq, and thence, to Central Asia, said that the Kuwaitis had discussed this with Iran, and stressed that the Chinese were enthusiastic about the general plan for Eurasian rail networks. The Chinese, he said, had offered their help in integrating the Persian Gulf region into the overall project. The Sheikh stressed the urgency of the project, while reiterating that it could not start until Saddam Hussein were ousted. In his concluding remarks the Sheikh went into raptures over the perspective for reestablishing friendly relations with a post-Saddam Iraq, "our wonderful neighbor Iraq," with its rich history and civilization, from Ur to Babylon, and so forth.

The outcome of the conference, was clear: a certain Anglo-American faction is preparing to go with the "Zinni Plan," named after Gen. Anthony Zinni, Commander of the U.S. Central Command, to encourage a coup d'état against Saddam Hussein, from within layers of the Iraqi military leadership. The SCIRI would be used to create confusion and chaos in the capital, by launching further rocket attacks or exploding bombs. This group would like to involve some faction from Iran in the operation, in hopes, then, of bringing Iran into a regional security arrangement, controlled from above by the Anglo-Americans.

### **Gulf Cooperation Council Meets in London**

That this is the name of the game, was revealed just days later, in London, when another seminar was convened. The May 18-19 conference, sponsored by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), featured defense ministers and chiefs of staff from the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The GCC includes the Persian Gulf countries, minus Iran and Iraq. The title of the conference was, "The Future of Persian

Gulf Security and British Policy."

British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon set the tone, in his opening speech, by saying that the "greatest threat" to security in the Gulf, was "the shadow of Saddam Hussein's Iraq." He heaped praise on Iran, which he characterized as "a major player in the Persian Gulf." Hoon expressed the desire for Arab states to encourage more friendly ties with Tehran, according to a dispatch by the Iranian press agency, IRNA. Hoon said that in Iran, he saw "a clear sign of change for the better," as the government of President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami is opening "a new chapter of relations with its neighbors and the West." He added that Britain is still "vigilant," regarding the possibility that Iran would develop weapons of mass destruction and sabotage the Middle East peace process, but Britain's main concern, was "security in the region." Hoon also confirmed that over one-half of Britain's arms sales go to the Arab countries of the Gulf, amounting to £20 billion over the past five years.

Although Iran did not participate in the conference, it was a central concern of especially the British and their piggybank, Kuwait. Chief of Defense Intelligence Vice Admiral Sir Alan West expressed the view that Britain was "extremely encouraged" by Iran's cooperation with various arms-control regimes. West was represented at the conference by John Andrews, who said that Iran was a "leading participant" in the Chemical Weapons Treaty, as well as "a party to and major influence" on the Biological Weapons Convention, and so forth. Andrews went on to say, that the British understanding was that Iran had a policy of "no-first-use of missiles to other countries of the region." He said that there was a "qualitative difference" between Iran and Iraq. As for the latter, he said that Saddam Hussein could acquire nuclear weapons. Andrews offered his view, that Iran was concerned about Iraq, and considered Israel a threat. He said that there had been only "limited" condemnation of chemical weapons used by Iraq against Iran in 1982, and that that had "little effect."

Neil Patrick, the head of the RUSI's Middle East program, dismissed Israel's nuclear arsenal as a "fact of life." Then: "What was needed in the Persian Gulf was an improved security atmosphere, he said, but suggested that with the U.S. becoming a 'permanent feature' in the region, that made it 'more difficult' for Iran to cooperate militarily with neighboring countries," according to IRNA's dispatch.

As for the Kuwaitis, they were openly courting Iran. Kuwaiti Defense Minister Sheikh Salim al-Sabah did not rule out that Iran could join the GCC, saying that the six Arab GCC members desired better relations. "We have got to get the Iranians with us," he stated at the conference. The GCC, he said, did "not want to provoke Iran to be anti-Arab," and emphasized that Kuwait considered Iran "an important country." He did not think it possible "at the moment" for Iran to join the GCC, however, as he did "not think Iran would come

on board.” Security in the region, al-Sabah said, could be handled without external forces “only in the long term.” The Arabs still require help from the West, he said.

### **A Deadly Threat**

The fact that two such conferences should occur, at such high levels of participation, shows that their plans must be taken as deadly serious.

Further indications, that this is a live operation, came in remarks made on May 19, to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, by George W. Bush’s adviser, Robert Zoellick. Zoellick, who had been Deputy Chief of Staff to Bush’s father, said that Iraq must be dismembered into more “enclaves,” like the Kurdish autonomous region, and urged the use of “air power in the south,” to start “taking away pieces of his territory,” and to “undermine [Saddam Hussein’s] position within his own country, also with the Russians and the French.”

At the same time, George W. Bush and Al Gore, speaking to a conference of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, in Washington, on May 23, reiterated the notion, that Saddam Hussein is the principal target. Bush justified his support for a ballistic-missile defense system, against alleged threats from so-called “rogue states,” by saying that Iraq is only 250 miles away from Israel, a U.S. strategic ally. Gore was even more belligerent, promoting a policy of “forward engagement.” The candidate, according to a report on his website, “discussed providing support to the Iraqi opposition that could lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein from power,” and said that he would meet with Iraqi opposition figures in June.

Iraq, still victimized by genocidal sanctions, is in a disastrous state, internally. Its economy is crippled, its population is being killed, and a once-vibrant, optimistic society has been turned into one of despair. Were the British and the Americans, cheered on by the Kuwaitis, to attempt to engineer a military coup against the current leadership of the country, with the active terrorist support of the SCIRI, a bloodbath and/or civil war could ensue. If Iran were in any way drawn into this mad adventure, it could spark renewed war between Iran and Iraq.

It is in the interests of all the nations and peoples of the region, and of world peace, that this evil, dangerous plan be exposed, and uprooted, before it can lead to disaster.

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## **Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon Will Not Decrease War Danger**

by Dean Andromidas

Despite the fact that Israel ended its 22-year occupation of its so-called security zone in southern Lebanon during the last week in May, the Middle East continues to be vectored toward war. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has characterized the withdrawal as fulfillment of one of his election campaign promises, to have Israeli troops back on Israeli soil and not engaged in a war of attrition in occupied foreign territory. While technically true, it rings hollow, given that Barak’s other election promise, to negotiate a peace settlement with Syria and come to the necessary final agreements with the Palestinians, appears on the verge of collapse.

Commenting on these developments, American statesman Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. characterized the situation as “extremely dangerous.” LaRouche pointed out that the situation began to deteriorate sharply after late March with the failure of the summit conference between President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad (see “Failure of Israel-Syria Talks May Mean War,” *EIR*, April 7). That failure was the result of Clinton’s sacrifice of a principled perspective for long-term peace and stability through economic development, especially through the introduction of large-scale nuclear power for desalination to provide abundant water to the Middle East.

The perception in the region, which is borne out by recent developments since the failed summit, is that Clinton has not only gone into the “lame duck” phase of his Presidency, but also has capitulated to electoral politics, exchanging his Middle East peace policy for peace with the right-wing “Zionist lobby” in the United States. Clinton is looked at as little more than a messenger for the U.S. State Department, which is perceived as more “pro-Israel” than many Israelis.

A political climate is now developing where all the players, including the Syrians, Israelis, and Palestinians, will not make any decisive moves toward peace, until after the U.S. elections. Some are already betting on the election of George W. Bush. This is the worst of all possible situations in a region that is so clearly influenced by outside forces.