

## AFTER THE WAR

April 6, 2003

*After a background report including comments from Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Gwen Ifill discusses postwar reconstruction and governance in Iraq, and what the roles of the U.S., U.N., and other entities may be.*

GWEN IFILL: Even as U.S. troops continued battling for control of the country, administration officials began outlining their vision of how a new Iraqi government might be created in the weeks and months ahead.

During interviews on Sunday news programs, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz predicted it might take at least six months to create a new Iraqi government. He also said it hasn't yet been determined who would lead that new government. Before the war, administration officials met with Iraqi exiles, like Ahmad Chalabi, head of a key opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress. But Wolfowitz denied that the U.S. has already decided to put that group in charge.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ: I mean, we can't talk about democracy, and then turn around and say we're going to pick the leaders of this democratic country. We have been in touch with many, many different leaders of the Iraqi opposition. There are some very courageous people who have been fighting for the freedom of Iraq in northern Iraq and living abroad, and we're finding more and more people in the South, southern parts of Iraq, who were leaders in the fight against Saddam over the years. It's got to be for the Iraqi people to pick their leaders, and our goal is to try to create the conditions, particularly the security conditions, where they can do that freely.

GWEN IFILL: Wolfowitz said that an interim administration will have to be set up to deal with the most pressing needs.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ: On the one hand, there has got to be an effective administration from day one. People need water and food and medicine, and the sewers have to work, the electricity has to work. And that's a coalition responsibility. We have to make sure it gets done. But our goal is to have a legitimate Iraqi government that represents the Iraqi people. And this interim authority which we've discussed and agreed upon in our government, with our coalition partners and with important elements of the Iraqi opposition, is a bridge to that legitimate government. Now, that's going to take some time to get to that end point, but when we would set up an interim authority is something we are going to have to see as things develop on the ground.

GWEN IFILL: This weekend, hundreds of soldiers from the Iraqi National Congress were airlifted into southern Iraq. General Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said they would help form a future Iraqi army.

GEN. PETER PACE: They are patriots; to speak specifically about where they are or what they're about to do would be inappropriate but they are the beginning of the free Iraqi army.

GWEN IFILL: U.S. officials continue to work on plans for what happens next. Retired Army General Jay Garner will head those efforts, reporting to U.S. War Commander General Tommy Franks.

## Who will govern Iraq?

GWEN IFILL: For more on the planning for postwar reconstruction and governance in Iraq, we turn to Robin Wright, chief diplomatic correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, and Adeed Dawisha, professor of political science at Miami University of Ohio. He was born in Iraq, and is now an American citizen.

Robin, we just heard your colleague John Daniszewski talking about the fighting that's still going on, even as we speak, around Baghdad. Is it premature to talk about postwar governance?

ROBIN WRIGHT: Well, under the original plan agreed to about six weeks ago it probably would be. But I think that the war has unfolded has led to a bit of shift in thinking -- that perhaps they bring forward that interim phase of transitional authority to something that would amount to kind of a giant PSY OPS -- psychological operation -- to try squeeze the regime of Saddam Hussein and basically bring some Iraqis in to help administer and bring Jay Garner into Iraq, perhaps somewhere around Baghdad airport, bring some of the Iraqis in, some of the people who were fighting, flown in today with Ahmad Chalabi, bring them in and to say, look we're creating an alternative.

GWEN IFILL: Who would be in charge of governing? What are the options for who would be in charge of creating that alternative?

ROBIN WRIGHT: Well, as originally envisioned it was to include exiles as well as probably the majority from inside Iraq. Clearly if you bring a transitional authority now, before the whole country has fallen, you probably rely largely on exiles from the Iraqi National Congress and others the U.S. has been talking to.

## Similar to Afghanistan?

GWEN IFILL: Professor Dawisha, our most recent experience with this sort of rebuilding was in Afghanistan where there seemed to be at least one obvious person for the United States' government to turn to, to put in charge, and the person is Hamad Karzai. Is it as obvious this time?

ADEED DAWISHA: No. Unless you are talking about the Iraqi National Congress or the opposition groups outside Iraq there are obvious people. It's not very clear to me how obvious these people are to the Iraqi population.

If we are looking for elements within Iraq, I'm sure there are obvious people, there are people, say, in the lower strata of the Ba'ath Party, those who in a sense joined the party not because they believe in the ideology and they're not associated with Saddam's regime, but, you know, they joined the party because that's the only way you can survive in Iraq. You can throw in these elements. I don't know what kind of contacts we have with these elements. I don't know whether the government -- whether our administration does know of particular people. I mean that would be the most, the best way to go about it. But it all depends how many we know and who we know.

## Plans to rebuild Iraq

GWEN IFILL: Professor Dawisha, until yesterday when the president's national security adviser came out and said otherwise it has been widely thought that the administration or at least Pentagon planners favored bringing Iraqi exiles, people who had been living in the United States, and sending them in to take over. How is that shaking out?

ADEED DAWISHA: I would have thought that there is a certain kind of difference of opinion within the administration. Between the Pentagon, they favor the Iraqi National Congress and Ahmad Chalabi, the State Department and the CIA are not so hot on Mr. Chalabi. They favor a kind of, some kind of cooperation between the exiles and Iraqi elements. It's interesting to me that Paul Wolfowitz is talking about three months - a kind of a hiatus, probably within these three months the American administration..

GWEN IFILL: I think it's six months actually, Professor. I think they're talking about six months.

ADEED DAWISHA: Six months. The point is that within the first six months you need to have some kind of a civil administration and it seems to me putting Iraqis as a front would certainly legitimize the operation. I don't think it's a good idea to have American personnel ruling Iraq. For the first maybe month or two, while security is the order of the day, while trying to stabilize Iraq that's not a problem. But at some point and in my opinion pretty quickly you need to have Iraqis there at the forefront to legitimize the operation in the eyes of the Iraqi population.

GWEN IFILL: Robin, just pick up on that point, so far we're talking all about the U.S. plan, what the Pentagon wants, what the State Department wants, what about an international presence in this planning?

ROBIN WRIGHT: Well, that's another area of intense debate. The State Department and Tony Blair the British prime minister, have strongly advocated that the United Nations play a major role, not just in humanitarian and reconstruction but also in the political transformation of Iraq, which is really the most important issue. And the Pentagon has resisted, and so far the White House has, too. And they have said, look, the U.N. didn't go along with us to the war. It wouldn't give us the power. We gave them every opportunity and we want them as a partner but there is a rule, a role for the UN, but it will not be UN ruled.

GWEN IFILL: Who's footing the bill for all of this? There has been much talk about using, for instance, Iraqi oil wealth to help with the reconstruction. \$25 billion has been set aside in Congress to start this process rolling. What are we talking about, who's paying and how expensive is it going to be?

ROBIN WRIGHT: Well, no one knows for sure. There is a supplemental the administration has put forward: \$74.4 billion to pay for part of the war and part of the early stage of reconstruction. It's widely believed - many branches of government - that that money is really only the beginning. Unlike the last Gulf War with \$65 billion from Saudi Arabia and other countries this time we're going alone. Now clearly that's a place that the United States would like to have some help and would like to say to the international community. The question is: is France and perhaps even Russia going to try and block that, any kind of role for the UN unless they play - and contribution from UN contributors - unless they're allowed to play a role in this critical political transformation.

## **Fear the U.S. will not fulfill promises**

GWEN IFILL: Professor Dawisha, among the people you talked to is there any concern the United States will either fail to foot the bill or others or simply just walk away?

ADEED DAWISHA: There is a lot concern about that in Iraq itself. The history of the American involvement in Iraq certainly in 1991 has created a lot of consternation amongst Iraqis, that the Americans basically are there to get rid of Saddam and find the weapons of mass destruction and then to leave the country. So there is a concern about that. Can I comment on the political implications for the United Nations?

GWEN IFILL: Please.

ADEED DAWISHA: I'm not very clear in my own mind what role the United Nations needs to play in the political reconstruction of Iraq. I can very well understand that they should be brought in along with the French, along with the Russians in some kind of an effort in the economic reconstruction. I don't think we want to be seen as though we are kind of hogging the whole thing to ourselves and that from that point of view then there is a role for the United Nations, and for the French and Russians and even the Chinese.

But I'm not very clear why should they be brought in, in the political reconstruction of Iraq? We want to make sure that we want to put Iraq on a democratic path, whether this takes six months or a year or eighteen months, but we want to be there when we're trying to kind of orient the Iraqis towards democracy creating political institutions, writing a Constitution. I'm not very clear what the Chinese, for example, or the Russians have to add to this endeavor.

GWEN IFILL: Robin, let's talk about timing. When do we have to start see things start happening in earnest, when do elections have to be scheduled when does the ball seriously have to begin rolling, might it start before the war is even over?

ROBIN WRIGHT: Not the electoral process, not at all. I think it's going to be a long, drawn-out process but I think the United States is going to feel increasing pressure the minute the war ends to begin withdrawing troops and begin handing over to Iraqis. I think Ahmad Chalabi, even the closest U.S. ally among the exiles has said there is a role for the United States. You can liberate us, rid of us Saddam, help us find the weapons of mass destruction, and then it's time for you to go.

The United States sees this as an orderly process. You know, U.S. administration, interim government and transferring power to a democratically elected country with a new constitution. That's a process the U.S. thinks could take a couple of years.

GWEN IFILL: Professor Dawisha, what's your thinking about the timing?

## Writing a constitution

ADEED DAWISHA: Yeah, I agree with Robin on this absolutely. I think probably in my own estimation the whole thing will take two years. I think once we get there and stabilize the situation in terms of security, should be thinking almost immediately about the political ramifications of all of this. And I think the first thing we should be doing is to try and form or get some kind of meeting or a congress for the writing of an Iraqi constitution.

The first thing that has to be done to have a constitution written, a constitution that will take Iraq's unique social conditions into consideration. A constitution that will talk very specifically about the secular nature of Iraq, and also about creating what kind of political institutions and political organizations do we create in order to make sure that democracy is set in place. Then probably within six months we should be thinking about things like formation of political parties, encouraging the expatriates as well as the elements within Iraq to form political parties that are dedicated to democratic values, and then setting an election date for that maybe in about a year or at the very most about eighteen months.

GWEN IFILL: Is it fair to say those timetables are already being worked out in hotel rooms in Kuwait City, Robin?

ROBIN WRIGHT: I think there is a lot of debate going on in hotel rooms in Kuwait. Whether they will ever keep to the time schedule is another question. There is an awful lot of work to do in a very fractured country. Whether they get to do it that quickly is an open question.

GWEN IFILL: Robin Wright and Adeed Dawisha, thank you both for joining us.