

About This Issue

Several months ago I attended a conference of church activists who had come together in support of Palestinian rights.

What caught my attention, however, was a side remark by one of the conference organizers on the plight of the Iraqi people. Yes, he knew of the cruel effects of the sanctions, but, no, it was not our fault: "Saddam could end it today if he wanted to."

I suspect many — most? — Americans feel this way. So when *The Link* invited Geoff Simons to write about the situation in Iraq, we specifically asked him to address the question of culpability. More observers now use the word genocide, but who's to blame? Saddam Hussein readily comes to mind. But is he the only one? Or even the chief one? Pope John Paul II has scheduled a December visit to Iraq and, provided his health and strong pressure from the U.S. Administration to cancel his trip, don't deter him, we hope his visit — and this issue — generate a serious discussion of who's to blame for the deaths of 1.5 million people.

Geoff Simons lives in England and is the author of 48 books, including three on Iraq: "Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam" (1996); "The Scourging of Iraq: Sanctions, Law and Natural Justice" (1998); and "Iraq, Primus Inter Pariah: A Crisis Chronology 1997-98" (1999). His books are listed in our abridged catalog on pages 14 – 16.

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

IRAQ

Who's To Blame?

BY GEOFF SIMONS

PUNISHING THE PEOPLE

The "wards of death" in Iraqi hospitals are like scenes from a horror film, a hellish symbol of the deliberate extermination of a people. The West, mainly the United States, has devastated and poisoned a nation, reducing millions of helpless babies, children, men and women to starvation, disease, and penury. Sanctions deny this civilian population food, drinkable water and medical relief in adequate supply.

The soaring cancer rate among children, caused by the uranium ordnance used against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, is only one of the graphic tortures inflicted on innocent civilians by Washington's strategic planners. Ten-year-old Faisal Abbas, treated in Dr. Ali Ismail's pediatric cancer ward—a way-station for dying children—bled to death from the leukemia that would have been treatable with adequate drugs. Noor Mohamed Younis, 2½ years old, had an eye removed to stop cancer reaching her brain, and was scheduled to have her other eye removed. Another child, Ahmed Fleah, began

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bleeding from his mouth, eyes, ears, nose and rectum. It took him two weeks to die.

The unborn, too, are ravaged. Plastic surgeon Ala Bashir notes "an astonishing rise in congenital abnormalities." Dr. Jenan Ali, working in Basra, has photographed full-term babies to record the "bunch of grapes" syndrome, reminiscent of what happened in the Pacific Islands after nuclear testing in the 1950s. Some of the babies had no brain, no face, no eyes; others had limbs fused together.

Dr. Ali showed English journalist Felicity Arbuthnot a tiny baby that was making small bleating noises. The baby had no genitalia, no eyes, nose, tongue, hands or esophagus; its twisted legs were joined by a thick web of flesh from the knees. Many babies had been born with similar conditions, Dr. Ali said, and radiation levels in the area were alarming.

Maggie O'Kane, reporting in The (London) Guardian, quoted Dr. Zenad Mohammed of the Saddam Hussein Teaching Hospital in Basra: "[In] August [1998] we had three babies born with no heads. Four had abnormally large heads. In September we had six with no heads In October, one with no head, four with big heads and four with deformed limbs or other types of deformities."

The cancers and deformities are occurring in the tens of thousands against a background of massive deprivation deliberately sustained by the U.S.-imposed sanctions regime. (I deliberately use the term "U.S.-imposed" — rather than U.N.-imposed — because it is the United States that has controlled the U.N. Security Council on this issue and it would be misleading to give the U.N. "flag of convenience" unwarranted credibility.)

By 1999, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was reporting that more than a million Iraqi children under 5 were suffering from chronic malnutrition, inevitably resulting in stunted physical and mental growth. Radio-

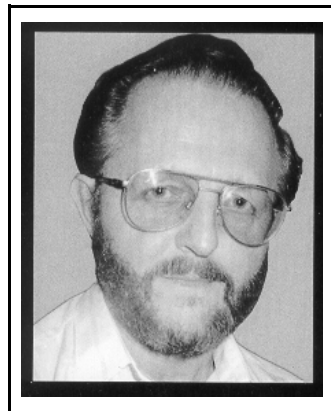
activity and other pollution continue to seep into the water table and to affect the food chain. Water-treatment plants cannot be repaired. Frequent power cuts cause pumps to stop, the pressure in leaking water pipes to fall, and raw sewage to be sucked into the system and to run out of domestic taps. The millions of children and adults who lack adequate nutrition are poorly equipped to fight the resulting disease.

UNICEF has judged that nearly half a million Iraqi children are suffering from acute malnutrition. Kwashiorkor, precipitated by diets lacking in protein in sufficient quantity and/or quality, can develop within one or two weeks and is rapidly fatal if untreated. These cases are turning up in the hundreds at hospitals that lack the resources to treat them. Thousands more are dying in the rural areas. In every disease category, for every age group, the morbidity and mortality figures have soared.

The most recent UNICEF report, published jointly with the Iraqi Government on 12 August 1999, deserves particular scrutiny. Based on 24,000 households with children under the age of 5, the report draws a distinction between the condition of children in the Kurdish north, where U.N. officials run the food and medical program, and those areas in central and southern Iraq under the control of President Saddam Hussein.

Deaths of children under 5 in the south and central parts, where 85 percent of the children live, more than doubled, from 56 deaths for each 1,000 live births in 1984-1989 to 131 in 1994-1999. In the northern Kurdish areas, however, the death rate for children under 5 actually declined from 80 every 1,000 births in 1984-1989 to 72 in 1994-1999.

The U.S. State Department was quick to put its pro-sanctions spin on these statistics. Spokesman James Rubin commented: "It is our



Geoff Simons, who writes from his home in England, is the author of a wide range of successful books. His work has been translated into a dozen languages and many of his titles appear on university reading lists. He was formerly chief editor and managing editor of

view that the fact that in northern Iraq the mortality rate is improving, with the same sanctions regime as the rest of Iraq, shows that in places where Saddam Hussein isn't manipulating the medicines and the supplies, this works."¹ The manipulation charge is a reference to media reports that the Iraqi Government has been warehousing medicines for military use.

The State Department knows better. It knows that the northern areas are faring better because the Kurdish per capita distribution from the oil-for-food program is much higher than in the rest of Iraq. It knows, too, that Kurdish areas benefit from the smuggling that is commonplace along the northern border with Turkey.

And the State Department is certainly aware that while revenues from oil-for-food help to pay for the U.N. to coordinate the distribution of food and medicine in the north, they only cover the imported materials themselves in the areas under Saddam Hussein's control.

The U.N.'s Hans von Sponeck, head of the agency responsible for monitoring the distribution of humanitarian relief in Iraq, has addressed the stockpiling accusations when meeting with delegations of the human rights group Voices in the Wilderness. While he acknowledges some stockpiling has occurred, he disputes that it is done out of malice or for military purposes. "What the military in a war situation needs in terms of medicine is not the kind of medicine that we are bringing in for normal diseases and illnesses," he said.²

Von Sponeck attributes overstocking to multiple causes, including underpaid workers and insufficient transport. Bulges in the distribution pipeline can appear simply because outlying warehouses are in disrepair.

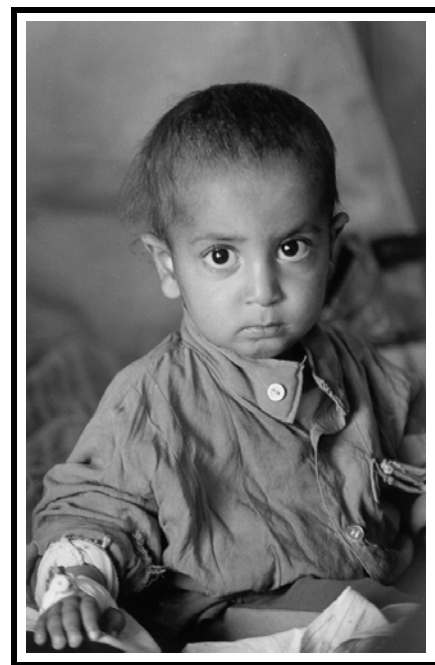
Denis Halliday, former UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, has noted that appearances of overstocking also can be explained by the Security Council's long delay in approving distribution contracts in central and southern Iraq. The Council has been sitting on requests for refrigerator trucks to transport medicine and computers needed for inventory control. Much of Iraq's existing transport remains crippled or inoperative because sanctions block the import of spare parts.

Meanwhile, the children continue to die. At the pediatric hospital in the al-Askan district of Baghdad, children are dying at a rate nearing 100 a month, 10 times as many as before the 1991 war. Dr. Raad Al-Janabi, the hospital's chief doctor, struggles to cope in impossible circumstances: "We're really suffering. We have a shortage of everything. ...The effects of the drug shortage are compounded by the increased malnutrition. [It is] a vicious circle."

Not only do Iraqis continue to die in the thousands every month as a result of starvation and disease, they also continue to be killed in a persistent—and largely unreported—bombing campaign. Few people realize that more bombs have been dropped on Iraq in 1999 than during the late-1998 military onslaught of Operation Desert Fox.

Columbia University professor Edward Said, acknowledging that Saddam Hussein is "a dreadful ruler, a disaster for his country," has noted the "sheer sadistic cruelty" of American policy designed "to tighten the screw of sanctions on poor, starving, sick people."

Iraqi child with leukemia, Basra Pediatric and Maternity Hospital.



—Copyright 1998
Alan Pogue

The World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Food Program and other bodies have repeatedly drawn attention to the worsening conditions of the Iraqi civilian population, and how the sanctions regime prevents any amelioration of the suffering. Malaria, for example, almost entirely eradicated prior to sanctions, today shows a 20-fold increase over 1989. This causes, among other things, anemia in children and mothers, low birth-weight in the newborn, and increased mortality in every age category.

In early 1999 the World Food Program reported continuing health and nutritional problems in the civilian population, particularly among children under 5, and announced plans to target 200,000 acutely malnourished children and their families. At the same time, UNICEF and the Iraqi Ministry of Health were reporting that acute malnutrition among children was increasing. By 1999, 8.3 percent of all infants up to 11 months of age were in this category.

The harsh punishment of the Iraqi civilian population is well known by Western politicians, U.N. officials, aid-workers, journalists, academics and others. The information is there in the public domain, if anyone cares to notice. Washington strategists rely on public apathy and the comprehensive demonizing of "Saddam." (One American journal even retouched his moustache so that it resembled Hitler's.)

In particular, the United Nations, having authorized one of the most vicious sanctions regimes in history, is well briefed about the creeping extermination of a people. The relevant documents lodged with the United Nations are copious and plain.

A 22 February 1999 report of the U.N. Secretary General variously acknowledges that foodstuffs were not arriving "in sufficient quantities;" that "none of the monthly food baskets" met defined targets; that American bombing had destroyed a storehouse in Tikrit containing 2,600 tons of rice; that lack of transport was impeding the distribution of medical supplies; that the level

of general malnutrition had changed "very little in the past two years;" that the water distribution network was "deteriorating rapidly;" that only 41 percent of the rural population had access to clean water; that the availability of water-treatment chemicals had been reduced; and that in some areas, because of the lack of suitable equipment, it was no longer possible to clean sewage networks.

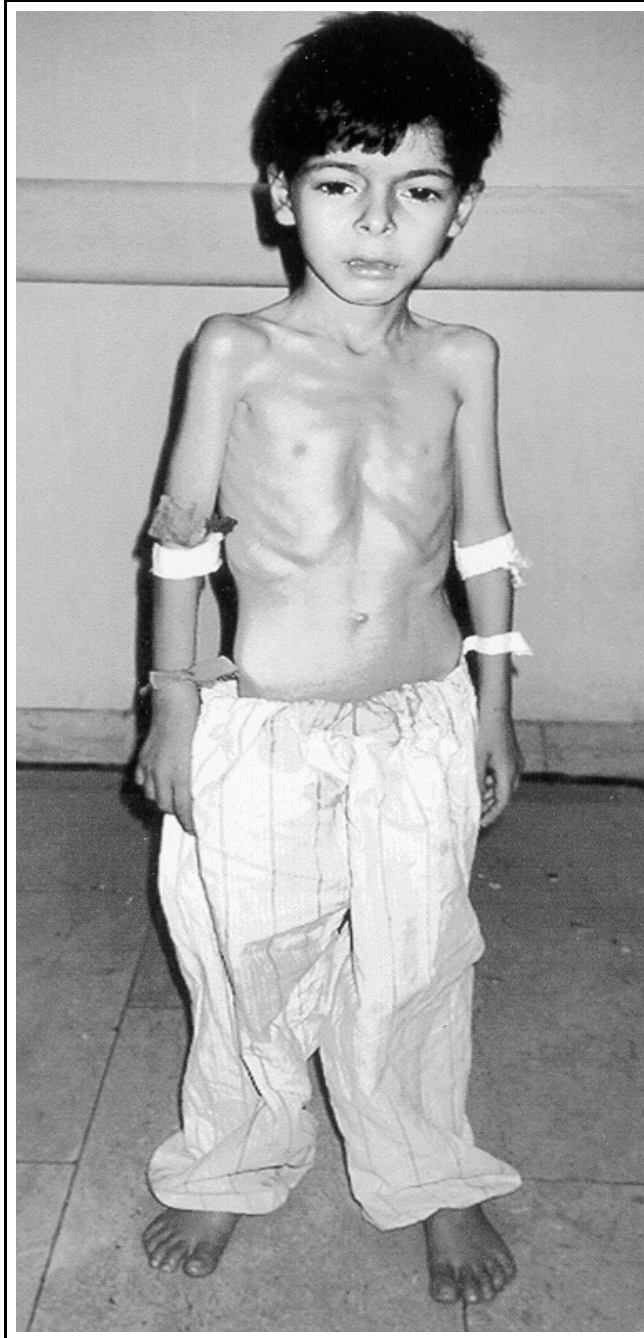
The dismal catalogue runs on. As water filters and pipes become clogged with filth, increased volumes of raw sewage are discharged into rivers that provide drinking water.

A Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report notes a 30 percent drop in crop production, caused in part by frequent power failures. A recent outbreak of hoof and mouth disease, affecting one million cattle and sheep, has not been adequately contained because of the insufficient supply of vaccines. If enough vaccines had been supplied they could not have been safely stored or used because of the shortage of cold storage units and trucks.

The supply of pesticides and herbicides amounts to less than 10 percent of the amounts needed, and even this miserable quantity often does "not arrive in time for optimal application." On top of this man-made scourge, Iraq also is experiencing its worst drought in nearly 100 years.

Iraq's inability to adequately maintain its power system affects every sector of the society. Power failures exacerbate the human misery in hospitals. Efforts to produce food are thwarted when land cannot be irrigated and poultry dies in hatcheries dependent on electricity for temperature control. Yet the United States has blocked the supply of 25 mobile diesel generators ordered to boost the collapsing power system, despite Iraq's acceptance of all the conditions specified for their use.

A letter of 13 May 1999 from



Dead Child Walking

Wisam Khaldoun, 6, died in October 1998 from malnutrition. He died at Yarmouk Children's Hospital in Baghdad—on the day this picture was taken. Malnutrition already had claimed his three brothers. Wisam's last meal was chopped cucumbers his mother fed him in the hospital. "When the sanctions are over, are all my kids coming back to me?" Wisam's mother asked.

—Photo by Lorraine al-Rawi

the U.N. Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council draws attention to findings of experts from the International Telecommunication Union following a visit to Iraq: the entire telecommunications infrastructure is deteriorating "to such an extent that the quality of service is beyond comprehension." To restore the system would cost more than \$1-billion and could take 10 years, but there are no funds, in U.N. provisions or elsewhere, for such a level of essential investment. This is symbolic of the Iraqi situation.

In March 1999, The (London) Daily Telegraph reported that Iraq was "reverting to the Stone Age" under the impact of the sanctions regime. A nation had lost hope. Pupils went to school hungry, if they went at all. Iraq used to lead the Arab world in technological expertise, but now a teacher could say: "Is it realistic to think that you can become a doctor or an engineer in these conditions? How can you grasp the subject matter when you have an empty stomach?"

A U.N. panel established to investigate the humanitarian situation in Iraq issued its report on 30 March 1999. It praises the pre-1991 health care system and draws attention to its subsequent appalling decline under sanctions. Formerly the health care system "was based on an extensive expanding network of health facilities linked up by reliable communications and a large fleet of service vehicles and ambulances." UNICEF noted that "a national welfare system was in place to assist orphans or children with disabilities and support the poorest families."

Turning to current conditions, the panel reported "a continuing degradation of the Iraqi economy with an acute deterioration in the living conditions of the Iraqi population and severe strains on its social fabric." The infant mortality rates, once impressively low, were now "among the highest in the world," with the for-

merly excellent health care system "in a decrepit state."

The panel concluded: "The gravity of the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people is indisputable and cannot be overstated. ... The data from different sources as well as qualitative assessments of bona fide observers and sheer common sense analysis of economic variables converge and corroborate this evaluation."

Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN) is rare among American politicians in criticizing the sanctions. At a meeting of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power on 26 March 1999, Wellstone said: "I have seen reports on the number of innocents who have died in Iraq. I have met with reputable doctors who have traveled there. The sanctions have been devastating. I don't doubt that Saddam doesn't care a whit about his people, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't care."

Writing in the May-June 1999 Foreign Affairs journal, widely read by America's foreign policy establishment, Gregory Gause III commented: "American policymakers need to recognize that the only 'box' into which sanctions put Iraq is coffins."³

RESOLUTION 986 – OIL FOR WHAT?

But what about U.N. Security Council Resolution (SCR) 986? Doesn't it allow Iraq to sell oil for the purchase of humanitarian goods in adequate quantities? At one level, 986—the "oil-for-food" resolution—did represent a partial Iraqi victory, but only briefly. It signaled that the world was becoming aware that an entire nation was being starved to death and that—in the name of simple humanity—some relief should be allowed.

But after Resolution 986 was passed on 14 April 1995, Washington strategists soon turned it into a propaganda advantage. They relied on rarely quoted sections of 986 that stipulate that revenues from oil sales could be siphoned off for the benefit of the Kuwaitis and the Americans, thus significantly reducing the funds available for food and medical supplies. Paragraph 8, for example, directs that part of the oil revenues are to be fed into the Gulf War Compensation Fund to pay for the U.N. weapons inspectors, various U.N. administration costs, and any other "reasonable expenses" that may be determined by Washington. The fund currently consumes 30 percent of Iraqi oil revenues.

At the same time, a massively cumbersome contracting system was established that enables the delivery of humanitarian goods to be effectively thwarted at many stages of the process. Contracts can be blocked without explanation by members of the U.N. Iraq Sanctions Committee; "unauthorized" charities are prohibited from supplying food and medicines to Iraq; and companies are banned from supplying free humanitarian goods.

Meanwhile Resolution 986, with its humanitarian pretensions, provides a useful propaganda cover for the continued

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—Sen. Paul Wellstone

extermination of the Iraqi civilian population by starvation and preventable disease, an assertion amply supported by many U.N.-approved studies and reports.

The most recent confirmation of the mocking nature of the oil-for-food program came in a 4 May 1999 letter from President Bill Clinton to Bill Archer (R-TX), chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee. Replying to Archer's letter complaining that the domestic oil industry was being injured "so Iraq can sell more oil," Clinton wrote that "without the oil-for-food program we could not maintain the sanctions, and without the sanctions we could [not] . . . hope to bring a more responsible government to power in Iraq."

Lest his Texas oil constituents miss the point, Archer summarized it for them in an article printed in Energy Houston: "Without a doubt, the situation of the Iraqi people is miserable and deserves pity. But President Clinton as much as admits that the food-for-oil program is more a public relations program than anything else."⁴

In February 1998, the U.N. Secretary General observed: "Further consideration of the nutritional requirements of the Iraqi population by United Nations nutritional experts has concluded that the target level was too low to provide the requisite nutritional security." Thus, even if the 986 goals were being met—which they were not—they would have been totally inadequate. In May 1998, Eric Fait, the spokesman for the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, declared that the nutritional status of Iraqi children, more than a quarter of whom were malnourished, had failed to improve over the previous year

Although the permitted revenue levels were raised in post-986 Resolutions 1153 and 1175, they could not be realized because of the decaying state of the Iraqi oil industry, still suffering from the bombing devastation, and because oil prices had plunged on world markets. A U.N. Secretary General report, dated 1 September 1998, noted that despite Iraq's efforts to pump more oil, there would be "a decline in the total revenue," falling "far short" of the intended humanitarian plan.

At this stage, no independent observers believed that the provisions of 986 and its later enhancements were succeeding in meeting the nutritional and medical needs of the Iraqi civilian population. According to UNICEF, the oil-for-food program had made no "measurable difference to the young children of Iraq in terms of their nutritional status."

On 2 July 1998, U.N. Under-Secretary Benon Sevan, also Executive Director of the U.N. Oil-for-Food Program, was reported as admitting that the program was never meant to meet all the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, and that "some tough choices" had to be made. At the same time, there was evidence that Washington was blocking 40 contracts Baghdad had signed for the supply of spare parts to repair its collapsing oil industry.

Nizar Hamdoon, the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations, published a letter to the U.N. Secretary General letter (27 October 1998) deploring the manifest failure of the U.N. plan as measured in three governorates of northern Iraq (with governorates elsewhere probably doing even worse). Over the 22-month period ending in October, 1998, humanitarian relief deliveries were abysmally short of target, 62 percent under in medical supplies, for example, and 74 percent under in water and sanitation facilities. For the first five months of the phase that began in October, 1998, the humanitarian program was vir-

tually non-existent, no deliveries whatsoever in medical supplies and in some other categories.

Why had the program ground to a halt? What was being done to rectify the situation? The U.N. and other claimants were continuing to tap into Iraq's oil revenues according to 986 (8), but thousands of Iraqi babies, children and adults continued to die every month through starvation and preventable disease. With remarkable restraint Ambassador Hamdoun commented that the situation raised "serious questions" about whether the U.N. agencies were capable of administering the program in view of their failure to mitigate "the suffering of our people."

The Iraqi government could not be blamed for the failure of the program. In July 1999, following his three-week inspection of Iraq, the U.N.'s Benon Sevan told reporters that Baghdad had legitimate complaints about the program. Large amounts of food and medicines arriving in Iraq were "substandard, damaged or unusable."⁵

Journalist George Alagiah, writing for The (London) Independent, commented, in line with other observers and U.N. officials, that the Iraqi government "runs an exemplary distribution process." Denis Halliday, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator who resigned in protest at the destruction of a nation, noted: "The fact is that oil-for-food is a failure. Anything that sustains malnutrition at 30 percent and leads to the death of so many thousands is a failure."

In March 1999, even the British government, in a rare departure from the U.S. State Department line, admitted that the "oil-for-food" program was not "able to do all that was envisaged" due to the fall in oil prices and the appalling state of Iraq's bomb-damaged oil infrastructure: "The needs of the Iraqi people are not being fully met. There is a growing sense of urgency for measures to be taken to address this situation."

THE CONTINUOUS WAR

For Washington, even the remorseless sanctions campaign is insufficient. The CIA has sponsored failed coup attempts against Saddam Hussein and, in 1998, Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act that provides \$93 million per year for groups trying to overthrow the Iraqi regime. But most insidious is the on-

going bombing campaign against a largely defenseless nation.

In December, 1998, Operation Desert Fox was a high-profile, no-holds-barred bombing assault to teach Saddam Hussein and his people yet another lesson. Since then, however, the U.S. has conducted a low-profile, little-publicized campaign of near daily bombings that have caused massive cumulative devastation. This on-going bombardment is justified by the U.S. Government on the grounds of "self-defense," that is bombs are dropped only when U.S. aircraft patrolling the so-called "no-fly" zones come under threat from Iraqi defenses.

"Self-defense" did not figure into the analysis that was written by former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter and published 16 August 1999 in The New York Times. He referred only to "bombing missions" — 115 of them so far in 1999. Ritter called these attacks a "war of attrition" aimed at weakening Iraqi control in the north and south.

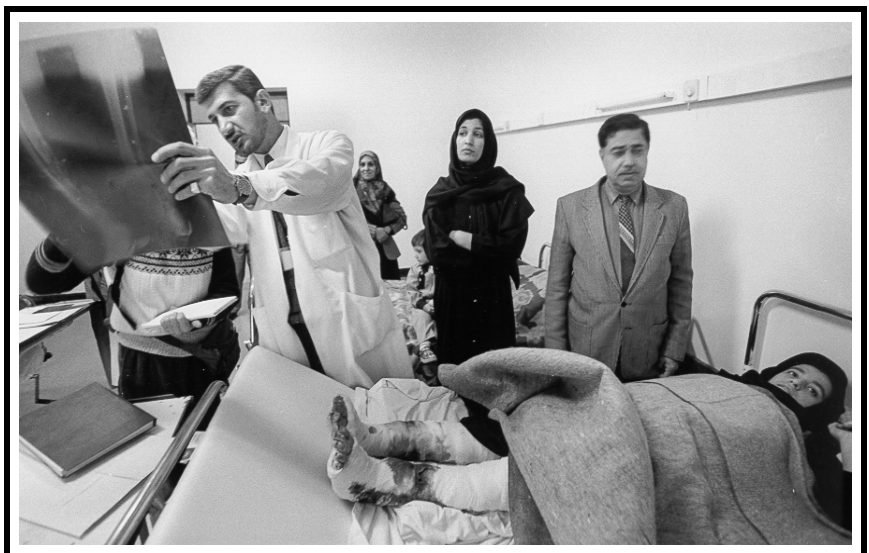
In fact, the no-fly zones themselves have no basis in international law; they appear in no Security Council resolutions and represent a gross violation of Iraqi sovereignty. The United Nations was never consulted—a fact admitted by U.K. Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd: "Not every action that an American government, a British government or a French government takes has to be underwritten by a specific provision in a U.N. resolution." This disregard of U.N. provisions is clearly acknowledged in a research paper produced by the British House of Commons library, which concludes that the "air-exclusion zone ... is not formally within the orbit of U.N. authority."⁶

The U.S. Government claims that "radar sites" or "missile sites" or "air defense installations" are being targeted as "self-defense" measures, whereas many of the targets are water-storage facilities, oil terminals and civilian areas. In November 1998, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed concern that "the Americans are desperately looking for any excuse to crank up the pressure and send the bombers in." The result was Operation Desert Fox, the massive four-night bombing assault that began on 16 December 1998. The U.S. Navy launched more than 325 cruise missiles, the U.S. Air Force nearly a hundred—twice as many cruise missiles as were launched through the whole of the 1991 Gulf War. American and British bomb-

'Operation Desert Fox'

Surgeon at Yarmouk Hospital in Baghdad looks at X-ray of young Iraqi woman whose legs were fractured by U.S. missile fragments during the "Operation Desert Fox" bombing in December, 1998. White spots can be seen on the X-rays where shrapnel remains imbedded. Patient's parents are at the bedside.

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ers—lacking any U.N. or other legal justification—flew 650 sorties, with RAF Tornados dropping some 50 2,000-pound bombs.

The non-military targets included: the Hail Adel residential area outside Baghdad, the Baghdad Teaching Hospital, the main grain silo in Tikrit, the Basra oil refinery, the Baath Baghdad Academic Institute, the Baghdad Museum of Natural History, the Tikrit Teaching Hospital, and the Baghdad Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (responsible for the distribution of food rations.)

Peter Burleigh, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, described what happened to a letter sent by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to the U.S. urging further negotiations to prevent the bombing: “We tore it up.” After the bombing, Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi deputy premier, subsequently reported fewer than 100 military casualties, with civilian casualties “much, much higher.” Iraqi doctors in Baghdad reported hundreds of civilian casualties. Nizar Hamdoon spoke of “thousands” of civilian casualties throughout Iraq.

Operation Desert Fox was over, but not the bombings. On 31 December 1998, 7 January 1999, and 25 January 1999, U.S. aircraft fired missiles allegedly at Iraqi anti-aircraft targets. The 25 January attack killed a dozen civilians in the working-class neighborhood of al-Jumhuriya on the outskirts of Basra. (The Pentagon admitted that missiles had hit residential areas.) American and British aircraft launched fresh bombing attacks on 2 February, allegedly against air defense radar sites. Limited publicity was given to the fact that two missiles had “gone astray” the previous week, killing 17 civilians, including 10 children, and wounding 100 others.

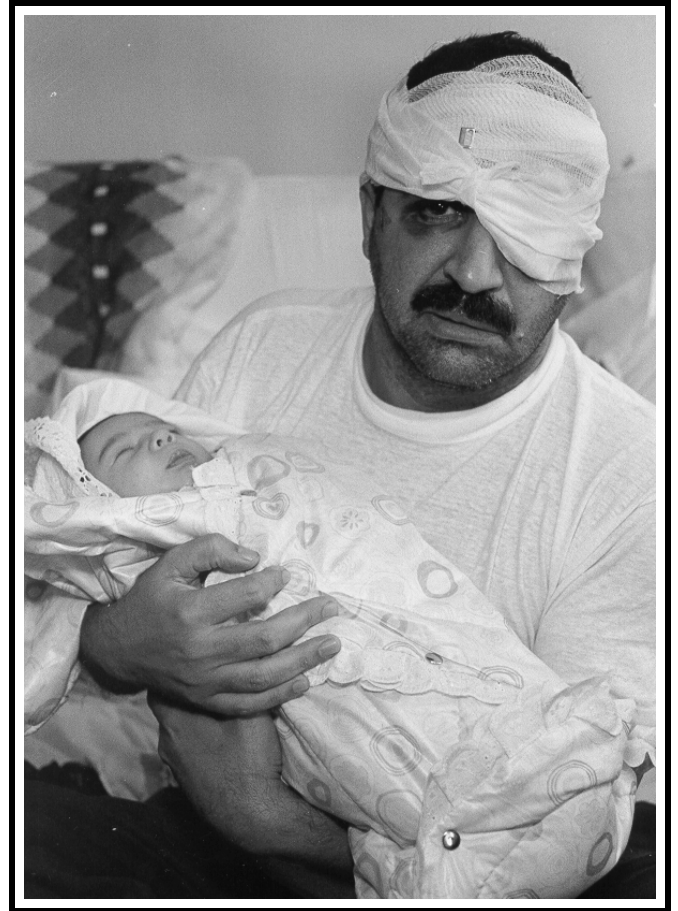
On 15 February, U.S. aircraft fired missiles in various parts of Iraq, killing more civilians. On this occasion bombing sorties were flown over Basra, Dhi Qar and Maysan, causing dozens of casualties.

The American strategy was plain. The Washington Post of 31 January 1999 quoted a senior U.S. Administration official involved in the decision making as saying, “It’s a way of pursuing an objective in a way that everyone’s comfortable with. You get things done without rocking any boats. If we started a broad bombing campaign people would say, ‘What provoked this?’” According to The (London) Observer of 7 February 1999: “The United States is fighting—undebated and virtually unreported—a low-level but determined war against Iraq.”

The U.S. was acknowledging dozens of attacks and a gradually expanding range of targets. A Pentagon official admitted that in addition to the obvious military targets, missiles were being fired at “strategic and political buildings.” A U.N. diplomat noted that, “We seem to have left the Americans with a brief to do more or less as they see fit.”

In March, according to a report in the International Herald Tribune, a U.S. government official acknowledged that the target range had been increased. “Absolutely this is an escalation,” he remarked.⁷

According to U.S. defense briefing documents, between 20 December 1998 (the end of Operation Desert Fox) through February, 1999, 86 laser-guided bombs had been used against Iraq, 66 since 30 January. On 28 February, a range of targets was hit, including Iraq’s only operating crude oil pipeline between



‘Americans Have a Big Heart’

Jasim Risun and his 3-week-old baby were hospitalized with injuries they received when a U.S. missile struck their home in Baghdad during the December, 1998, bombing assault. Other members of his family were more severely injured. Risun, who holds a Ph.D. in engineering, told photographer Alan Pogue: “The Americans have a big heart. Why do they not have a big heart for the Iraqi people? There should not be another Hiroshima in Iraq.”

—Copyright 1998 Alan Pogue

Kirkuk and the southern Turkish port of Ceyhan; the flow of crude oil, associated with the farcical “oil-for-food” plan, was stopped and three more civilians were killed. On 1 March, U.S. aircraft dropped 30 laser-guided bombs on various parts of Iraq, the biggest single bombardment since Operation Desert Fox.

And the war continues. On 2 April, bombs hit a residential area in Qadissiya province and an oil industry communications station, causing more casualties. Again, the occasional journalist was briefly noting the “undeclared war.” The bombing of the oil pumping station serving the Mina al-Bakr oil terminal in the area of Abi Al-Khasib in the Basra province again stopped Iraq’s

main pumping activity. Iraq's Ambassador to the U.N., Saeed H. Hasan, called attention to the U.S. and U.K. plan "to perpetuate military aggression against Iraq quietly and with a minimum of fanfare, as several United States officials have described it."

On 11 April, two Iraqis were killed and nine wounded in further bombing raids on Qadissiya province; a week later, fuel tanks jettisoned by American military aircraft destroyed homes in a residential area and killed several civilians.

On 30 April, American aircraft dropped five 500-pound bombs on an open agricultural area, killing Jirjis Ayub Sultan, 60, and five members of his family. More than 100 of the sheep they were tending were killed as well (documented in CNN broadcasts showing the bodies of the bombed sheep). There are no military targets in the area of Ninevah where the bombing occurred.

Journalist Felicity Arbuthnot went to the scene. "Walking amongst the decaying sheep's corpses, the dead sheepdog lying at the head of his flock, turning pieces of metal with one's foot, viewing the distance debris had been hurled, the blackened crater where a 500-pound bomb landed, made me shiver," she wrote in *Middle East International*.⁸

Hassan Yunis Ayub, a friend and relative of the victims, told Ms. Arbuthnot what was found after the bombing. "The old man (Jirjis) lost his head, arms and legs. Only his torso was left. We searched for bodies, but could gather only pieces."

And the indiscriminate murder goes on: 24 Iraqis wounded by bombing elsewhere on 30 April; three killed on 8 May; four on 9 May. On 12 May, U.S. aircraft, supposedly acting in "self-defense," killed 12 Iraqis in their tents, wounded many others, and slaughtered 200 animals in the same attack.

Reuters reported that from 14 to 17 people were killed and 17 injured on 18 July when missiles struck passenger vehicles, a market and parking lot in the southern Iraqi town of Manathira. Salma Ayad was cleaning her family's house overlooking the highway when the missiles struck, according to Reuters. "When the attack was over, Salma, 16, and her six younger sisters were left alone, their parents dead." The car carrying their parents was hit by a missile as they were driving near the family home. On 29 and 30 July, U.S. and British bombing raids over northern and southern Iraq killed a further 17 civilians.

The high-profile Desert Fox onslaught of December 1998 and the on-going low-profile bombings through 1999 have yielded hundreds of thousands of casualties, either directly as fatalities and wounded or indirectly through the bombing of grain stocks, water storage facilities and oil terminals. To the obvious maiming and deaths through whatever cause should be added the countless thousands of traumatized children and adults, terrified at the sound of every approaching aircraft, a further burden on a massively deprived and decaying society.

WHOSE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION?

Weapons of mass destruction is what it's all about, we are told. And the price—killing children by the hundreds of thousands to insure elimination of these weapons—is worth it, we are told.

Saddam Hussein is said to possess hidden weapons-making facilities, hidden arsenals and hidden motives. Or, if he doesn't actually possess conventional weapons of mass destruction, he

may put anthrax in a suitcase or spray it from a propeller-driven plane ("the anthrax airforce"). When sanctions are up for renewal, we are told of some new horror to justify the infliction of starvation and disease on civilians.

In June 1998, for example, when consideration of renewal was still on the U.N. agenda, U.S. scientists told us they had found evidence of the VX chemical warfare agent on warhead remnants. Later, after the VX scare had done the job and the sanctions remained safely in force, a Swiss laboratory reported that it "did not find any chemical-warfare-related chemicals," and French experts observed that the detected chemical "could also have been used for the purpose of chemical destruction of biological warfare agents."⁹

However, in July 1999, experts from The Hague-based organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons found seven vials, three opened, of VX samples in a U.N. laboratory in Baghdad. Suspicions were immediately aroused that American and British personnel preserved the samples in order to contaminate Iraqi missile warheads. On 27 July, Washington and London battled in the U.N. Security Council for the destruction of the vials to avoid further investigation of their purpose.

Today, few believe that Saddam Hussein is a serious threat to his neighbors, most of whom—particularly Israel—possess a copious inventory of weapons of mass destruction.

But what can be said of America's weapons and their deployment?

Fuel-air explosives (FAEs), used against Iraq in 1991, cause, according to weaponry expert Michael Klare, "nuclear-like levels of destruction without arousing popular revulsion." Does the acres-wide fireball of an FAE qualify it as a weapon of mass destruction? A Rockeye cluster bomb contains 247 "anti-personnel" grenades that individually explode into 2,000 high-velocity razor-sharp fragments that effectively shred people into mincemeat over a wide acreage. A weapon of mass destruction? Then there is the matter of depleted-uranium ordnance with its insidious effects.

Depleted uranium (DU) is a highly toxic and radioactive by-product of the uranium enrichment process used in nuclear reactors. Highly dense, it is extremely good at piercing armor and very effective when added to anti-tank ordnance. In testimony cited by the World Court (2 June 1999), the United States representative "explicitly stressed that depleted uranium is in standard use" by the U.S. Army.

According to the U.S. Army Environmental Policy Institute, more than 940,000 uranium-tipped bullets and 14,000 large caliber DU rounds were used by the U.S. in the 1991 Gulf War. Britain also used DU ordnance. Cruise missiles, employed through the 1990s against Iraq (and against Serbia in 1999), make use of DU. On impact, DU ordnance vaporizes, burning alive anyone in the vicinity and creating a vast cloud of radioactive dust.

The problem is that DU emits alpha particles that are 20 times more dangerous than beta or gamma rays; insidiously, these particles destroy normal cells inside the body and "cause problems in the kidney or cause cells in the lungs to mutate and become cancerous," according to Douglas Collins of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, division director of Nuclear Safety in Atlanta.¹⁰

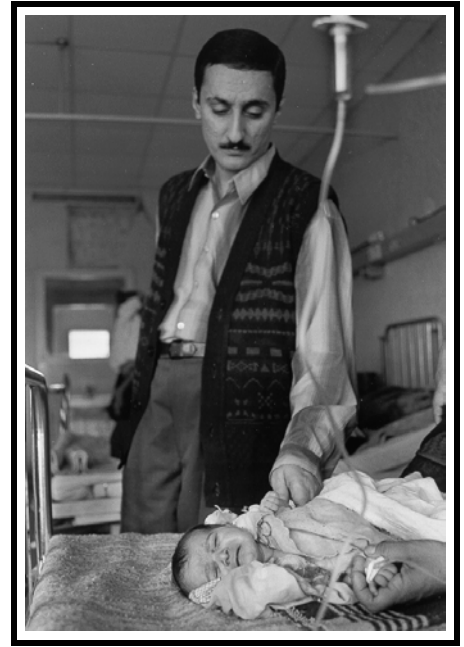
That DU is carcinogenic is well established. A publication of



Death Watch

Dr. Abdul Ferros Abass (right) of the Basra Pediatric and Maternity Hospital sees babies die every day for want of medicine. This infant, photographed by Alan Pogue on Christmas Day 1998, suffered from severe anemia. At left, Asma Leith, a 15-year-old at the Girls Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad, depicts a student waving goodbye to dead classmates.

—Photo copyright 1998 Alan Pogue



the U.S. General Accounting Office notes the cancer risk posed by ingested DU dust.¹¹ Marvin Resnikoff of Radioactive Management Associates discussed the cancer-causing risks of DU ordnance in testimony cited by the World Court: "Once inhaled, fine uranium particles can lodge in the lung alveolar and reside there for the remainder of one's life ... uranium increases the probability of lung cancer ... it increases the probability of bone cancer, or, in the bone marrow, leukemia. Uranium also resides in soft tissue, including the gonads, increasing the probability of genetic health effects, including birth defects and spontaneous abortion."

Such effects, declares Resnikoff, "are listed in numerous references." Thus the U.S. has significant culpability for the soaring cancer rates—particularly among children—in the Iraqi civilian population. And to compound the criminality, the United States now denies a suffering populace the anti-cancer drugs that are known to be effective in many cases.

According to the Pentagon's own figures, American forces in the Gulf War fired at least 860,000 DU rounds or approximately 320 tons of depleted uranium. This has left a trail of radioactive toxic waste that lasts forever, according to Doug Rokke, a DU expert formerly at the Pentagon. "It doesn't go away. It only disperses and blows around in the wind."¹²

Given the lag time between exposure to radiation and evidence of its consequences, William Davros, a radiation specialist at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, said he "would have been surprised [to see cancer] two years after the war. I would expect to see it now."¹³ And, indeed, recent studies have shown a resulting increase in many cancers, particularly among children. One U.N. study shows significantly increased rates of leukemia.¹⁴ At the same time, a substantial increase in spontaneous abortions and congenital abnormalities has been recorded in many parts of Iraq.

Journalist Maggie O'Kane, writing in *The (London) Guardian*, described a typical scene in an Iraqi maternity ward. As

Suad Jope awaited the birth of her baby, Dr. Haifa Ashahine, a senior gynecologist at the pediatric hospital in southern Iraq, observed: "See, the spine ends here. There is no head." He was not shocked because he had seen it all before: "If it is not a child without a brain, then maybe it's one with a giant head, stumpy arms like those of a thalidomide victim, two fingers instead of five, a heart with missing valves, missing ears."

And what of the future? Scott Peterson, Middle East correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*, notes that the price of removing DU from the desert is prohibitive. The cost of cleaning 152,000 pounds of DU from 500 acres of the U.S. government's closed Jefferson Proving Ground in Indiana—one fourth the amount fired in the Gulf War—was four to five billion dollars. "The battlefields of the future will be unlike any in history," predicts Asaf Durakovic, former chief of nuclear medicine at the Wilmington, DE, Veterans Administration Medical Center. "Due to the delayed health effects from internal contamination from uranium, injury and death will remain lingering threats to 'survivors' of battles for decades into the future."¹⁵

Perhaps we should be more sensitive when we talk to the Iraqis about weapons of mass destruction.

SO IS IT GENOCIDE?

There is no dispute that the Iraqi civilian population has suffered, and continues to suffer, a massive and escalating catastrophe. There is debate about the scale of the catastrophe and the inevitable political disagreements about its causes. I suggest that when the facts are known, the conclusions are inescapable.

In December 1995, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that more than one million Iraqis had died—567,000 of them children—as a result of sanctions. The situation has massively deteriorated in the nearly five years since then. Madeleine Albright, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and now Secretary of State, was not prepared to disagree. When questioned in a "Sixty Minutes" interview by

Lesley Stahl about the half million Iraqi children killed by sanctions, Albright replied: "We think the price is worth it."¹⁶

In November 1996, Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General of the United States, referred to the "genocidal sanctions" that had killed 1,500,000 Iraqi, including 750,000 children under 5. In November 1997, President Clinton declared that "sanctions will be there until the end of time, or as long as he [Saddam Hussein] lasts." By 1998, many observers were referring to sanctions as a weapon of mass destruction. Since sanctions inevitably cause malnutrition, starvation, disease, and environmental pollution, they can accurately be regarded as a form of biological and chemical warfare.

In May 1998, Iraq itself was claiming that 1.5 million men, women and children had been killed by disease and malnutrition directly attributable to U.N. sanctions. Some 6,500 children under 5 were dying every month. In October 1998, English activist and academic Dr. James Thring drew up a legal paper charging Prime Minister Anthony Blair with "conspiring with others to perpetuate an act of genocide against people in Iraq" and that such "conspiracy to kill" was "an offense under the Genocide Act (1969)." Pope John Paul, addressing the sanctions in his 10 January 1998 State-of-the-World Address, said, "The weak and innocent cannot pay for mistakes for which they are not responsible."

In early 1999, English activists were campaigning to protest the 800,000 Iraqi children killed by sanctions since 1991. At the same time, heroic American charity workers (members of Voices in the Wilderness, for example) were struggling to transport medicines and toys to dying Iraqi children despite a written threat from the U.S. Department of the Treasury that such activities are punishable by "up to 12 years in prison and \$1 million in fines."

There is now increasing international recognition that genocide is being committed against the Iraqi people. In April 1999, Denis Halliday, the former U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, who resigned in protest at the draconian sanctions policy, was asked in an interview with the English journalist Miriam Ryle about his use of the word "genocide." He replied: "For many months I refused to use the word. ... What I say now is that there is no other way to describe the death of 1.5 million people, to describe the death of thousands of kids each month, to describe the death of almost 600,000 children since 1990. ... What else is that but genocide?"

On 11 December 1946, the U.N. General Assembly, in response to the horrors of the Second World War, passed resolution 96(1) to define genocide and denounce it as "a crime under international law." Genocide is defined as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of a group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life cal-

culated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

With the exception of (e), all of the defined genocidal acts currently are being practiced by the U.S.-dominated Security Council of the United Nations. (We should remember that when the United States ratified the Genocide Convention on 25 November 1988, it explicitly reserved the right to ignore its provisions.)

The high mortality rates afflicting the Iraqi civilian population through the 1990s are plainly evident. The connection between these death rates and the character of the sanctions regime is equally clear. What about intent? Just listen to Denis Halliday: "I believe the member states [of the Security Council] are sustaining, particularly London and Washington, a program of economic sanctions which they know is responsible for the death of thousands of people every month."

Today, in the second half of 1999, around 10,000 innocent Iraqis—6,000 of them children—are being killed by sanctions every month. And to the hundreds of thousands of dead must be added the millions suffering from malnutrition, disease, despair and unrelieved trauma.

Yes, it is genocide.

WHO'S TO BLAME?

Let us be clear. Saddam Hussein is a brutal tyrant. I have described his bloody rise to power in my book, "Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam."¹⁷ To maintain his grip on Iraq, he has relied on torture, murder and other sadistic forms of repression. But consider this also:

1. Syria's President Hafez al-Assad relies on torture and killed more of his own countrymen (10,000) in Hama in 1982 than did Saddam Hussein in Halabja (5,000) in 1988. Turkey, a NATO member using U.S.-supplied weapons, also employs torture and has razed as many thousands of Kurdish villages as Iraq has destroyed under Saddam Hussein. *Washington does not oppose Saddam Hussein because of his abuse of human rights, but because he threatens American interests.*
2. Israel has invaded and occupied parts of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Turkey has invaded and occupied parts of northern Iraq. Suharto, using U.S.-supplied arms, invaded and occupied East Timor. When Saddam Hussein launched his war against Iran in 1980, he was quickly and massively bankrolled by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The United States was an active ally of Iraq, go-

**"... There is no other way to describe the death of 1.5 million people, to describe the death of thousands of kids each month, to describe the death of almost 600,000 children since 1990. ... What else is that but genocide."
—Denis Halliday**

**"The weak and innocent cannot pay for mistakes for which they are not responsible."
—Pope John Paul**

ing so far as to bomb Iranian shipping in the Gulf. *Washington does not oppose Saddam Hussein because he is an aggressor, but because he threatens American interests.*

3. Before Saddam Hussein lost American support, long after the massacre of the Kurds at Halabja (which did not concern Washington at the time), the Iraqi people enjoyed a high standard of living, excellent health care, a highly developed educational system, and enlightened social programs.

It is in the context of the above facts that the economic sanctions against Iraq should be evaluated, and the following questions asked: Are the sanctions applied with integrity and in good faith? Are they working? Are they legal? Are they ethical?

ARE THE SANCTIONS APPLIED WITH INTEGRITY AND IN GOOD FAITH?

While no U.N. resolution prohibits Iraqi access to food and medical supplies, the United States continues to work hard to ensure a *de facto* block on the supply of humanitarian items in adequate quantity. This is done in many ways: blocking humanitarian contracts on bogus technical grounds (claiming that documents are incomplete, etc.), delaying contracts for consideration at some later date, prohibiting contracts for transport or electrical spare parts (making it impossible to distribute or cold-store foods and medical supplies in sufficient quantities), banning "unauthorized" charity groups, threatening "unauthorized" charity workers with \$1 million fines and long jail terms, bombing water plants, bombing oil installations (thus limiting oil sales that fund humanitarian purchases), and bombing schools, hospitals, homes and other civilian infrastructure.

These are not shrill accusations from the fringe. U.N. Under-Secretary General Sevan was quoted by the Associated Press on 22 July 1999 as criticizing the delays in endorsing shipments of food and medical supplies and spare parts for the oil industry. The article said Sevan's remarks were "targeted at Britain and the United States, which have delayed scores of contracts for oil sector spare parts and other equipment amid concerns over their possible diversion to the Iraqi military." The U.N. Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator of Iraq estimated that, on average, it took 66 days to get a food contract approved by the Sanctions Committee, 59 days for the food to be delivered, and 7 more days to make the food available for distribution.¹⁸

Moreover, it is asserted—the greatest dishonesty of all—that sanctions would be lifted if only Saddam Hussein would comply with U.N. resolutions. In fact, U.S. leaders—including President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright—have repeatedly asserted that sanctions will be maintained as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power. This has nothing to do with U.N. resolutions and everything to do with the various unstated agendas of Washington strategists.

Ramsey Clark summed up the strategy: "It's like we put a gun to the head of the children of Iraq. We say, 'Saddam Hussein, you do what we say or we pull the trigger.' Then we pull the trigger every day."¹⁹

Iraqi lies are frequent and well-documented. Despite this self-destructive behavior, there have been numerous, but largely unreported, acts of Iraqi cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors, comprehensive destruction of arsenals, the opening of the so-called "presidential sites," the establishment of monitoring facilities in sensitive areas (many of these facilities destroyed by later American bombing), and the surrender of copious technical documents.

Scott Ritter, who said he resigned as a member of the U.N. weapons inspection team because Washington had politicized the disarmament mission, asserted in a 24 June 1999 interview that "Iraq today possesses no meaningful weapons of mass destruction." He was forceful on this point. "When you ask the question, 'Does Iraq possess militarily viable biological or chemical weapons?' the answer is "NO! Can Iraq produce today chemical weapons on a meaningful scale. NO! Can Iraq produce biological weapons on a meaningful scale? NO! Ballistic missiles. NO! It is no across the board. So from a qualitative standpoint, Iraq has been disarmed."²⁰

Short of voluntarily relinquishing power, which totalitarian dictators are rarely seen to do, there is no action that Saddam Hussein could take that would lead to a lifting of sanctions. In an article in the May-June 1999 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, John and Karl Mueller point out that, "Unlike many dictators, Saddam cannot flee to a haven elsewhere: the only place he is reasonably safe is in control in Iraq." As a result, for practical and humanitarian reasons, the authors call for a restructuring of the sweeping trade sanctions.²¹

ARE THE SANCTIONS WORKING?

To this question, U.S. officials and politicians themselves frequently supply the answer: Not yet. After 108 months. Saddam, they declare, is not cooperating. He still poses a threat to his neighbors—despite massive losses of men, tanks and other war material to coalition forces on the battlefield, despite subsequent U.N. efforts to identify, destroy and monitor Iraq's weapons capability, and despite import controls that go to the extreme of considering ballpoint pens and medical syringes as potentially helpful to an Iraq bent on rearming.

Many independent observers argue that sanctions actually strengthen Saddam Hussein. A starving and diseased Iraqi people can scarcely mount a challenge to Saddam Hussein's security and military apparatus. And the provisions of the so-called "oil-for-food" program actually tighten the regime's grip on the population by assigning to Iraqi officials much of the administration for distributing the humanitarian supplies that do flow from the program, inadequate as they are.

Forbes Magazine (June 1999) included Saddam Hussein in the top half of the world's wealthiest 100 people, crediting his \$6 billion fortune to oil smuggling and corruption. It is ironical that the sanctions imposed to bring Saddam Hussein to his knees and drive him from power instead have enriched him personally and strengthened him politically. Meanwhile, the sanctions are ravaging millions of innocent civilians and leaving the regime firmly entrenched.

"It's like we put a gun to the head of the children in Iraq. We say, 'Saddam Hussein, you do what we say or we pull the trigger.' Then we pull the trigger every day."

—Ramsey Clark

ARE THE SANCTIONS LEGAL?

The American treatment of Iraq involves legal considerations at many different levels. The issues reach into the status of international law, the legal weight of treaties, the U.N. Charter, customary practice, and expert legal commentary.

The United States, like all powerful states throughout history, does what it judges necessary to protect its perceived interests and thinks about the law afterwards. Lawyers advising governments usually encourage the pursuit of national goals and cook up the legal justifications as needed. It is useful to consider in summary a few legal considerations in the context of the claim of the United States to be a law-abiding country.

Security Council Resolution 678 of 29 November 1990, authorizing member states of the United Nations "to use all necessary means" to achieve the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, was secured through intimidation and bribery, which I have documented in my book "The Scourging of Iraq."²² For example, the U.S. worked to avoid a Chinese veto in the Security Council by backing off criticism of the Tiananmen Square massacre and smoothing the way for a substantial World Bank loan. Chinese scholar Liu Binyan observed that China had "skillfully manipulated the Iraqi crisis to its advantage and rescued itself from being a pariah of the world."

Money and arms helped buy the support of other nations. The U.S. wrote off a \$7-billion loan to Egypt and promised Saudi Arabia \$12-billion in arms sales. Zimbabwe, initially hostile to 678, voted in favor after being told a projected International Monetary Fund loan would be blocked, and Ecuador was warned of "devastating economic consequences" if it voted "no." Minutes after Yemen voted against the resolution, a senior American diplomat told the Yemeni ambassador: "That was the most expensive 'no' vote ever cast." Within days, the U.S. had blocked its \$70 million aid program to Yemen.

In the context of these strong arm tactics, it is well to remember that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties stipulates that an agreement secured by coercion "is without legal effect" and "void."

The U.N. Charter (Article 47), in order to secure U.N. control over any military initiative in its name, specifies that a Military Staff Committee consisting of "the Chiefs of Staff of the permanent members of the Security Council" be formed to have responsibility "for the strategic direction of the armed forces placed at the disposal of the Security Council." No such committee was ever formed, and so the U.S.-led coalition acted in serious breach of the U.N. Charter.

Moreover, the Security Council never met again to decide what action was "necessary" under the terms of 678(2)—another breach of the spirit of the Charter. Washington had marginalized the United Nations while pretending to be acting under its mandate.

Resolution 687 (3 April 1997), the cease-fire resolution requiring the destruction of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, explicitly derives its authority from 678 (see above). If the legitimacy of 678 is in question, then 687 is insecure. Also, if 687 is assumed to be valid, then attention should be paid to its preamble, emphasizing the Security Council's aim of establishing "a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region of the Middle East" and "the need to work towards the establishment in the Middle

East of a zone free" of all weapons of mass destruction.

Fine! So what is the Security Council doing to ensure that Israel relinquishes all of its nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction?

Moreover, as revealed by weapons inspector Scott Ritter and others, the United States abused the U.N. inspection commission (UNSCOM) by sharing gathered information with Israel and other states for purely espionage purposes.

The American forces in Iraq used various "weapons of mass destruction" that stand condemned in principle by the U.N. Commission for Conventional Armaments (12 August 1948) and explicitly in several U.N. resolutions. Thus General Assembly Resolution 32/84 (12 December 1977), recalling earlier resolutions, urges states not to develop new weapons of mass destruction and explicitly condemns weapons based on "radioactive material" and weapons that have destructive effect comparable to that of the atomic bomb. Thus Resolution 32/84 implicitly condemns depleted-uranium ordnance and fuel-air explosives, both types of weapons massively used by the United States in Iraq.

The targeting of civilians is explicitly condemned in the Geneva Convention and other elements of international law. Even before the 1991 Gulf War the Iraqi civilian population had suffered six months of draconian economic sanctions, among the harshest measures of the 20th century. This remorseless targeting of men, women and children—which continues through the remainder of the decade—is unambiguously condemned in Part IV ("Civilian Population") of the 1977 Protocol 1 Addition to the Geneva Convention (1949).

Many articles of this protocol are relevant. It is enough to cite Article 54 which condemns the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and condemns the destruction of "objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works."

An organization of American Gulf War Veterans has criticized the sanctions precisely on the basis of these international understandings. A resolution passed on 20 December 1998 by the board of directors of the National Gulf War Veterans states:

*[Our organization] strongly believes that further civilian casualties in Iraq must be avoided. As soldiers, we were trained to abide by international laws relating to the treatment and protection of civilian populations. Economic sanctions which prevent or otherwise hamper nations from maintaining the public health of their citizens (as opposed to targeted military and diplomatic sanctions) are in violation of these international laws, including Geneva Protocol 1, Article 54 . . .*²³

In addition, many U.N. provisions specifically condemn the imposition of a food and medicine embargo as a political tool. Consider, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Constitution of the World Health Organization, General Assembly Resolution 44/215, and the 1992 World Declaration on Nutrition. One typical prohibition is the Rome Declaration adopted by the World Food Summit on 13 November 1996:

Food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure. We reaffirm . . . the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures, not in accordance with the interna-

tional law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food security.

The legal situation is plain. Even if economic sanctions, drastically affecting food availability in Iraq, were working—as they demonstrably are not—they would still be in gross violation of international law. There is no system of law, domestic or international, that states that criminal behavior is allowed in combating criminal behavior. Where a seeming suspension of legal constraint (for example, killing in wartime) occurs, it is sanctioned in statute. There is nothing analogous—quite the reverse—that permits any country, or “partnership” of countries, to organize the wholesale slaughter of another country’s civilian population.

ARE THE SANCTIONS ETHICAL?

The answer to this question should now be plain. The issue of economic sanctions has long been out of Saddam’s hands. He has no recourse—short of suicide. Sanctions will be maintained until his demise (through overthrow, assassination, CIA coup, etc.). Sanctions are dishonestly maintained, publicized with endless propaganda to mislead decent people who would otherwise be horrified at the comprehensive torture today being inflicted on millions of helpless Iraqi people. Saddam has long since posed no threat to his neighbors—which is why no nation (except a typically supine Britain) supported Operation Desert Fox in December 1998, and why countries such as France, India and even Saudi Arabia are urging an end to the genocidal sanctions.

I have argued that the American case for sanctions on Iraq is deeply and shamefully flawed—in politics, law and ethics. This means that, in my view, it is the United States that is to blame for the appalling suffering being inflicted over endless years on the Iraqi civilian population. To those who disagree with this conclusion and would maintain sanctions, to those who argue that it is Saddam Hussein and not Washington who is to blame, let me put a final argument.

We have always known the character of Saddam Hussein, and often exploited it, as when he cooperated with the CIA in the 1960s to slaughter Iraqi communists.²⁴ Our propaganda tells us that he was brutal and ambitious through the 1980s when he was making war against Iran, threatening Israel, and gassing the Kurds at Halabja. Our propaganda tells us that he was brutal and ambitious when he invaded Kuwait on the 2nd of August 1990. We have always known the character of the man.

So what are we saying now? That we will maintain a genocidal sanctions regime against a helpless civilian population and hope that Saddam Hussein will act decently and compassionately to mitigate its effects? What? We show our concern for the agonies of innocent Iraqi babies, children, women and men by forcing them to depend on the compassion of Saddam Hussein? The compassion of Saddam Hussein? Do we not believe our own propaganda?

In the 1980s the Iraqi population was one of the healthiest and best educated in the Middle East. Today it is racked by malnutrition, disease and starvation. The character of Saddam Hussein has not changed. Today, as then, he was a brutal tyrant. In the 1990s, as in the 1980s, Iraq was at war. What is new in the 1990s is the merciless sanctions regime. We do not protect innocent people by forcing them to rely on the compassion of a brutal tyrant. The character of Saddam Hussein is the very reason why decent people everywhere oppose the cruel sanctions re-

gime that heaps measureless pain on millions of innocent Iraqis.

It is my personal opinion that, in all reasonable and fact-driven consideration, America is today acting as a shameless delinquent, a mass murderer, a global rogue state. p

Endnotes

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Authors	Publication	Year	Pages	List	AMEU	Summary
Aburish, S.	Arafat: From Defender to Dictator	1998	360	\$25.95	\$20.50	Good biography of Palestinian leader.
Abu-Sitta, S.	Palestine: 1948	1998	NA	\$17.00	\$15.00	Locates 531 depopulated towns & villages.
A.M.E.U	Holy Land Travel Directory	1999	18	\$10.00	\$5.00	Recommends travel agents, inns, guides, shops.
Are, T.	Israeli Peace, Palestinian Justice	1994	194	\$14.95	\$11.50	Liberation theology & the peace process.
Armstrong, K	Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths	1996	431	\$29.50	\$23.50	Well written and well reviewed.
Ashrawi, H.	This Side of Peace	1995	318	\$15.00	\$11.50	Author is respected Palestinian spokesperson.
Ateek, N. et al	Faith & the Intifada	1992	207	\$13.95	\$10.50	Palestinian Christians speak up.
Ateek, N.	Justice and Only Justice	1989	227	\$13.50	\$10.50	A Palestinian theology of liberation.
Ateek, N. ed.	Holy Land, Hollow Jubilee	1999	314	\$25.00	\$24.50	Includes articles by Edward Said & Michael Prior.
Bailey & Hillard	Living Stones Pilgrimage	1999	132	\$15.00	\$14.50	Guide to Holy Land's Christian communities.
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Giladi, N.	Ben Gurion's Scandals	1992	261	\$19.50	\$14.95	How the Haganah & Mossad eliminated Jews.
Haddad, et al	The June 1967 War After 3 Decades	1999	218	\$19.95	\$17.50	Articles by C. Maksoud, E. Hagopian, E. Said, et al
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