

IS IRAN THE NEXT TARGET?

A War Too Far: Iraq, Iran and the New American Century

by Paul Rogers (Pluto 2006)

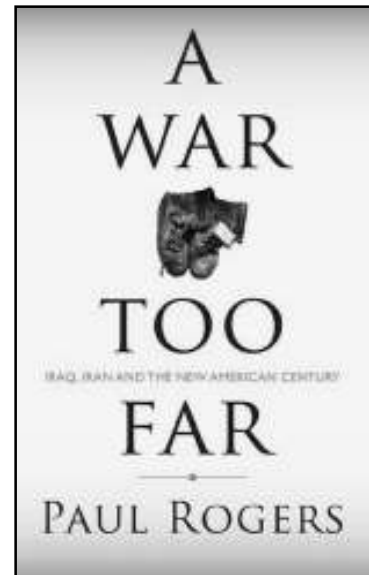
Paul Rogers is Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford and writes for www.opendemocracy.net. He comes across as someone who is not given to exaggeration. This book is a collection of his web articles that track the growing crisis in the Middle East from early 2003.

At first the focus is on the invasion of Iraq. He views this as a move in the longstanding American policy of trying to control Middle East oil. He expects the US bases in Iraq to become a permanent fixture, and thinks the prospect of a US withdrawal is remote.

His comments on the Bush regime's attitude towards Iran also make disturbing reading. He emphasises that the pivotal event was the 1979 Iranian revolution which overturned the repressive regime of the Shah - installed by the Americans back in 1950s - and which established the Islamic republic. The overthrow of their regional muscleman was a disaster for US policy-makers.

Israel, the current regional enforcer on behalf of US interests, has long viewed Iran - which supports Hizbullah in south Lebanon - as the most serious threat to its security. A further complicating factor is that Iran, with the world's fourth largest oil reserves and second largest natural gas reserves, has recently signed long-term oil and gas deals with China and India.

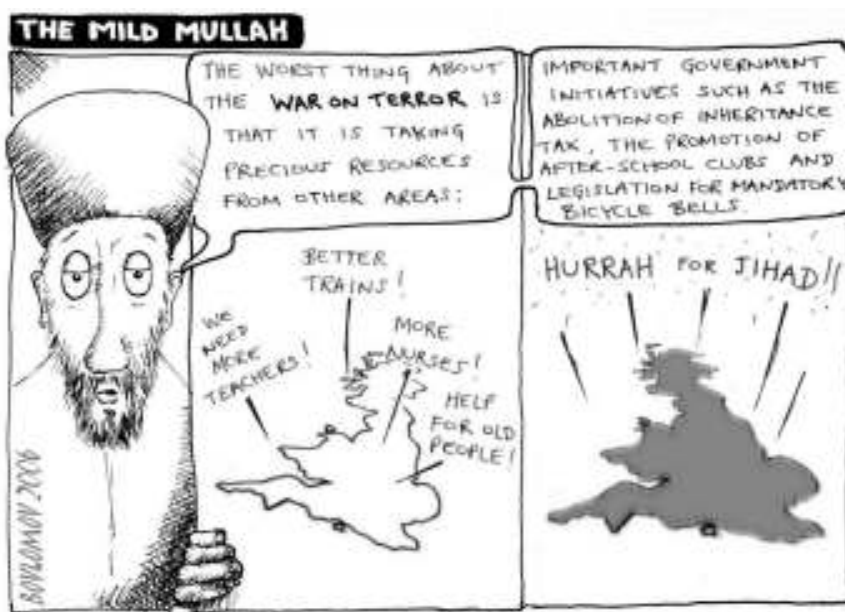
When the Bush regime came to power, it stigmatised Iran along with Iraq and North Korea as part of the so-called 'axis of evil'. However, US invasions of Afghanistan where Iran's enemy, the Taliban, were overthrown, and of Iraq where Iran's enemy Saddam Hussein was removed, have actually made the country in some respects a bigger player than before, not least in its capacity to intervene to support fellow Shi-ites in Iraq. This is not exactly a success for the Bushites, but then again they've still got two years to do something about it.



Iran is surrounded by American bases and allies on all sides, not to mention the American Fifth Fleet in the Persian Gulf. There must be strong internal pressures to develop nuclear weapons and challenge the Israeli regional monopoly. From most accounts they could not achieve this for several years. But, as Rogers points out, quite soon it will be impossible to bomb the Iranian Bushehr reactor without causing a Chernobyl-type disaster of unpredictable consequences.

It looks pretty certain that there is already a detailed American-Israeli plan to bomb targets in Iran. This could also involve the UK, since the Americans would probably use their B2 bombers based at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire. Unlike the invasion of Iraq there would be no slow build-up, little warning apart maybe from increased efforts to soften up western public opinion, and hardly any time for the peace movement to react.

Whether this plan becomes operational is another matter. If it does, Iran is not likely to take it lying down. Queues at the pumps could end up being the least of our problems.



AN INDYMEDIA SITE FOR WALES?

Following a meeting at the Earth First! Gathering in August, some people across Wales have been talking about setting up a Wales web site within indymedia uk so that Welsh news can all be kept together, hopefully encouraging more activists to post their news to indymedia. There are also good arguments for setting up a site which is independent of indymedia uk, not least so posts can be made in Welsh, but there would be a lot more work to do and less support available to get it up and running. Having a site within imuk would be a good start.

So, if you're interested and want to get involved, please sign up to:
<https://lists.indymedia.org/imc-cymru>
and send a message to introduce yourself.

MORE DIARY DATES

Faslane 365 planning meeting

For anyone from N Wales wanting to take part in Faslane 365 blockade

Sunday 8th October, 2-4 pm

Friends Meeting House, Erskine Rd, Colwyn Bay

More info from: bangorpeace@dslw.net

The Fight Against Racism in Wales

Friday 20th October, 7.30pm

Organised by Morning Star Supporters Group and Deeside Trades Council

Grosvenor Club, the Ranch, Nelson St, Shotton

For more info, contact: 01244 814330

What's Going on at Aberporth?

Speaker: Harry Rogers

WPJF Public Meeting

Monday 23rd October 7-9pm

Trinity Church, King St, Wrexham

More information in next column

Challenging Racism Conference

Tuesday 31st October,
Wrexham

Organised by Wales TUC

For more info, email: vkuck@tuc.org.uk

Or phone: 029 2034 7010

National Climate March

Demand that world leaders act now to stop climate chaos

Saturday 4th November, London

Cycle protest assembles 10am Lincoln's Inn Fields

Rally 12 noon at the US Embassy, Grosvenor Sq

More info: www.campaigncc.org

Ending the Occupation of Iraq

A strategy gathering for campaigners

Saturday 18th November, 11am-5pm

Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, London

£5/£2 unwaged

Organised by Iraq Occupation Focus

More info or to book: iraqfocus@riseup.net

For more info about WPJF events, call: 0845 330

4505 or email wrexhamsaw@yahoo.com

UAVs & ABERPORTH

WPJF PUBLIC MEETING

Monday 23rd October, 7pm

Trinity Church, King Street, Wrexham

Speaker: Harry Rogers

An advert for Boeing in the *New Statesman* reads:

BOEING AND THE GREEN HILLS OF WALES

Sometimes discovery means finding a new use for an existing technology.

That's exactly the territory Boeing and the Welsh Assembly Government are exploring as they develop environmental and agricultural applications for unmanned aerial vehicles [UAVs]. Success may mean being in the right place at the right time, but it certainly means being with the right partner.

Just in case the reader might (perish the thought) think that the unmanned aerial vehicles might be the same kind that circle Palestine and Lebanon seeking human targets for F16 jets to blow to pieces, we are told that those being developed in Wales [at Aberporth] are for "environmental and agricultural applications".

Boeing's attempt to convince us that what they are up to in Wales is purely 'agricultural and environmental' is an insult to the intelligence of every Welsh citizen. Who are they trying to kid with their 'Green Hills of Wales' propaganda?

UAVs certainly do have agricultural and environmental uses, but so do single engined biplane trainers. What UAVs uniquely have is the ability to keep expensive pilots out of harm's way when flying military reconnaissance, spying and eventually attack missions. Their development is as much to do with the delivery of bullets and bombs as it is to do with photographing deforestation in the Amazon. It is said that the current generation of fighter aircraft is the last one that will have human pilots.

When will the Welsh Assembly Government be coming clean about what Boeing and other military contractors are really doing in Wales?

To find out more about these worrying developments at Aberporth, come to hear Harry speak on Oct 23rd.

To put your name on our mailing list or to make a donation to support WPJF, complete and return this form to WPJF, PO Box 661, Wrexham LL11 1QU. Please make cheques payable to Wrexham Peace & Justice Forum.

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