

New French book exposes duplicitous Anglo-Americans in Gulf policy

by Mark Burdman

Guerre du Golfe: Le Dossier Secret

by Pierre Salinger and Eric Laurent

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The French-language book *Guerre du Golfe: Le Dossier Secret* (*Gulf War: The Secret Dossier*) presents compelling evidence that the current global confrontation in the Persian Gulf could have been prevented, and was, to a considerable extent, set up by the Bush administration, the British, and the arrogant Kuwaitis themselves. The authors are well informed: Pierre Salinger was President Kennedy's press secretary and is today senior ABC News correspondent in London, and Eric Laurent is a star investigative reporter in France. Unfortunately, the book is written in the style of a thriller, pointedly coming to no conclusions about the strategic implications of the facts they expose. They demonstrate that before the crisis, American policy toward Iraq was diplomatically duplicitous, with certain circles in Washington clearly eager to weaken Iraq's influence and power. Then, once Iraq had moved into Kuwait in August, they discuss how the critical interplay became George Bush's personal psychological pique, not only at Iraq but at the Arab nations in general, together with the personal, manipulative intervention into U.S. policy-making by Margaret Thatcher. The then-prime minister arrived in the United States just after Iraq moved into Kuwait and insisted that Bush immediately act to stop an imminent Iraqi move against Saudi Arabia, which was, in fact, nonexistent. Bush and Thatcher's antics wrecked Arab diplomatic efforts, centered around Jordan's King Hussein, who sought to contain the dimensions of the crisis to the Arab world.

The authors have no love lost for Saddam Hussein, and they characterize him generally in the terms that have become typical in the Western media, including with frequent nasty aspersions and comments. Nonetheless, the Iraqi side of the story is at least presented. And while Salinger and Laurent

don't address some significant questions about U.S. and Western policy toward the Middle East, they are inevitably provoked by their account of the events.

'Certain Western circles wanted Israel to attack'

As for the Israeli role, the authors mention briefly in the early section of the book, that the view in Washington, in the weeks prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was that Iraq's increasingly belligerent tone was mainly in response to fears that Israel was going to launch a war. Elsewhere, Saddam Hussein is quoted in his Aug. 6 discussion in Baghdad with American chargé d'affaires Joseph Wilson, responding to the American accusation that Saddam had threatened Israel with destruction in an April 2, 1990 communiqué: "Why did I publish this communiqué? Because certain Western and American circles wanted to push Israel to attack us. This communiqué had the goal of discouraging any aggression. We are convinced that it helped peace. If we had kept silent, Israel would have attacked us; this would have forced us to reply."

But these two cases are among the few in which Israel's provocative role is discussed. There is no mention made in *Gulf War* about the dramatic Israeli government reshuffle of June 1990, which brought the Ariel Sharon crowd into power, and really set the Middle East war dynamic in motion. In general, the authors are sympathetic to the Israeli view, and obviously have received some portion of their information from Israeli sources. Future more thorough—and perhaps more courageous—histories of the Gulf conflict will have to take this question on.

Many Americans are probably familiar with one of the book's central pieces of documentation, the transcripts of the meeting between Saddam Hussein with American Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie on July 25, exactly one week before the invasion occurred. During that meeting, they emphasize, Glaspie gave Saddam Hussein the green light to act against Kuwait three times, going so far as to sympathize with Iraq's insistence on the need for an oil price of \$25 a barrel. She also stated that American policy had traditionally, including

up to that moment, regarded Iraq's conflict with Kuwait as an "intra-Arab" affair. She went further, associating Saddam Hussein's insistence that Iraq would not allow itself to fall prey to coordinated economic warfare, with the revolutionary motto of American statesman Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death." Americans know very well what it is like to fight against colonialism, she told President Hussein.

Whatever Glaspie may have thought she was doing, she was setting up the circumstances for the Anglo-American military intervention into the Gulf. Salinger and Laurent don't discuss this in its strategic context: They omit the fact that the Anglo-Americans had already been seeking a pretext for a NATO "out-of-area deployment" into the Gulf, and George Bush's need to divert attention from his growing political difficulties as a result of the economic depression. The most glaring omission the authors share with most international press is the fact that a new oil shortage would explode efforts of a newly reunified Germany to stabilize the shaky economies of its former East bloc neighbors, and ease the severe strain on the Soviet Union itself. That window of opportunity is now nearly closed, and as a result, the Soviet military threat is actually greater.

Iraq's right to live

But their report of Glaspie's expressions of sympathy are interesting from a different standpoint: There is, in fact, a similarity between the deeper issues in Iraq's complaints against Kuwait and the reasons why the American colonies fought a war against the British Empire.

As the book makes clear, the issue on Saddam's mind was *not* the annexation of Kuwait. This only became a primary issue after the U.S. had militarily committed itself to Operation Desert Shield, rebuffing an Iraqi offer made as late as Aug. 6 for some kind of U.S.-Iraqi negotiations process and *modus vivendi* in the Gulf. Saddam declared on numerous occasions—to American envoys, to Arab leaders, and others—that Iraq was being victimized by an economic warfare campaign, orchestrated by certain circles in the U.S. and Britain, and carried out through the agency of the Arab Gulf states, particularly Kuwait. He cited Kuwait's increase of oil production beyond OPEC quotas, which forced down the price, and its refusal to alleviate Iraq's war debt and help reconstruction efforts, as evidence.

Saddam made it crystal clear, to Glaspie and others, that Iraq's very survival was at stake, and that the nation would fight, even against U.S. military might itself, rather than see itself strangled. From Iraq's standpoint—a country that had been at war with Iran for eight years—a policy of *de facto* economic sanctions was already in effect *before* the U.N. mandated them.

Resisting Kissinger's new world order

EIR has documented the substance of economic warfare against Iraq, by the Anglo-Americans and others, as a predi-

cate of the Kissingerian policy of controlling Third World reserves of raw materials, and preventing at all costs, the industrial development of Third World nations, such as Iraq, Sudan, Argentina, or Thailand. Anglo-American policy toward the Middle East is economic and other forms of warfare, against any and all of the Arab-Muslim states that try to achieve national sovereignty. The genocidal policies of the "New World Order" have existed since at least the days of Kissinger's reign in the Nixon and Ford administrations in the 1970s.

Whatever the Iraqi leadership's many flaws, and—as unpalatable as this may be to those swept up in George Bush's extravagant propaganda excesses—the fact is that Iraq is on the front line of resistance against an oligarchical policy that seeks to strangle the development of countries whose people have darker skin than the Anglo-Americans.

If we take 1975 as the point of departure, from the moment of the assassination of Saudi King Faisal, an assassination for which Kissinger bears either direct or indirect responsibility, what do we see in the Middle East? We see mass devastation in Lebanon, including the genocidal Israeli invasion of June 1982. We see the undermining of the Shah of Iran, and his replacement by fundamentalist mullahs committed to a dark age for Iran and the region. We also see eight years of war between Iran and Iraq, and to the north, almost a decade of Soviet armed forces' genocidal depopulation of Afghanistan. We see the wholesale deprivation of Palestinian Arabs' rights by Israeli occupation forces. Additionally, and linked to this, we see the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Chase Manhattan Bank sabotage an ambitious plan to make Sudan into the breadbasket for the entire North Africa-Sahel region, and IMF strangulation of the economy of Egypt. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's observation, some years back, that 500 million persons have died of hunger worldwide because of IMF policies is correct, if an understatement, and only makes his present participation in the "new world order" strategy all the more embarrassing and hypocritical.

In sum, what we see are millions dead, even more millions fleeing as refugees from war-torn nations, and whole nations (e.g., Sudan) brought to the brink of total destruction through starvation and civil war. International policy toward the Iran-Iraq War itself epitomizes the same attitude. Throughout that war, *all* of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—not only the U.S. and Britain, but also France, the Soviet Union, and Communist China—supported both sides in the war, for cynical purposes of individual state policy, and for mutual interests in maintaining a focal point of instability in world oil prices and supply. The Anglo-American zombie-state of Israel was probably the most frank about pursuing a policy of supporting both sides, as were certain of the American "neo-conservative" ideologues like Irving Kristol. It is of more than passing interest that Saddam Hussein, during his meeting with Glaspie,

points to Irangate as a sign of hostile U.S. intentions toward his country.

The decline and fall of Eduard Shevardnadze

The other issue raised by the book is the insanity of the Bush-Thatcher "New World Order" mob vis-à-vis the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reemergence of the Soviet Empire as the "Third and Final Roman Empire."

The writing of *Guerre du Golfe* was completed at the end of November. By that time, Thatcher had just departed from the scene, but an event of even greater significance had still not taken place. Looked at from the vantage point of one month later, some of the book's more interesting passages concern the interchanges between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III and the since-departed Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion.

It is clear, in hindsight, that the Bush-Thatcher-Baker diplomacy sealed Shevardnadze's fate.

While the Soviets have undoubtedly publicly gone along with much of the Anglo-American diplomatic shenanigans around the Gulf crisis, including the U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force, what is remarkable from the accounts Salinger and Laurent present, is that even Shevardnadze was a reluctant partner, and that the Soviets were presented with a set of American "done deeds," hardly in keeping with all the hoopla about "cooperation in the post-Cold War era."

For example, in the first attempts to bring about a joint U.S.-Soviet statement on the Gulf, Eduard Shevardnadze's willingness to cooperate was, at best, lukewarm. He tells Baker, on Aug. 3, "We insist. The Soviet Union will not accept that you conduct a gunboat diplomacy." Baker, clearly lying, tells him, "There will not be any unilateral action on the part of the United States, unless American citizens are in danger." Shevardnadze nods, but is only "half-convinced," and repeats: "Especially no American military operation."

But as *Gulf War* recounts, military action was being planned in Washington, precisely at that moment. Once Bush had resolved to commit American troops, the question was raised within his cabinet: what to do about "the Soviet reaction"? Should the announcement be made at a press conference that Operation Desert Shield had commenced, Moscow would be presented with a *fait accompli*, and might break ranks with the United States. So, ever sly, the Bush-Baker team decides to present Moscow with a *fait accompli* anyway, but to do so by postponing any public announcement on the troop deployment until Aug. 8, after a key U.N. resolution against Iraq is passed, and until after the Soviets are told privately about U.S. plans. This strategy is defined by National Security Adviser Gen. Brent Scowcroft as "utilizing this emergency situation to more rapidly cement Soviet-American relations."

Baker calls Shevardnadze at his vacation home, when it is evening on Aug. 6 in Washington. Calling him "Shev," and engaging in what is supposed to be amiable back-and-forth, Baker then tells "Shev": "We are going to have to send troops to the Gulf—at the demand of Saudi Arabia." The Soviet foreign minister remains silent, so Baker adds: "We give you the assurance that we are not seeking to take advantage of the situation to increase our influence in the region." The usually glib and friendly Shevardnadze then says in a

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"glacial" tone: "Your call, Jim, what is the purpose? To consult us or to inform us?" Baker, "embarrassed," responds, "We are informing you," and then tries to recoup with some haphazard proposals for joint U.S.-Soviet military operations in the Gulf.

There is something frightening in reading these passages, since they indicate a wild miscalculation, perhaps the biggest miscalculation of the 20th century. As Bush has madly careened into confrontation in the Gulf, no one in Washington has been minding the shop about the Soviet Union, about the global implications of the smashing apart of the Soviet system. All that the Bush White House has come up with, are suggestions for IMF-guided "economic reform" that would bring the devastation that the Middle East has seen in the past 15 years, into the U.S.S.R. itself. The Shevardnadze resignation is a marker for the depth of the Soviet crisis. His playing the role of a junior partner in a crudely manufactured Anglo-American strategy for global hegemony set in motion the process leading to his own demise. No matter what the "New World Order" mob thinks, the Soviets will not for long be able to tolerate Bush's mad escalation in the Gulf. So, in that sense, if Bush "wins" militarily in the Gulf against Iraq, he really loses, except that all of civilization might be brought down in that loss.

That message is only implicit in *Guerre du Golfe: Le Dossier Secret*, but it is there for those who want to see it.