

Iraq's US/UK Permanent Bases : Intentional Obfuscation

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[US permanent bases in Iraq?1](#)

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There is Pentagon and US governmental obfuscation surrounding United States permanent bases in Iraq. Whilst Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defence, continues to deny a permanent US presence there, the facts appear to contradict his statements.

In February 2002, [Zoltan Grossman](#) wrote the following cogent perception entitled New US Bases: Side Effects or Causes of War? “Even if this administration pulls combat troops out of Iraq in the future, it intends to keep at least four large permanent military bases, and access or ‘basing rights’ to many smaller bases, to keep control over oil supplies and shipments, support counterinsurgency operations, and to use Iraq as a launching pad against Iran or Syria. The only way that Washington can avoid this impression is to explicitly renounce any future permanent military bases in Iraq.”

On 19 April 2003, A NY Times headline said: “A NATION AT WAR: STRATEGIC SHIFT; PENTAGON EXPECTS [LONG-TERM ACCESS](#) TO KEY IRAQ BASES. ... “military officials ... spoke of maintaining perhaps four bases in Iraq that could be used in the future: one at the

international airport just outside Baghdad; another at Tallil, near Nasiriyah in the south; the third at an isolated airstrip called H-1 in the western desert, along the old oil pipeline that runs to Jordan; and the last at the Bashur air field in the Kurdish north.

On the 21st of April Rumsfeld said in a [press briefing](#) "I have never, that I can recall, heard the subject of a permanent base in Iraq discussed in any meeting ... we don't plan to function as an occupier, we don't plan to prescribe to any new government how we ought to be arranged in their country... We have no desire to be there for long periods, we simply don't. And that's just a cold, hard fact."

On 23 March 2004, [Christine Spolar](#) said in The Chicago Tribune that there was a "long term military presence planned" in Iraq. "U.S. engineers are focusing on constructing 14 "enduring bases," long-term encampments for the thousands of American troops expected to serve in Iraq for at least two years. The bases also would be key outposts for Bush administration policy advisers." Major Kimmitt said, "This is a blueprint for how we could operate in the Middle East." The US was making plans for Iraqi bases in Baghdad, Mosul, Taji, Balad, Kirkuk and in areas near Nasiriyah, near Tikrit, near Fallujah and between Irbil and Kirkuk. There were also plans "to renovate and enhance airfields in Baghdad and Mosul, and rebuild 70 miles of road on the main route for U.S. troops headed north."

In June '04, major construction (Parsons / KRB) at Taji Military Base was completed. Major construction on other US bases continued.

In August 2004, an order was issued to [vacate](#) the former presidential palaces in Mosul, Tikrit, Ramadi, Basra and Baghdad, but this order was rescinded in 11.04. No further news ...

September '04, and Rumsfeld was speaking before the [Senate Armed Forces Committee](#). "Rearranging our global posture ... is essential to our success," he said.

On 30 September, [Dick Francis](#) of the Christian Science Monitor quotes Jessica Mathews, president of the Washington's Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, as saying that permanent bases in Iraq are a "disastrously bad idea."

In February 2005, Rumsfeld reported again to the Senate Armed Services Committee: "we have [no intention](#), at the present time, of putting permanent bases in Iraq."

In April 2005, a new report from the [Congressional Research Service](#), commissioned by Congressman Dennis Kucinich, showed "that the United States is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in the construction of "long-term" bases in Iraq ... some projects ... suggest substantial U.S. investment to improve facilities that could be used for the longer-term." These long-term projects in Iraq include, \$214 million for the Balad Air Base and \$49 million for the Taji Military Complex.

The March-April '05 Mother Jones report by [Joshua Hammer](#) fully discusses 'enduring bases', and contains interesting quotes from General Garner, Bremer, General Zinni, Brig. Gen. Pollman, Karen Kwiatkowski and Jessica Matthews of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C., who said: "It will convince people across the Arab world that we went there to install an American regime in the Middle East."

On 22.05.05, [Bradley Graham](#) wrote in the Washington Post that Commanders were planning "eventual consolidation of US Bases in Iraq." This "entailed the construction of

longer-lasting facilities at the sites, including barracks and office structures made of concrete block instead of the metal trailers and tin-sheathed buildings that have become the norm at bigger U.S. bases in Iraq... But they said the consolidation plan was not meant to establish a permanent U.S. military presence in Iraq.”

Congress approved an \$82m supplemental ‘war spending bill’, also in May ‘05.

In the summer of 2005, a Kuwaiti firm was ‘awarded’ the \$592million contract for the [new US embassy](#) in Baghdad, to be completed by 2007. Built to withstand attack, this Ozymandius on the Tigris, composed of a cluster of 21 buildings, will have “a gym, swimming pool, barber and beauty shops, a food court and a commissary. In addition to the main embassy buildings, there will be a large-scale US Marine barracks, a school, locker rooms, a warehouse, a vehicle maintenance garage, and six apartment buildings with a total of 619 one-bedroom units. Water, electricity and sewage treatment plants will all be independent from Baghdad’s city utilities. The total site will be two-thirds the area of the National Mall in Washington, DC.” It will be the largest US embassy in the world.

By mid-2005, the U.S. military had [106](#) ‘forward operating bases’ in Iraq, including what the Pentagon calls [14](#) “enduring” bases (twelve of which are located on the map) – all of which were to be consolidated into “perhaps” [four](#) bases that could be used in the future.[2](#)” By 2006, 34 of the (now admitted) 110 bases had been vacated.[3](#) Two palaces in Tikrit and one in Mosul were due to be [turned over](#) to the government in Iraq at the end of 2005. No further news ...

In an [Agence France](#) report on 11 March ‘06, Zalmay Khalilzad, one of the signers of the [1998 PNAC letter](#) to President Clinton supporting regime change in Iraq, and since November ‘05 the US ambassador in Baghdad, said his country “did not want permanent military bases in Iraq and that he was willing to talk to Iran about the war-torn country’s future.”

[Oil anarchy threatens Iraq’s future](#) suggested a Reuters headline. “Rampant corruption and political anarchy have pushed Iraq’s oil industry to the brink of collapse and may drive away the experts needed to save it.” On the same day (15.03), another Reuters report said that “While the Bush administration has downplayed prospects for permanent U.S. bases in Iraq, [Gen. John Abizaid](#) told a House of Representatives subcommittee he could not rule that out.” Abizaid also said the “United States and its allies have a vital interest in the oil-rich region ... Ultimately it comes down to the free flow of goods and resources on which the prosperity of our own nation and everybody else in the world depend.” Also on the 15th, [700](#) more US troops from Kuwait were being dispatched to Iraq.

On 16 March ‘06, the [US Congress](#) passed the Lee-Allen-Hinchey-Schakowsky Amendment, assuring that “None of the funds in this Act may be used by the US government to enter into a basing rights agreement between the United States and Iraq.”[4](#) An April Senate vote is pending.

[Peter Spiegel](#) picked up this thread in his Los Angeles Times story, ‘Bush’s Requests for Iraqi Base Funding Make Some Wary of Extended Stay,’ quoting the exorbitant DoD expenditures on US bases in Iraq.

20 March ‘06: White House Press Conference

Q.: “...will there come a day when there will be no more American forces in Iraq?”

[THE PRESIDENT](#): “That, of course, is an objective, and that will be decided by future Presidents and future governments of Iraq.”

21 March: [Charles Hanley](#) of the Associated Press, after visiting US bases in Iraq, said that “Elaborate U.S. bases raise long-term questions.” Zinni, a former Centcom chief, said of long term bases: “It’s a stupid idea and clearly politically unacceptable.” Hanley says, “In early 2006, no one’s confirming such next steps, but a Balad “master plan,” details undisclosed, is nearing completion, a possible model for al-Asad, Tallil and a fourth major base, al-Qayyarah in Iraq’s north.” Except for Balad, these are different ‘permanent’ bases than those first mentioned in 2003.

A recent story (30.03.06) in [Stars and Stripes](#) says that six bases will produce their own drinking water. Perhaps this is ‘the’ clue for future ‘permanent’ US bases? These are: Camp Anaconda, located at Balad Air Base; Camps al-Asad; Speicher; TQ; Q-West and Victory.

[Condi Rice](#), on 04.04.06, “brushed aside suggestions that the United States wants an indefinite troop presence and permanent military bases in Iraq.”

Prime Minister Blair also has the habit of obscuring his intentions. One can almost be sure that if he, or a member of his government, says, “there is no plan ...”, there IS, indeed, a plan. We read on the 28.02.06, in [Hansard](#), the following written question, followed by the written answer from Adam Ingram, Minister of State (Armed Forces), Ministry of Defence:

“Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his US counterparts over their plans to set up 14 permanent military bases in Iraq. [218827]

Mr. Ingram: Ministers at the Ministry of Defence are in continuous dialogue with all of our allies, including the United States, on a range of issues. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has had no discussions with his US counterparts on plans to set up permanent military bases in Iraq.”

On 2 April 06, [Andrew Buncombe](#) wrote an article with a new twist in the The Independent entitled: “US and UK forces establish ‘enduring bases’ in Iraq.” A spokesperson for the coalition forces, Major Breasseale, said: “The current plan is to reduce the coalition footprint into six consolidation bases – four of which are US ... We have no intention of remaining, or indeed retaining bases in Iraq long-term.”



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The 10 April [Guardian](#) shows a NY Times photograph by Doug Mills of George Bush at Centcom joint operations centre in Fort MacDill in Florida. In the background is a large centcom map of Iraq, also on five computers in the foreground. On this map, the following bases are marked: Qayyarah West, Kirkuk, Al Sahra near Tikrit, al Asad, Balad, Al Taquaddum, H2 and H3, al Salman North and Talill. Baghdad is a large centre dot — Camp Victory, the future US embassy and Baghdad airport are part of the Baghdad complex. A small part of this map is blocked by people / computers in the forefront.

The number of remaining US bases is now stated as being 75, one less than in 2005. We still

have no firm idea of the US time-scale in Iraq. We now also have the confirmed confusion of “enduring” (that favourite PNAC word) UK bases in Iraq. And, surprise, surprise – ‘Our Tony’ had not informed the UK about this UK/Iraq agenda. We shall hopefully soon have another ‘leaked’ memo.

The US (and now apparently also that of the UK) administration’s subterfuge is transparent. The US building of bases in Iraq continues⁵, whilst any thought of US construction or humanitarian programme benefiting the Iraqi people is in the dustbin. The US government does not care about the Iraqi people. The US cares only about controlling Iraqi oil pipelines, pacifying its soldiers with comfortable mod cons and making a different kind of ‘killing’ from corporate DoD deals. Keeping Iraq in a perpetual state of violence, keeping Osama bin Laden alive (even if he is dead) is beneficial to the US government and its octopussy corporate purse-strings.

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Other Source Material

1. 13.03.06. Dahr Jamail, uruknet [Iraq: Permanent US Colony](#)
2. 30 March 2006 [Iraq bases spur questions over US plans](#)
3. Ozymandius by: Percy Bysshe Shelley

“I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: “Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
My name is Ozymandius, King of Kings,
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

Footnotes

[1] [Further maps](#)

[2] Baghdad International Airport; Tallil; H1; Bashur air field.

[3] [Hanley](#), Charles, AP, 21.03.06

[4] [Roll call vote](#) (Democrats in italics) Abercrombie, Baldwin, Blackburn, Blumenauer, Campbell (CA), Cannon, Capps, Clay, Coble, Conyers, Cooper, Costello, Cubin, Deal (GA), Eshoo, Farr, Flake, Frank (MA), Gohmert, Grijalva, Gutierrez, Hensarling, Hinchey, Holt, Inslee, Jackson-Lee (TX), Johnson, Sam, King (IA), Kucinich, Lee, Lewis (GA), Maloney, Markey, McCollum (MN), McDermott, McGovern, McHenry, McKinney, McNulty, Meehan,

Michaud, Miller, George, Moore (WI), Neal (MA), Neugebauer, Olver, Owens, Pallone, Paul, Payne, Pence, Petri, Rangel, Rothman, Schakowsky, Sensenbrenner, Serrano, Solis, Stark, Tancredo, Thompson (CA), Tierney, Velázquez, Waters, Watson, Watt, Waxman, Weiner, Westmoreland, Woolsey, Wu

[5] How American Contractors With The Help Of U.S. Government Raped Iraq. [Iraq's Missing Billions](#).

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