

Blasting Open the Middle East Door

by Jim Tarbell

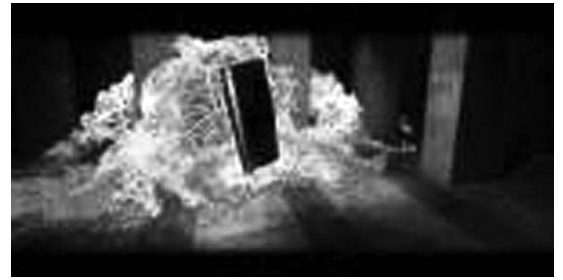
Current conflagrations in the Middle East are nothing more than a continuation of the century-long drive of US foreign policy to blast open doors to resources and markets around the world to benefit US corporate bottom lines. It is a policy that began in 1899 with John Hay's Open Door Policy in China after the completion of what he called the "splendid little war" that made the US an imperial power in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The innocent sounding open door policy turned China into a free trade zone where money is power. That tradition has carried on down to the Coalition Provisional Authority's Iraq free trade zone and the present drive to create a Middle East Free Trade Agreement.

Coming out of the monopoly-infested gilded age that consolidated American wealth into a few hands, Wall Street lawyers took over American foreign policy in 1905. Elihu Root, a corporate lawyer that represented E. H. Harriman, Jay Gould and a collection of other notorious robber barons, became the first of a series of big-business attorneys running the US State Department. JP Morgan associate Robert Bacon followed him and then Philander C. Knox, counsel to Carnegie Steel and prominent organizer of the United States Steel Corporation took over.

After World War I this Wall Street control of US foreign policy became institutionalized within the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). With Elihu Root as its honorary chairman, corporate bankers and lawyers joined with a stable of hired CFR academics and rotated through the upper levels of the US foreign policy bureaucracy—a tradi-

tion that included Henry Kissinger and continues to this day. CFR associates established a consensus that what is good for American business is good for the world resulting in our traditional bipartisan foreign policy.

With the onset of the second World War, CFR's War and Peace Studies Project analyzed global resources and determined that it served corporate interests, which they called "vital US



national interests," to keep the door open to South East Asia. This analysis drove US war goals from 1940 until 1972, when the Vietnam debacle split the CFR consensus apart.

At that point, David Rockefeller and other CFR leaders began a campaign to forgo the nation-state model and to establish corporate global government. Starting with the Tri-Lateral Commission in 1972, they promoted initiatives that created the World Trade Organization in 1995. In this global approach they thought war was outmoded. They only needed to establish worldwide corporate rule. The problem is that this system leaves out most of the world's population, a problem which has caused global resistance.

In fact, Islamic philosophies eschew many of the principles that support corporate power and the Middle East has never opened the door completely to the western economic model. With the beginning of the new millennium, the Middle East remained the last door not fully pried open for US corporate interests.

When the neocons came to power in the George W. Bush administration, they too rebelled at the vision of global government and retreated to using US military might to advance corporate goals. The war to take over Iraq became their tool to create a free-trade foothold in the center of the Middle East. Now the Bush administration, with its inherent threat of military violence, is imposing a Middle East Free Trade Agreement. In pursuit of this goal they are creating bilateral free trade agreements with individual governments acquiescing to their not so veiled threats.

Iran and Syria, which have not bought into this free-trade agenda, were targeted last month in the President's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. If these countries do not go along with the American free-trade plan, regime change by war is the inferred solution. The perennial war to open access to markets and resources will go on—unless the advocates of multilateral solutions establish global corporate government, in which case perennial war to regain popular power will begin.

Jim Tarbell is the editor of Justice Rising and the co-author of Imperial Overstretch: George W. Bush and the Hubris of Empire.

Coming out of the monopoly-infested gilded age that consolidated American wealth into a few hands, Wall Street lawyers took over American foreign policy in 1905.

Imperial Brain Trust

Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter's valuable book on the history, influence and corporate connections of the Council on Foreign Relations was fortunately republished in 2004 and is no longer difficult and expensive to acquire. *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations & United States Foreign Policy* follows the creation of a global commercial empire from the dreams of Cecil Rhodes through the wars of the 20th century to the creation of corporate globalization. Lest one thinks that the influence or makeup of CFR has changed, one only needs to look at the present President of CFR Richard Hass, former principal Middle East Advisor to the Bush administration, and the CFR Board of Directors that includes representatives from Citigroup, Caterpillar Inc. and the Carlyle Group.