

Press Release

From: Porter for Congress

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ENGLISH FLIP-FLOPS ON IRAQ

Now that he is drawing heat from Move-on, our Congressman, Republican incumbent Phil English, representing the beleaguered 3rd district of Pennsylvania, has seen fit to try to con us about his Iraq flip-flops.

English's position on the war has as many twists and turns as a corkscrew. When Bush was riding high in the polls, nothing was wrong with Iraq, and English supported it--lies and all--from day one.

Then, as Bush's position began to crumble, in order to avoid the political fall-out, English began to distance himself from the President by equivocating about the war before the 2006 elections and by siding against the "surge" of troops afterward.

Now, no doubt under orders from the Republican leadership, he refuses to support the bill which might lead to bringing our troops home.

The flip-flops are, of course, purely political. It is doubtful that Mr. English has any reasoned position on the foreign policy he is directed to support, and if he has, he has never articulated it. He is just another Washington politician scrambling to make himself look good and to keep in favor with his party leadership.

By comparison, I opposed the invasion of Iraq from the get-go and did so because my study of history compelled me to reject Bush's arguments for the war. It was clear there were no weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq posed no threat to the U.S., that Saddam--evil as he was--had no link to the 9/11 terrorists or to Al-Qaeda, and that the tribal conflicts between Shiite, Sunni, and Kurd were centuries in the making. It was also clear to me that the invasion was far more about oil and money for the likes of Halliburton than the cause of democracy. I have never wavered from these conclusions.

Moreover, I believe that the only viable solution to the mess Mr. Phil and his brainless President have created is to seek a divided Iraq with Kurdish, Shiite, and Sunni autonomous regions and with each sharing equally in the oil revenues which have evidently been "divvied up" by the likes of Exxon, Shell, BP, and

Chevron through the production-sharing agreements in the new Iraqi constitution (see article entitled THE ELEPHANT attached).

It is time to send English and his like-minded Congress men and women packing. It is also time for the press to stop lauding him for his flip-flops and to get on board with a program which will end this horrible war.

(See HR 1591, Roll call 186, March 23, 2007 for English's vote).

Scroll to the next page to read the article "The Elephant In The Room of Iraq".

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM OF IRAQ

When a nation goes to war, it is usual for its government to inform the citizenry of the reasons. For a democracy, it is even more necessary. For America, it is incumbent.

We now know that the two reasons given us by Bush in the case of Iraq were bogus: a threat from WMDs and a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda. More than that, we know that the Bush administration *knew* they were bogus. Before we invaded Iraq, UN chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, told the UN Security Council that Saddam's cooperation was "active or even proactive." Mohammed El Baradei, head of the IAEA, reported there was no evidence of a nuclear program in Iraq, and both the UN and US intelligence reports stated that there was no link between Saddam and Bin Laden. (See "WMD in Iraq," Carnegie Foundation Report, January 2004.)

If not WMDs or Al Qaeda, then it is reasonable to think that America might have gone to war for oil. While members of the Bush administration have consistently denied this explanation (Rumsfeld called it "utter nonsense"), there is so much mounting evidence to suggest it, that it is now more than necessary to put the case forward and call for an investigation.

One can start by noting that with 112 billion barrels of oil, Iraq has the second largest reserves in the world. Moreover, Iraqi oil is far easier to tap than, say, North Sea oil, which makes it enormously profitable. Of the 71 known Iraqi oil fields, only 24 have been developed. There is untold wealth to be had in Iraq: untold wealth and untold power.

Bush's designs on Iraqi oil long before the US invaded have been reported in many sources. Below are just a few.

1. According to both the Washington Post and The Nation, in August of 2002, Bush administration member Richard Perle attended a policy briefing in which Iraq was presented as "the tactical pivot," Saudi Arabia as "the strategic pivot," and Egypt as "the prize" in a war which would be purported to rid the world of Saddam. (See www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1665.htm.) [Perle, Wolfowitz, Cheney, and many more Bush administration members are founders of the Project for the New American Century, a think tank whose stated objectives include global American domination. Moreover, the Bush family is part of The Carlyle Group which has investment ties to the Bin Laden family. Finally, Bush and Cheney are both "oil men" whose private corporations, including Halliburton, are heavily connected to Middle Eastern oil.]

2. Joshua Holland of AlterNet posted an article on October 16, 2006 in which he stated that in 2002 then Deputy-Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz suggested the outright seizure of Iraq's oil fields, an idea dismissed by Colin Powell as "lunacy."

3. Mark Levine of Judicial Watch wrote in The Nation that in February of 2001, just a few weeks after taking office, Cheney called the now infamous "Energy Task Force Conference" which was attended by executives of the "big four" oil companies (Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, BP, and Shell). The center of discussion, according to Levine, was Iraqi oil and the fact that foreign companies—*not* the "big four"—were negotiating with Iraq for the rights to Iraqi oil. Levine concludes, "It's not hard to surmise how the participants at these meetings felt about this situation."

4. Similar episodes have been reported by former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, former security analyst Richard Clark, and Pulitzer Prize reporter Bob Woodward in their respective books.

The desire for Iraqi oil profits can be viewed as but one aspect of the reason for the US invasion. There are two more: the desire to keep Iraqi oil out of the hands of both Russia and China, and the fulfilling of the PNAC agenda by controlling the world's energy resources. [In this last regard, it can also be argued that America's tragic delay in developing clean, alternative, US-produced energy (wind, solar, tidal, bio, nuclear, coal, etc.) is linked to the stranglehold of the oil industry and its governmental servants.]

The motive of oil for the Iraq War is thus reasonable to consider and worthy of Congressional investigation. But there is more. There are the actions taken and pending which also provide evidence which supports the "Bush oil war" hypothesis. Again, some are listed below.

1. As soon as Baghdad fell, even as Rumsfeld shrugged off the looting there, US forces were sent to secure the Iraqi oil fields and one Iraqi Ministry, the Oil Ministry.

2. In May of 2003 a resolution was submitted to the UN Security Council which gave the US and UK control over Iraq's oil revenues. It also allowed Iraqi oil revenues to be withheld from the Iraqi people as compensation for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a decade or so before. (See "Blood and Oil..." The Independent, January 7, 2007.)

3. Under Bush's appointee, Paul Bremer, Iraqi corporate taxes were slashed, a flat tax on income was established, and rules allowing multinationals to pull all of their profits out of Iraq without taxation were enacted—all of which still remain today as part of Iraq's Constitution (a Constitution which researcher Herbert Docena says "was cooked up in an American kitchen, not an Iraqi one"). (See "Bush's Petro-Cartel..." AlterNet, October 16, 2006.)

However, the single most important and on-going illustration of US actions which supports the hypothesis of the "Bush oil war" is the drafting of PSAs. "Production-Sharing Agreements" between the new Iraqi government and the "big four" give these Western oil giants the rights to Iraq's oil fields for the next 30 years, and they do it at profit rates far higher than normal (70% for "cost recovery" when 40% is the industry norm and 20% in royalties when 10% is the norm).

These PSAs were drafted last July with the assistance of BearingPoint, an American consulting firm hired by the US government. Greg Muttitt of Platform (a human and environmental rights organization which monitors the oil industry) said, "Three outside groups have had far more opportunity to scrutinize this legislation than most Iraqis...the US government, major oil companies, and the International Monetary Fund." (See "Blood and Oil..." The Independent, January 7, 2007 and "Iraq to give Western companies oil rights," CBC News, January 8, 2007.)

Even as the violence in Iraq is spreading and Bush is escalating US troop involvement, the Iraqi Parliament is set to pass these PSAs into law.

It is of importance to note in this regard the reaction of Iraq's trade union leaders to the PSAs at their recent meeting in Jordan.

“The Iraqi people refuse to allow the future of their oil to be decided behind closed doors...The occupier seeks and wishes to secure...energy resources at a time when the Iraqi people are seeking to determine their own future while still under conditions of occupation,” they said.

There could be no clearer example of how the US has now cloaked itself in the garb of a colonial imperialist and why America is now anathema to so many in the Muslim world. It is, to be sure, a new kind of colonialism. It is not the overt takeover of resources by conquerors like Cortez, nor the appropriation of human beings by the slave traders of the past. That would never do for post-World War II morality. It is more subtle. It is colonialism by manufactured war, puppet government, contractual appropriation, and the establishment of more or less permanent military presence in foreign lands.

Surely this is not the foreign policy scenario which will win friends for America. Ultimately, it will build massive hatred and make us less safe. And equally surely the time has come for the American Congress and the American media to investigate and discuss the elephant in the room of Iraq.