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by LAUREN SMITH
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Amnesia and Impunity Reign: Wall Street Celebrates Halliburton's 100th Anniversary



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When it comes to the ruling elite's corporate plunder and crimes against humanity, the U.S. national memory's short and no one, not even its political henchmen, assume blame or suffer real consequences: take Halliburton and former chief executive and U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney for example. Not only did Cheney plan and justify the invasion, occupation and pilferage of Iraq's oil, gold bars and national museum treasures under treasonous false pretenses, but its subsidiary, Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR Inc.), overcharged the U.S. taxpayer to a tune of more than \$2 billion due to collusion

engendered by sole source contracting methods and shoddy accounting procedures. It's even forgotten that Cheney received a \$34 million payout from Halliburton when he joined the Vice President ticket in 2000, in advance of his unscrupulous maneuvers, according to news commentator, Chris Matthews; because on November 5th 2018, in celebration of its 100-year anniversary, its chief executives rang the New York Stock Exchange's (NYSE) opening bell.

Sadly, as a nation, the U.S. doesn't recall Cheney's lies, or his role in planning the contemptible "Shock and Awe" saturation bombing campaign that destroyed a sovereign nation, which posed no threat to the United States, and left the world's cradle of civilization in ruins. Conveniently, it doesn't recall the over 500,000 deaths from war related causes, as reported by the Huffington Post in its 2017 updated article; nor does it recall that obliterating Iraq's government created a sociopolitical vacuum that enabled the exponential growth of the CIA's unique brand of Islamofascism and its resulting terrorism, which has culminated in war-torn Syria and Yemen.

Iraq's only "crime" against the United States, if you want to call it that, was being hogtied by Washington's sanctions and embargo against it – in what can only be called a Catch 22 situation. Iraq couldn't do business with U.S. corporations not because Saddam Hussein was unwilling to, but because the U.S. government effectively barred Iraq from doing so. This Catch 22 situation is presently being repeated in Venezuela and Iran in advance of its planned invasion and occupation.

Then there is the cost of war itself: according to The Costs of War project at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, "The wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq (the war in Pakistan refers to U.S. counterterrorism efforts there, such as drone strikes and other efforts against al Qaeda) cost \$4.4 trillion. Included in the cost are: direct Congressional war appropriations; war-related increases to the Pentagon base budget; veterans care and disability; increases in the homeland security budget; interest payments on direct war borrowing; foreign assistance spending; and estimated future obligations for veterans' care. By 2053, interest payments on the debt alone could reach over \$7 trillion."

Keep in mind that the U.S. taxpayer directly subsidizes the profits of the military industrial complex, and oil & gas industries. Yet, no U.S. protests against Halliburton are found in the media later than 2007. And, there are no organized disinvestment campaigns of record.

So Wall Street celebrates Halliburton's 100-year anniversary with a clear conscience, because no one has graffitied its large four column wide sign or is disinvested from its stock. The nation only recalls, according to IBTimes, in their 2013 article on Iraq war contracts, that Halliburton's subsidiary, KBR, had the most: KBR's war contracts totaled \$39.5 billion in just a decade.

Other than the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission, which found Cheney and President Bush et al guilty of war crimes in absentia for the illegal invasion of Iraq, there remains no lasting acknowledgement in the U.S. consciousness of Cheney's evil doings. Cheney had recent book deals and continues to ramble on with speaking engagements. He was scheduled by Cornell University to issue a keynote address as recent as May 2018. In short, the ruling elite protects those engaged in their dirty work until they prove unnecessary. In this regard, consider the fact that Saddam Hussein was a former CIA asset and a good corporate customer – as the weapons of mass destruction (WMD), he once possessed, were sold to him by the U.S. and Britain. However, according to the former United Nations (UN) chief weapon inspector, Scott Ritter, the UN destroyed Iraq's stockpiles after the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) – well before the 2003 invasion. This report was ignored because it contradicted the prevailing narrative that justified the invasion, occupation and looting of Iraq.

Just as the ruling elite engineered Saddam Hussein rise to power when he was useful, they ensured Cheney's political ascent, and the success of his campaign against Iraq. To illustrate the persuasive power of the oil & gas industry in politics, note that according to Open Secrets.org, oil & gas lobbyists spent over \$175M in 2009 (Obama's first year in office). Of that amount, ExxonMobil spent the most at \$27.4M and Chevron Corp., in second place, spent \$20.8M. For the record, ExxonMobil and Chevron are successors of Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company. Prior to President Obama & Vice President Biden, the Oil & Gas Industry lobbyists spent approximately half that amount at \$86.5M in 2007. Thus, Bush & Cheney represented a 50% savings for oil & gas lobbyists.

When seeking to "out" the elite, keep in mind that the Rockefeller clan describe themselves "as ExxonMobil's longest continuous shareholders". In Iraq, ExxonMobil has a 60% share of a \$50 billion market contract developing the 9-billion-barrels southern West Qurna Phase I field, and ExxonMobil is expanding its oil & gas holdings into the semiautonomous Kurdish region in the country's north.

Within this context, the enemy is not a corporate office, an oilrig, pipeline or refinery; it's the ruling elite that own and control the means of production. If people of conscience

don't hold them accountable for their crimes, they will continue to commit them in countries such as Venezuela and Iran, which are presently locked in their sights. While henchmen change, the ruling elite remains. Why should the U.S. allow its military and secret service to be pimped out as corporate stooges and glorified security guards?

Imperialism is insatiable and fascism expedient. The time to hold the ruling elite accountable is now before another invasion and occupation is executed against a fake enemy that just so happens to coincidentally have a large desirable oil reserve. Let's follow Iceland's lead and seek the prosecution of white-collar criminals that hide behind a facade of corporate stock holdings now, before its too late and they strike again in Venezuela and Iran.

So for Halliburton's 100-year anniversary wish, let's wish its stock tanks and that its guilty are remembered, held accountable, and that justice is ultimately served.

Lauren Smith has a BA in Politics, Economics and Society from SUNY at Old Westbury and an MPA in International Development Administration from New York University. Her historical fiction novel based on Nicaragua's 1979 revolution is due out in 2019.