

Kept Secret for 17 Years: Intel Memo Warned Bush's Iraq Invasion to Create "Perfect Storm"

By [Zero Hedge](#)

Global Research, March 18, 2019

[Zero Hedge](#) 15 March 2019

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War](#)

[Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

*A newly declassified US intelligence memo has been unearthed this week and featured in a bombshell [Wall Street Journal](#) report. It proves that the year prior to the Bush administration's 2003 invasion of Iraq the White House was expressly warned in great detail of all that could and would go wrong in the regime change war's aftermath, including **the Sunni-Shia sectarian chaos and proxy war with Iran** that would define Iraq and the whole region for years following. And crucially, it reveals that seven months before the US invasion of Iraq, American intelligence officials understood that **Osama bin Laden was likely "alive and well and hiding in northwest Pakistan"** — important given that a key Bush admin claim to sell the war was that Saddam Hussein and bin Laden were "[in league](#)" against the United States.*

The [July 2002 memo](#) was authored by William Burns, then serving as assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs, and though clearly dismissed by the Bush neocons making the case for war, proved prescient on many levels.

"Following are some very quick and informal thoughts on how events before, during and after an effort to overthrow the regime in Baghdad could unravel if we're not careful, intersecting to create a **'perfect storm'** for American interests," Burns wrote in the memo, classified 'Secret' and sent to Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The classified memo's existence was first brought to the public's attention through [Knight Ridder's reporting](#) in July 2003, which sought to reveal at the time there were pockets of dissenting voices in the State Department and intelligence community pushing back against the absurd White House claim that the whole operation would be a "[cakewalk](#)" and US troops would be greeted as "liberators". And there's Vice President Dick Cheney's infamous declaration that the military effort [would take](#) "**weeks rather than months.**"

Now, sixteen years after the start of the war the "perfect storm" intel briefing has been made public in fully redacted form and it affirms, as the [WSJ reports](#),

"Diplomats accurately forecast many setbacks: **sectarian violence, attacks on U.S. troops, Iranian intervention and long road to structural change.**"

Out of this came the rise of ISIS and the continued unleashing of regime change and

sectarian chaos on neighboring Syria.

The ten page memo outlines a litany of **catastrophic doom and gloom scenarios** resulting from the invasion which would destabilize not only Iraq, but **unleash sectarian hell on the entire region.**

100321104

Change to _____
() Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify
Exemptions b () () E.O. 13526 25x (X) ()
Declassify after _____ **RELEASE IN FULL**
With concurrence of: _____
From: NEA - Bill Burns _____ obtained _____ not obt.
IPS by E. Burns Date 8/7/2017
Subject: Iraq: The Perfect Storm

We all seek a process of regime change in Iraq that leads to a democratic, representative government and security in the region. It could be a historic turning point in the Middle East, and for U.S. interests. But it will require enormous, painstaking preparation to get from here to there - with our eyes wide open to the possibilities for trouble. Following are some very quick and informal thoughts on how events before, during and after an effort to overthrow the regime in Baghdad could unravel if we're not careful, intersecting to create a "perfect storm" for American interests.

Lots of things come to mind, because with Iraq there are so many variables that the possibilities are endless. This is only intended as a sampler. I don't mean to be pessimistic, because I really do believe that if we do it right this could be a tremendous boon to the future of the region, and to U.S. national security interests. But we should have no illusion that it will be quick or easy.

I. Pre Regime Change

Here are but a handful of the memo's many warnings which later proved right on target, as summarized by the military reporting website [Task & Purpose](#):

- Iran increasing aid to anti-American groups in both Iraq and Afghanistan because it feared being "next on US hit list."
- Security in Iraq collapsing following regime change because Iraqi troops and police would be too afraid to patrol while Iraqis aligned with the United States would prove to be inept.
- U.S. troops coming under increasing attacks as they patrol both Shiite and Sunni cities. "If they intervene to stop disputes, they are perceived to have sided with one party or another in a tribal dispute, thus incurring the wrath of the opposing party."
- Afghanistan's security situation simultaneously deteriorating, creating the need for more U.S. troops there.
- "Carpetbaggers, bill collectors, expats and exiles," arriving in Iraq. "It will be a wild mix."

"I don't mean to be pessimistic, because I really do believe that if we do it right this could be a tremendous boon to the future of the region, and to U.S. national security interests," the memo stated. "But we should have no illusion that it will be quick or easy."

And further contradicting Cheney's "weeks rather than months" claim, the memo accurately predicted that U.S. troops would have to stay for, **"Five years - maybe four if we're lucky, ten if we're not."**

Read the full newly declassified and [unredacted intelligence memo here](#).

Some further interesting highlights from the July 2002 'Secret' report are below.

*

Osama bin Laden hiding in Pakistan (the Bush admin claimed Saddam and bin Laden were in cahoots)

“Osama bin Laden turns out to be alive and well and hiding in NW Pakistan. We press Paks, internal stresses grow in Pakistan.”

-- Osama bin Ladin turns out to be alive and well and hiding in NW Pakistan. We press Paks, internal stresses grow in Pakistan.

-- Iranian leadership, convinced they are next on US hit list, step up anti-US influence activities in western Afghanistan. At same time, step up contacts with possible future agents of influence in Iraq: PKK, KDP, PUK, SCIRI, Syrian mil intell, Shia tribes, Iraqi Dawa, Hizballah spiritual leader Fadlallah, Iraqi Shia military officers. Many agents of influence run back into Iraq from refugee camps in Iran.

Iran and Syria targeted next

“Following US warnings that it would take the war on terrorism to all groups with global capabilities, Iran and Syria hold summit meeting, decide US has targeted them.”

Iran and Syria “strengthen positions in face of perceived US threat against them following action in Iraq.”

Sectarian score settling and Shia uprising

“This means night becomes the time for revenge, all over Iraq. A horrible wave of bloodletting and private vengeance begins... US forces are helpless to stop the countrywide phenomenon. Police, intelligence, senior military, and Baath Party officials effectively go into hiding...”

“Shia religious and political leaders, unhappy with composition of provisional government and determined to secure greater share of power in post-Saddam Iraq... This leads to more violent confrontations, and deaths, and the riots become a political tool to demonstrate power and increase leverage against Sunnis and Kurds...”

Here's a list of a few more issues that could develop in interesting ways. It does not do justice to the many interlocking repercussions action in Iraq will have on the calculations of regional states and our allies, or its possible impact on the world economy.

- Law and Order, collecting weapons. We won't get them, most will go to ground.
- No cash; Saddam and henchmen ship all money out of country. Banks broke.
- Effect on world markets if Iraqi oil fields are torched.
- Keeping UN controls -- not popular, but need to do to avoid chaos. Gradual phase out.
- What other UN role?
- All for one, one for all, free for all -- deals, short-term scrambles. It will be every clan for itself.

Long US quagmire to put down sectarian powder keg

“Faced with inchoate and escalating disorder in the provinces, the US faces an agonizing decision: step up to a more direct security role, or devolve power to local leaders.”

“The Shia in the south, quietly aided by Iran, stage major revolt, taking over local government offices and killing interim officials.”

Weapons from Saddam's army will disappear (to be later used against US occupation)

“Law and Order, collecting weapons. We won't get them, most will go to ground.”

“All for one, one for all, free for all – deals, short-term scrambles. It will be every clan for itself.”

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

All images in this article are from Zero Hedge

The original source of this article is [Zero Hedge](#)
Copyright © [Zero Hedge](#), [Zero Hedge](#), 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Zero Hedge](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca