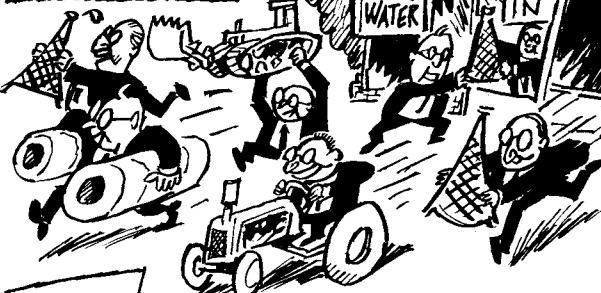


IN THE COMIC STRIP OF NEOLIBERALISM, THE EXCEPTION PROVES TO BE THE RULE.

THE RULE →

NEVER USE COERCION TO REDISTRIBUTE WEALTH.

VERY BAD!



IN OTHER WORDS →

ARMED PRIVATIZATION

IRAQ'S STATE-OWNED COMPANIES ONCE GENERATED HUGE PROFITS FOR IRAQ'S GOVERNMENT AND, TO SOME EXTENT, ITS PEOPLE. BREMER & THE CPA WANT TO SEE THESE MONEYS IN PRIVATE - PREFERABLY AMERICAN - HANDS.

NO ARABS NEED APPLY!!



(CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?)

IN THE BIDDING WAR FOR IRAQ'S MOBILE PHONE SYSTEM, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CPA RULED THAT "NO GOVERNMENT ENTITY MAY OWN MORE THAN A 10% STAKE IN ANY BIDDER," WHICH DISQUALIFIES ALMOST EVERY MIDDLE EASTERN TELECOM COMPANY (AND MOST WESTERN EUROPEAN ONES AS WELL).

BUT WHY DO YOU SAY "COERCION"? DIDN'T WE FIGHT THIS WAR SO IRAQIS COULD ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF DEMOCRACY?



OF COURSE WE WILL DEMOCRATIZE IRAQ, EVENTUALLY!

BUT FOR NOW, I'M A GUY WITH A JOB TO DO, DEALING WITH FACTS ON THE GROUND



BEFORE WE CAN HAVE ELECTIONS, WE HAVE TO RESTORE ORDER. OTHERWISE THE EXTREMISTS WILL WIN.

TO RESTORE ORDER WE MUST REBUILD.

LIKE

FACT #1:

ANARCHY



FACT #2: RUINED INDUSTRY



TO REBUILD, WE MUST ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

TO ATTRACT INVESTORS, WE MUST OFFER THEM SECURE & HIGHLY PROFITABLE INVESTMENTS.

I.E., PRIVATIZATION

TO PRIVATIZE, WE MUST DARE TO BE UNPOPULAR.

IRONICALLY, PRIVATIZATION WILL APPEAR TO MAKE IRAQ HUNGRIER AND MORE DEPENDENT.

WHY ASK THE LONG-SUFFERING IRAQI PEOPLE TO MAKE SUCH A DIFFICULT DECISION? THEY COULD EASILY GET IT WRONG!

FACT #3: NO MONEY



FACT #4: NERVOUS INVESTORS*



FACT #5: STATE-OWNED INDUSTRIES



THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO PRIVATIZE BEFORE WE DEMOCRATIZE.

OF COURSE WE WILL DEMOCRATIZE IRAQ, EVENTUALLY



* PAUL BREMER KNOWS ABOUT THE ANXIETIES OF INVESTORS - FROM 1989 TO 2003 HE RAN "RISK ASSESSMENT" CONSULTING FIRMS, FIRST HENRY KISSINGER'S & THEN HIS OWN. BUT HE HAS MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT IRAQ.

QUICK HISTORY OF IRAQ AND ITS OIL

1918 IRAQ CREATED AS A BRITISH "MANDATE" AFTER OTTOMAN EMPIRE DISMEMBERED.

WHAT'S A "MANDATE"??

IT MEANS WE GUIDE YOU TO SELF-RULE



BRITISH IMPOSE THEIR PUPPET, KING FAYSAI, WHO GETS £40,000 FOR ALLOWING TURKISH PETROLEUM* ACCESS TO ALL IRAQ OIL.

THAT'S FUNNY-YOU DON'T LOOK TURKISH.



*"T.P." WAS CONTROLLED BY U.S., BRITISH, FRENCH + DUTCH OIL COMPANIES.

1932 "INDEPENDENCE"

THANKS, BOSS.



NATIONALIST REVOLTS

OIL WORKER STRIKES

1954 MONARCHY OVERTHROWN



NEW GOVT. ATTEMPTS TO APPEASE THE WEST WITH JOINT VENTURES, SHARING UNDEVELOPED FIELDS.

EARLY '60S

T. P. BECOMES I.P.C. (IRAQ PETROLEUM)

THAT'S FUNNY-YOU DON'T LOOK IRAQI.



1963

QASIM, THE NEW IRAQI PRESIDENT, SETS UP INOC (STATE-OWNED OIL COMPANY) TO TAKE OVER UNDEVELOPED OIL FIELDS.



HE IS OVERTHROWN, WITH CIA HELP, 4 DAYS LATER.

1968: BAAATHIST COUP

ARE YOU TRYING TO BE FUNNY?

I.P.C. CONTINUES TO RESTRAIN PRODUCTION (= GOVT. REVENUE)

1972 IPC NATIONALIZED

I'LL BE BACK



THE BAAATH ("ARAB SOCIALIST RENAISSANCE PARTY") CARRIED OUT THE SOCIALIST PROGRAM OF STATE-DRIVEN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WHILE RUTHLESSLY SUPPRESSING SOCIALIST ORGANIZATIONS (LEFT PARTIES + TRADE UNIONS) AS WELL AS SHIITES, KURDS, + ANYONE ELSE WHO GOT IN THEIR WAY.

NEVERTHELESS, UNTIL THE 1980 WAR WITH IRAN, SADDAM HUSSEIN + THE BAAATHISTS DID USE OIL REVENUE TO RAISE LIVING STANDARDS (AS WELL AS TO ENRICH THEMSELVES + BUILD VAINGLORIOUS MONUMENTS + PUBLIC WORKS).

BUT THEN... SADDAM, ENCOURAGED BY THE U.S. TO COUNTER IRAN'S ISLAMIC REVOLUTION, LED HIS COUNTRY INTO A DOWNWARD TRAJECTORY OF ARMS SPENDING, WAR + IMPOVERISHMENT.

UP, UP + AWAY!

FOLLOW ME!

PAY NO ATTENTION TO THAT CORPSE BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

UNTIL...

WE'RE BA-A-ACK!

OH THE THINGS THAT WE'LL DO!

WE'LL HAVE OUR WAY IN THE HOLY LAND + BREAK UP OPEC, TOO!

WHILE BACK IN BOSTON...

SO YOU'RE IRAQI! WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS WAR?

SADDAM WAS NO GOOD, YET NEVER COULD I HAVE IMAGINED, IN THIS CENTURY, A SUPERPOWER UNILATERALLY CONQUERING A SOVEREIGN STATE!

BUT I'M AFRAID YOUR LEADERS DON'T KNOW THE IRAQI PEOPLE.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE THIS LYING DOWN.