



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on June 7, 2010

Rangel: Obama “Makes Cheney Look Good”

It won't be taken by either man as a compliment, but then it wasn't meant to be. New York Congressman Charles Rangel said that in continuing America's military presence in Iraq, Barack Obama has come to resemble former Vice President Dick Cheney.



"I'd challenge anyone to tell me we're not there because of the oil," Rangel told the *New York Daily News*. "The lack of an honest explanation is consistent with Bush and Cheney." In an hour-long interview with the paper, Rangel said, "We're trying to buy our friends there...stuff like that makes Cheney look good." On the other hand, he praised Obama for the way he has dealt with the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and for his political savvy. Concerning the President's sinking approval ratings, Rangel said, "We had perhaps higher expectations than we should have."

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Rangel stepped down from his chairmanship of the powerful Ways and Means Committee earlier this year, due to an ethics probe into his corporate-sponsored vacations in the Caribbean. There is also a federal investigation into allegations of unreported income and tax fraud. Undeterred, Rangel kicked off his campaign for a 21st House term in Washington Heights on Sunday.

"I don't know what they are going to report," Rangel, who turns 80 this week, told the *Daily News* concerning the investigation. "Just because they are taking a long time reaching a conclusion doesn't mean I should stop my public service."

Rangel will face Democratic challengers to his reelection for the first time in 16 years. His rivals include state Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell IV, whose father held the Harlem seat for a quarter of a century before losing to Rangel in 1970.

"I don't know how many opponents I have," Rangel said. "So far, nobody's filed." Rangel said he is still influential enough to get things done and named tax reform, climate control and improving education among his goals.

The imagined power of Congress to control the climate was somehow overlooked in the drafting of and subsequent amendments to the Constitution. Education is likewise nowhere mentioned as the province of the federal government. And the kind of "tax reform" favored by the Rangel would increase the number of Americans paying the top rate of 36 percent and add a surtax to household incomes of more than \$200,000. That is not tax relief but a scheme to expand the power of government to redistribute wealth.

As for his claim that the war in Iraq is all about oil, Rangel is partially right. A steady supply of oil is needed to fuel our economy as well maintain our military readiness, and our government would like to control as much of it as it can. As Secretary of State James Baker said during the run up to the first Gulf War, "Simply put, it's about jobs, jobs, jobs..." But Iraq was not refusing to sell its oil when went to war. On the contrary, the United States and the United Nations had put a boycott on Iraq in response to its invasion of Kuwait. The boycott was relaxed under the Oil-for-Food Programme, established by the United Nations in 1995 that allowed Iraq to sell oil on the world market in exchange for food, medicine,



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and other humanitarian needs for ordinary Iraqi citizens. Nevertheless, the liberation of Kuwait had nothing to do with our national security, though it became the pretext for our greatly expanded military presence in the Middle East.

Realizing that every crisis provides an opportunity for expanded government power, the George H.W. Bush administration seized on the Iraq invasion of Kuwait as the pretext for a creating a powerful international military coalition under the authority of the United Nations. On a date that seemed unremarkable at the time, the first President Bush in his September 11, 1990 speech to a joint session of Congress exulted in the opportunity to expanded the power of U.N. to act as arbiter of the issues of war and peace throughout the world.

"We're now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders," Bush said, being careful not to mention that the UN's founders included Soviet spy Alger Hiss and others who believed the idea of free and independent nations was obsolete. Bush spoke in glowing, almost mystical terms of "a new world order" that would all but bring heaven on earth. It would leave the entire world "freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony. A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known. A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle. A world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice. A world where the strong respect the rights of the weak. This is the vision that I shared with President Gorbachev in Helsinki. He and other leaders from Europe, the Gulf, and around the world understand that how we manage this crisis today could shape the future for generations to come."

Alas, it could and already has. But what was clear then, and is even clearer 19 years later, is that the utopian "vision" that Bush gushed over as the cheerleader of a "new world order" is weakening rather than strengthening our safety and security by stretching our military and economic resources to the breaking point, while subordinating our national defense to the demands of a super global cop. And it could hardly have been encouraging that this "vision" for a new world order came to us endorsed by Mikhail Gorbachev, the former president of the Soviet Union.

President George W. Bush was smart enough-or his speechwriters were-to avoid invoking the "new world order" mantra when rallying the nation for a second Iraq war. And it is true that he attacked Iraq without authorization of the United Nations, even while citing UN resolutions as the basis for the invasion. But when several nations band together, with or without the UN banner, to attack another, smaller country and impose their will on it, it does not bode well for "a world where the strong respect the rights of the weak."

To bring, through a combination of conquest and coercion, the world's political, economic and military resources under the command of an all-powerful one world government is the ultimate goal of "a new world order." Oil is but a significant piece of that puzzle and a convenient excuse to apply our own and our allies' military might in the pursuit of a global empire.

Rangel may instinctively have guessed part of the "new world order" puzzle, but if he knows the rest of the story he probably does not find it politically expedient to say so.

Photo: House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) makes his statement on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 3, 2010: AP Images



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