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More pontification, more propaganda on Iraq: Notes on John Ware's BBC Iraq fiasco

Dissecting the disinformation on Western secret strategy in the new Middle East wars

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Weary of Ware's wares

Watching journalist John Ware's two-part BBC television documentary aired on Sunday and Monday evening this week, "No plan, no peace in Iraq", one came away with the impression that the entire invasion and occupation of Iraq was nothing more than one incredibly inept debacle after another. Stupidity, incompetence, and arrogance are about the only factors that explain the overwhelming reality of Anglo-American role in Iraq by Ware's depiction: total and utter mismanagement.

Enforced by the spate of testimonials from British military leaders, such as retired General Sir Mike Jackson, or Major General Tim Cross, this has now become the standard conventional critique of our role in Iraq. John Ware's ruminations and interviews fleshed out the contours of this critique, which has been so entrenched in mainstream discourse that it sorely requires a systematic counter-critique. Hence, John Ware's BBC programme on Iraq offers an ideal opportunity to do this.

Writing on the BBC News website, Ware explained that:

> "… it's now clear that Mr Blair knew before the invasion that America's planning for post-war recovery was woefully inadequate - and so was Britain's. … There was no properly worked-out strategy for the key longer term objective of transforming it into a stable, prosperous nation that the Blair-Bush vision held out."
> [John Ware, "No Peace, No Plan in Iraq", BBC News (27 October 2007)]

He goes on to blame "the rush to war" and "the blur of ideology" for the apparent lack of post-war planning. Ware takes it as given that "the Bush-Blair vision" for post-war Iraq was indeed to build a stable, prosperous democratic nation. Having accepted this as his starting assumption, all and any evidence that what happened in Iraq departed from this vision becomes obvious evidence, for Ware, of how incompetent and bumbling the Americans and British were in failing to plan properly for how to effect this noble vision. Although officials across the Atlantic are eager to blame the other side, he concludes that they're both at fault:

> "The truth is both governments got just about everything wrong in their assumptions as to what would follow the fall of Saddam. ... The evidence suggests that in the rush to war, planning for what came afterwards was not a first order priority in either Washington - or London."
> [Ware, "UK and US Play Iraq 'Blame Game'" BBC News (29 October 2007)]

Ineptitude, lack of foresight and mismanagement no doubt played a role. Ware would have us believe they played the only role. Seemingly critical of Anglo-American policymaking, it's important to note that Ware's BBC investigation rarely attempts to actually subject any of the individuals he interviews to meaningful scrutiny. The entire programme assumes that Anglo-American objectives in Iraq were, and are, fundamentally to create a stable, democratic country; that officials were genuine and sincere in their intentions, but were so pre-occupied by rushing to war and some unspecified "ideology", that they simply "recklessly" failed to plan properly. This failure then, while worthy of harsh criticism, was still a matter of sheer stupidity on the part of our governments.

The outcome of Ware's analysis is, in many ways, one of moral relief. We're able to feel satisfied that whatever horrendous disasters and loss of life have occurred in Iraq, it was all the result of unfortunate miscalculations and lack of foresight; nothing to do with our politico-economic institutions, nothing to do with actual government planning, but rather simply to do with *lack* of such planning.

The implication is obvious. The Americans and British, bearing the heavy white man's burden of responsibility for Iraq – having now occupied the beleaguered nation for the last 4 years – have a moral responsibility to rectify the unfortunate consequences, all totally regretful, of our governmental recklessness. Although Ware doesn't spell it out, there is a solution logically implicit in his narrative: to have not *less* Anglo-American interventionism, by for instance withdrawing troops, but rather to have *more* and better full-on planning and involvement to ensure that Iraq returns to the course of stability, prosperity and democratization -- as undoubtedly originally intended.

In the ensuing discussion, we will discuss how badly John Ware's BBC television project serves the public interest, by completely ignoring documented facts, all in the public record for the last few years. The result is a programme that is partial, inaccurate, and untruthful; rather like much of the official justifications for intervention and occupation. In preparing this response to Ware, and the trend of thinking he represents, I draw liberally from my book on the Iraq War, *Behind the War on Terror: Western Secret Strategy and the Struggle for Iraq* (Clairview, 2003), which critiques the record of Anglo-American intervention in the Middle East since the collapse of the Ottoman empire all the way up to the 2003 Iraq War.

The Bush-Blair Vision for Iraq and the Middle East

If we are to believe John Ware, the Anglo-American vision for Iraq was to develop a stable, prosperous and democratic nation. But it has long been clear that this was never the real agenda in Iraq. Ware avoids all mention of the abundance of evidence that shows, to the contrary, that the Bush-Blair vision for Iraq was part of a wider grand strategy of American expansionism in the Middle East, motivated by extremely dubious interests.

This was not a plan about Iraq. The Iraq War plan was only one stage in a wider strategy to re-configure and thereby dominate the entire Middle East. According to former CIA political analyst Kathleen Christison and former Director of the CIA's Office of Regional and Political Analysis Bill Christison:

> "… [T]wo strains of Jewish and Christian fundamentalism have dovetailed into an agenda for a vast imperial project to restructure the Middle East, all further reinforced by the happy coincidence of great oil resources up for grabs and a president and vice president heavily invested in oil. All of these factors - the dual loyalties of an extensive network of policymakers allied with Israel, the influence of a fanatical wing of Christian fundamentalists, and oil - probably factor in more or less equally to the administration's calculations on the Palestinian-Israeli situation and on war with Iraq." [Kathleen and Bill Christison, "The Bush Administration's Dual Loyalties: A Rose By Any Other Name," *Counterpunch* (13 December 2003)]

Ware seems utterly oblivious to all this, and indeed to the fact that numerous American military intelligence experts have confirmed the role of the Iraq War as part of a wider regional strategy.

According to Vincent Cannistraro, former chief of counter-terrorism operations of the CIA: "Clearly Iraq is not the last phase of what the administration tends to do in the Middle East."

Former State Department and CIA counter-terrorism expert Larry Johnson similarly agreed that: "The administration may be working on the theory that by taking care of a secondary target like Syria, you bring tremendous pressure on primary targets" such as Iran, which may force changes in behaviour "without resorting to force." Johnson continues that "By rights [Iran] should be the next target."

Former CIA official Robert Baer, who worked in the CIA's Directorate of Operations for over two decades spending most of his career in the Middle East, further observed that the Bush administration wants "to divide up Syria, give part of Iraq to Turkey, overthrow the monarchy in Saudi Arabia, restore the Hashemites to the Hijaz," a very

centre of Saudi Arabian culture. "The underlying motivation" for this "is Israel. They think the demographics are going badly for Israel, for the US." [Richard Sale and Nicholas M. Morris, "War talk sweeps city," United Press International, 11 February 2003; reprinted in *Washington Times*, 12 February 2003, http://www.washtimes.com/upi-breaking/20030211-065953-3776r.htm/]

Democracy? Security? Naah, it's Oil and Power, Stupid!

That democracy was far removed from the intentions of the war-planners is indisputable. John Ware echoes the government's own justifications for the war in the form of Saddam himself. He points out that Tony Blair displayed a consistently unhealthy interest in trying to prove that Saddam was "uniquely evil". The thrust of this, in hindsight, was clearly that Saddam was supposed to be a "uniquely evil" threat to both his own Iraqi people, as well as to the security of the international community. Thus, sincere concern for democracy and human rights meant that the Americans and British had to act against Saddam.

As Ware ought to know, this absurd story was refuted as long ago as one year before 9/11, four years before the Iraq invasion, by the notorious neo-conservative think-tank, Project for the New American Century (PNAC), whose sponsors were ranking members of the Bush administration at that time, including Vice-President Dick Cheney; I. Lewis Libby, the Vice-President's Chief of Staff; Elliott Abrams, Middle East director at the National Security Council; Zalmay Khalilzad, White House liaison to Iraqi opposition groups; Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Defense Secretary; John Bolton, Ambassador to the UN; and so on. In September 2000, PNAC published a document, *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, which dismissed the relevance of Saddam's tyrannical security threats to the need for military involvement in Iraq:

> "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein."

[“Rebuliding America’s Defences”, Project for the New American Century, September 2000]

So Saddam’s anti-democratic regime provided an immediate justification for a military intervention in Iraq that was motivated by other more transcendental issues. Issues like control of one of the world’s largest oil reserves. In 2001, a report on “energy security” - commissioned by Vice-President Dick Cheney and sponsored by two leading government-influenced U.S. think-tanks, the Council on Foreign Relations and the James Baker Institute for Public Policy, concluded ominously that: “The world, is currently precariously close to utilizing all of its available global oil production capacity.” The impending crisis is increasing “US and global vulnerability to disruption” and now leaves the US facing “unprecedented energy price volatility,” One of the key “consequences” of the fact that “the United States remains a prisoner of its energy dilemma” is the “need for military intervention.” The report thus recommends that energy and security policy be integrated to prevent “manipulations of markets by any state.”

The principal source of disruption to the existing energy system, the report concludes, lies in “Middle East tension”, due to which “chances are greater than at any point in the last two decades of an oil supply disruption.” The threat posed by Iraq is highlighted. In 2000, Iraq had “effectively become a swing producer, turning its taps on and off when it has felt such action was in its strategic interest to do so.” There is a “possibility that Saddam Hussein may remove Iraqi oil from the market for an extended period of time” in order to damage prices.

> “Iraq remains a destabilising influence to... the flow of oil to international markets from the Middle East. Saddam Hussein has also demonstrated a willingness to threaten to use the oil weapon and to use his own export programme to manipulate oil markets.
>
> “This would display his personal power, enhance his image as a pan-Arab leader... and pressure others for a lifting of economic sanctions against his regime. The United States should conduct an immediate policy review toward

Iraq including military, energy, economic and political/diplomatic assessments."

"The United States should then develop an integrated strategy with key allies in Europe and Asia, and with key countries in the Middle East, to restate goals with respect to Iraqi policy and to restore a cohesive coalition of key allies."

[Neil Mackay, "Official: U.S. oil at the heart of Iraq crisis," *Sunday Herald*, 6 October 2002, http://www.sundayherald.com/print28285; Neil Mackay, "The West's battle for oil," *Sunday Herald*, http://www.sundayherald.com/28224. For full text see Report of an Independent Task Force, *Strategic Energy Policy Challenges For The 21st Century*, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy / Council on Foreign Relations, April 2001, available online at the Baker Institute website, http://www.rice.edu/projects/baker/Pubs/workingpapers/cfrbipp_energy/energytf.htm]

In all of this general evidence of strategic planning behind the 2003 Iraq War, we find that there is no evidence whatsoever of concern for stability, prosperity and democracy in Iraq. What we do find is abundant evidence for an overarching concern with geostrategic ambitions rooted in a questionable neo-conservative ideology tied to the goals of sustaining US pre-eminence through both control of oil and manipulation of Israel.

It never occurs to Ware that stability, prosperity and democracy in Iraq were never factored into post-war planning in Iraq because *the post-war planning was never intended to secure stability, prosperity or democracy*. Contrary to Ware's argument, backed up only by a list of illustrious looking talking heads, post-war planning in Iraq *did* exist, and it was concerned *fundamentally with these other regional strategic, political and economic objectives*; those objectives *obliterated* all other concerns, and this is *precisely why* Anglo-American leaders remained *studiously uninterested* in post-war planning for stability, prosperity and democracy.

Er, Lots of Plans, None Involving Peace, in Iraq

Let's now examine Ware's overriding theme: There were no serious plans whatsoever for what would happen after the war.

All the evidence, he suggests, shows that the Americans wanted to conduct a quick operation permitting the immediate removal of US forces after the successful removal of Saddam. He reports that Donald Rumsfeld, "The hawkish defence secretary had required his generals to give America a 'lite' footprint - a small invasion force that could be rapidly withdrawn afterwards." He also interviews Sir Christopher Meyer, then British Ambassador to Washington, who tells Ware that he warned Prime Minister Tony Blair that "there was a black hole in American planning for the aftermath."

Ware even gets some American talking heads to confirm that any planning that was being done, was in fact not actual planning at all. Longstanding State Department planning, for instance, was "never intended as a post-war plan", insisted Ryan Crocker, US Ambassador to Iraq. Based on Crocker's opinion, Ware concludes that whatever the State Department planning was, it only amounted to "a series of expert study groups whose purpose was to engage Iraqi Americans in thinking about their country's future." This explains the failure to get off the ground serious reconstruction efforts to help the Iraqi people.

Hmmm. Not quite. Extensive evidence in the public record, evidence that Ware failed to acknowledge let alone address, shows that the Bush administration was indeed working on a very specific post-war plan for Iraq. Such as the State Department's detailed "reconstruction" plan, designed to rob the country of its resources.

American investigative journalist Greg Palast, who has reported for BBC Newsnight, the *Observer* and the *Guardian*, obtained a State Department document, "Moving the Iraqi Economy from Recovery to Growth," in February 2003. In 101-pages, the document detailed the Bush administration's plans for a complete rewrite of Iraq's "policies, laws and regulations", based on low taxes on big business, and quick sales of Iraq's banks and bridges, "all state enterprises" to foreign investors. Among other

things, the document stipulates that Iraq would have to "privatize" its "oil and supporting industries." Annex D of the document set out, Palast reports, "a strict 360-day schedule for the free-market makeover of Iraq." Under the tutelage of Paul Bremer, the Coalition Provisional Authority imposed in the aftermath of the invasion issued "exactly 100 orders that remade Iraq in the image of the Economy Plan." Palast lists several major examples, but one is worth citing here by way of illustration:

> "Order 12, 'Trade Liberalization', permitted the tax- and tariff-free import of foreign products. One big winner was Cargill, the world's largest grain merchant, which flooded Iraq with hundreds of thousands of tons of wheat. For Iraqi farmers, already wounded by sanctions and war, this was devastating. They could not compete with the US and Australian surpluses dumped on them. But 'the import plan' carried out the letter of the Economy Plan."

It is no surprise then that Palast quotes a disgruntled US government insider who worked on the State Department plan, noting that it conflicted fundamentally with real Iraqi democracy:

> "They have [Deputy Defense Secretary Paul] Wolfowitz coming out saying it's going to be a democratic country' but we're going to do something that 99 percent of the people of Iraq wouldn't vote for."
> [Greg Palast, "Adventure Capitalsism: the hidden 2001 plan to carve-up Iraq", 27 October 2004, http://www.gregpalast.com/adventure-capitalism-the-hidden-2001-plan-to-carve-up-iraq/]

From the very beginning, reports from high-level sources indicated that the Americans and British were not very interested in facilitating Iraqi democratization. They originally wanted a "regime change" that focused on the removal of Saddam himself and his top associates, without a fundamental restructuring of the regime itself. This had been the strategy as early as the 1991 Gulf War, during which Richard Haas, then Senior Director of Near East Affairs at the US National Security Council, confirmed that: "Our policy is to get rid of Saddam, not his regime." Haas, of course later became Director of Policy Planning in the State Department under the administration of

President George W Bush. [Andrew and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein*, HarperCollins, 1999, p. 37]

Daniel Neep - head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies in London – reported in late 2002 on the post-war thinking going in Anglo-American policymaking circles:

> "The ideal scenario is someone within Iraq, preferably within the army, killing Saddam and taking control. That would mean that entering Baghdad would not be necessary and would also solve the problem of who will govern once he has gone." [*Observer*, 17 November 2002, p. 20]

As the *New York Times* elaborated in late February 2003, "outraged Iraqi exiles report that there won't be any equivalent of post-war de-Nazification, in which accomplices of the defeated regime were purged from public life…

> "Instead the Bush administration intends to preserve most of the current regime: Saddam Hussein and a few top officials will be replaced with Americans, but the rest will stay. You don't have to be an Iraq expert to realize that many very nasty people will therefore remain in power"
> [Paul Krugman, "The Martial Plan," *New York Times*, 21 February 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/21/opinion/21KRUG.html?ex=1046832072&ei=1&en=b9794179c1952ba0]

British academic Patrick Cockburn, Visiting Fellow at Washington DC's Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), further commented that:

> "Kurdish leaders who recently met American officials... are enraged by an American plan to occupy Iraq but largely retain the government in Baghdad. The only changes would be the replacement of President Saddam and his lieutenants with senior US military officers. It undercuts the argument by George Bush and Tony Blair that war is justified by the evil nature of the regime in Baghdad…" [Patrick Cockburn, "Kurdish leaders enraged by 'undemocratic' American plan to occupy Iraq," *The Independent*, 17 February

2003, http://news.independent.co.uk/low_res/story.jsp?story=379060&host=3&dir=508]

Furthermore, superimposed over the entrenched Ba'athist military-political regime structure, the US had already been drawing up extensive plans to establish a colonial-style administration of direct control. The *Independent* in February 2003 described documents summarising the conclusions of 17 State Department working groups – the same groups that John Ware accepts were "never intended as a post-war plan" and only designed to help "Iraqi Americans" do some "thinking" about their country of origin.

That's not how it was reported at the time, but Ware displays little interest in the boring details of recent history. "Britain and America have been working for months on detailed proposals on how to rebuild Iraq after President Saddam", reported *The Independent*. "In the initial aftermath of any war, Iraq would be governed by a senior US military officer, probably General Tommy Franks, with a civilian administrator." General Franks would be expected to "initially impose martial law," while Iraqis would be relegated to the sidelines as "advisers" to the US administration. [Andrew Buncombe, "US sees 'someone like Jimmy Carter' to oversee administration after overthrow of Saddam," *The Independent*, 13 February 2003]

And what of Ware's reiteration of belated official claims that Dick Cheney only wanted a "small invasion force" that would be "rapidly withdrawn" after Saddam's removal?

Again, this is just plain false. The *Washington Post* also reported on the post-war planning performed by the State Department, noting that the "blueprints for Iraq's future… outline a broad and protracted American role in managing the reconstruction of the country." Particularly, US forces are expected to control Iraq's oil reserves, something that Ware obviously sees as bearing little relevance to understanding the occupation.

> "The [Bush] administration's plans, which are nearing completion, envision installing a civilian administration within months of a change of government, US officials said. But the officials said that even under the best of circumstances, US forces likely would remain at full strength in Iraq for months after a war ended, with a continued role for thousands of US troops there for years to come... Among key roles for US forces would be the preservation of Iraq's borders against any sudden claims by neighbours and the defence of the country's oil fields." [*Washington Post*, 17 January 2003]

Indeed, White House plans outlined in late February 2003 revealed that the US intended to take "complete control of post-Saddam Iraq 'for an indefinite period.'" [Ian Bruce, "General Franks 'to run Iraq after war,'" *The Herald*, 24 February 2002] So why does Ware, four years later, take seriously Bush administration officials claiming that the original idea all along was to deploy a small invasion force with a view to pull out almost immediately?

The Carve-Up Strategy

One doesn't need to be a historian of empire to know that divide-and-rule is a rather standard strategy of imperial domination. It was deployed by the British, for example, to great effect in key colonies in North America and India against natives who, once divided along artificially exacerbated ethnic, religious and tribal classifications, were far easier to play off against one another, and thus control to the benefit of the colonial regime.

From the very beginning, American planners envisaged that in the long-term, Iraq would be divided up to facilitate the Anglo-American military occupation. Fragments of a plan to fracture Iraq along ethnic and religious lines to facilitate control of the oil reserves and allow population control emerged in September 2002.

Richard Perle, who then chaired the prominent Pentagon advisory group, the Defense Policy Board, issued a briefing for Pentagon officials that month. Ha'aretz reported from a "top official in the Israeli security services" that Perle "showed two slides to the Pentagon officials. The first was a depiction of the three goals in the war on terror

and the democratisation of the Middle East: Iraq – a tactical goal, Saudi Arabia – a strategic goal, and Egypt - the great prize. The triangle in the next slide was no less interesting: Palestine is Israel, Jordan is Palestine, and Iraq is the Hashemite Kingdom." [Akiva Eldar, Perles of wisdom for the Feithful, *Ha'aretz*,1 October 2002, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=214635]

This outrageous idea advocates a fundamental reconfiguration of power across the Middle East, with a number of highly dubious parameters, including a greatly expanded Israel fully encompassing the Occupied Territories; the expulsion of the Palestinians to Jordan; and the incorporation of the Sunni areas of Iraq with Jordan to form a wider pro-US Sunni Arab Hashemite Kingdom. How influential was this plan? Extremely.

According to the private American intelligence firm, Stratfor, the United States was "working on a plan to merge Iraq and Jordan into a unitary kingdom to be ruled by the Hashemite dynasty headed by King Abdullah of Jordan." The plan was "authored by US Vice President Dick Cheney" as well as "Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz", and was first discussed at "an unusual meeting between Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan and pro-US Iraqi Sunni opposition members in London in July" that year. Now under this plan, Stratfor reported, Iraq would be de facto ethnically partitioned into three autonomous cantons: The central and largest part of Iraq that is populated by the Sunni Arabs would be joined with Jordan, and would include Baghdad, which would no longer be the capital. The Kurdish region of northern and north-western Iraq, including Mosul and the vast Kirkuk oilfields, would become its own autonomous state. The Shia Region in south-western Iraq, including Basra, would make up the third state, or more likely it would be joined with Kuwait. Why did Cheney and Wolfowitz, the architects of this post-war plan for Iraq in the Bush Cabinet, think this sort of partition would be a good idea? And did their plans have anything to do with facilitating Iraq's emergence as a democratic sovereign state? Not according to Stratfor, who outlined the advantages for the US as follows:

> "First, the creation of a new pro-US kingdom under the half-British Abdullah [king of Jordan] would shift the balance of forces in the region heavily in the US favor. After eliminating Iraq as a sovereign state, there would be no fear

> that one day an anti-American government would come to power in Baghdad, as the capital would be in Amman [Jordan]. Current and potential US geopolitical foes Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria would be isolated from each other, with big chunks of land between them under control of the pro-US forces."
>
> "Equally important, Washington would be able to justify its long-term and heavy military presence in the region as necessary for the defense of a young new state asking for US protection -- and to secure the stability of oil markets and supplies. That in turn would help the United States gain direct control of Iraqi oil and replace Saudi oil in case of conflict with Riyadh."
> [Stratfor, *Uniting Jordan and Iraq Might Be Prime Post-War Strategy*, 26 September 2002; Stratfor Press Release, "US plan to merge Iraq, Jordan after war", 26 September 2002, http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/KHA209A.html; Gary D. Hallbert, "US Considers Dividing Iraq into Three Separate States after Saddam is Gone", *Forecasts & Trends*, 1 October 2002, http://www.profutures.com/article.php/91/%20.]

Yet none of this seems remotely interesting to John Ware who remains adamant, based on the reassurances from either ill-informed or unscrupulous American and British officials, that the allies were well and truly plan-less.

It is not a coincidence, of course, that a few years later a large number of American politicians security experts began popping out of the woodwork, seemingly at random, all advocating that the best way forward for Iraq was to undergo partition. When this happened, the public was led to believe that the partition proposal was a radically new idea that could solve Iraq's entrenched problems. But we know that the partition lobby didn't come out of the blue at all. It was inspired directly by the original architects of the 2002 post-war plan, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Perle.

There is no conceivable way that such tripartite partitioning of an entire country could be achieved peacefully. Violence, conflict, civil war, along sectarian lines, would be

inevitable if this was to be achieved. The task of "eliminating Iraq as a sovereign state" by fracturing the country along ethnic and religious lines, in other words, was *precisely* the post-war strategy being explored by Dick Cheney as the most effective means of securing American control over the country, and the wider region. It is not simply some sort of accident of Anglo-American stupidity.

Fostering Internal Conflict in Iraq

It is no surprise then to find that at the core of the escalating sectarian violence in Iraq one consistently finds the involvement of the United States. Although systematically ignored by the vast majority of mainstream media, that US strategy has deliberately attempted to foster internal conflict between various Iraqi factions as a tool to consolidate the occupation has been officially acknowledged. In the November 2005 edition of the *US Joint Special Operations University Report*, Thomas H. Henriken, a senior fellow at the university and a former member of the US Army Science Board, reported that:

> "*The post-invasion stage in Iraq also is an interesting case study of fanning discontent among enemies, leading to 'red-against-red' firefights* (this color-coding derives from US training exercises, in which red designates enemy combatants and blue designates friendly forces). Like their SOG predecessors in Vietnam, *US elite forces in Iraq turned to fostering infighting among their Iraqi adversaries on the tactical and operational level*…
>
> Events during fall 2004 within the central Iraqi city of Fallujah showcased the wily machinations required to set insurgents battling insurgents. ... But Fallujah was hardly a unified camp—the city seethed with internecine tensions. Zarqawi's strict Salafi beliefs clashed with the more moderate Sufi views of the Sunni residents. Additionally, the Zarqawi jihadis and nationalistic Fallujans disagreed over the use of terror tactics. Both wanted the Americans out of Fallujah and out of Iraq, but they differed on the methods.... Evidence of factional fighting between the residents came to light with nightly gun battles not involving coalition forces. *US psychological warfare (PSYOP) specialists took advantage of the internal warring by tapping into Fallujans'*

revulsion and antagonism to the Zarqawi jihadis. The PSYOP warriors crafted programs to exploit Zarqawi's murderous activities—and to disseminate them through meetings, radio and television broadcasts, handouts, newspaper stories, political cartoons, and posters—thereby diminishing his folk-hero image. Battles among anti-coalition forces killed enemy combatants and heightened factionalism. Thus, red-on-red battles enhanced the regular blue-on-red engagements by eliminating many insurgents." [Thomas H. Henriken, "The War: Divide et Impera", *Hoover Digest*, 2006, No. 1, http://www.hoover.org/publications/digest/2904886.html.]

I've documented some of the evidence confirming a US strategy of tension in Iraq two years ago for *Raw Story* here:
[http://rawstory.com/news/2005/CAUGHT_RED__0923.html],
and that evidence is still relevant now; I also updated it somewhat here:
[http://nafeez.blogspot.com/2006/08/four-frontal-war-covert-operations.html]
and in the latter half of a piece put up earlier this year by *Dissident Voice*:
[http://www.dissidentvoice.org/2007/07/whose-bombs/].

Conclusion

The BBC programme portrays itself as a work of solid, investigative journalism, one that takes a thoroughly critical perspective of our governments' involvement in Iraq. The truth of the matter, however, is that John Ware's narrative is mired in a set of unquestioned assumptions that systematically misrepresents the reality of the Iraq War 2003 by taking at face value the claims of various British and American officials.

Throughout his investigation, Ware consistently refrains from doing any serious research into his subject. He ignores overwhelming evidence that the grave humanitarian, military and political crisis in Iraq is not simply a regrettable consequence of insufficient planning by well-meaning but hasty politicians; it was a direct consequence of a set of plans prepared before and during the war designed

fundamentally to secure Anglo-American strategic and economic interests at the expense of the Iraqi people.

These criticisms of John Ware and the BBC by no means stop there. They are prominent facets of an edifice of disinformation endorsed by a mainstream media that uncritically swallows official government claims all too routinely, as part of its normal functioning.

Throughout, one finds in Anglo-American plans for Iraq no evidence whatsoever that the impact on the Iraqi people was ever factored into the strategic and economic equation. Thus, the catastrophe that currently wracks Iraq was not simply a result of the paucity of planning due to lack of foresight; it is the result of a deliberate set of plans to consolidate Anglo-American political, economic and strategic interests in the region, plans which advocated social, political and economic policies that systematically marginalized and slaughtered Iraqis in the hundreds of thousands. Yes, in this context, there was indeed a paucity of planning to make Iraq a stable, prosperous and democratic, sovereign state. But that paucity didn't issue forth from some inexplicably bumbling incompetence. It came from carefully thought-out, properly-mapped, conscious decisions that were fully cognizant of the ramifications of the policies being proposed, but derived from a wilful and reckless indifference to the lives and rights of the Iraqi people.

We are dealing here with war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of international law -- issues that Ware didn't see fit to mention. This is the line of inquiry that the BBC should have explored in uncovering the reasons for "no peace" in Iraq. Instead, the BBC ended up spouting what amounted to propaganda, by taking for granted the ill-informed nonsense and carefully contrived claims of Ware's chosen talking heads, in effect concealing from public understanding the ongoing course of the Anglo-American strategy of tension in the Middle East.
[Seymour Hersh, "The Redirection", *New Yorker*, 5 March 2007, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/03/05/070305fa_fact_hersh]

And that is exactly where the anti-war movement needs to focus its efforts in educating the public if we want to turn the tide of "national security" hysteria, on the

back of which Western states are rushing through increasingly repressive policies of domestic and international militarization.

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