

Iraq: A Bush Family Jihad?

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Global Research, September 25, 2007
25 September 2007

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)
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Ever since the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq, there have been two parallel litanies from the invaders. They cannot leave until 'Iraq can stand on its own feet' and its army and police can maintain order. The other is the mantra of 'thirty years of neglect' of Iraq's infrastructure and Iraqis inability to repair it themselves.

Here is something worth repeating, yet again. Before the invasion Iraq was an efficient, functioning society, whose state institutions and ministries operated with near bribe free and accountable efficiency. The army and the police were loyal to the state and not to factions. The factionalists and militias now absorbed in to both, came in with the invasion (and many seemingly, are not even Iraqis or had abandoned their Iraqi nationality and taken the now increasingly worthless Dollar.)

Until the crippling thirteen year embargo (implemented, under George Bush Sr., 6th August 1990) Iraq had undergone thirty years of extraordinary progress and emerged 'a near first world country', according to the U.N., whose US/UK driven embargo, created a quiet holocaust and denied essential parts and replacements for every vital service and industry. Even X-ray and dialysis machines lay idle, for want of imported parts; blood banks no longer functioned due to sporadic electricity denying laboratory tests and refrigeration.

In 1992, the U.N., cited a report by Beth Osborn Daponte which concluded: ' ... life expectancy has been reduced from (an average of) sixty eight years (pre 1991) to forty seven years by late 1991'. A chilling, shaming and astonishing achievement in under two years in the name of ' We the people ...'

Medical laboratory tests, in what had been a highly sophisticated sector, dropped sixty percent by 1992 - just two years in to the embargo. Major surgery declined by sixty three percent in the same period. Those who had enough money, or could borrow it, would take desperately ill relatives, children, patients who should have been in intensive care, on the bus to Jordan, in a desperate attempt to save them, a tortuous, often up to twenty seven hour journey. Courtesy the United Nations, the sick, frequently died, on the bus.

However, since the 2003 invasion, in spite of the telephone number \$billions squandered, embezzled and disappeared and the \$billion contracts awarded to all the usual suspects, the health service and infrastructure is now worse than under the embargo. Seriously sick and injured U.S., and 'allied' soldiers are rushed to state of the art hospitals in their bases, which there seemed to have been no trouble in rapidly building from scratch. In the 'New Iraq', sick Iraqis, bombed, ruined, irradiated, abandoned and ruled by quislings, quietly die. ' We will reduce Iraq to a pre-industrial age', said James Baker, in 1991. The forty two day, U.S., led carpet bombing did, but Baker could not have dreamed of the improvement on his vision, the second time round - and rising to new heights each of the invasion's genocidal,

criminal, fifty four months.

Now, courtesy of Uncle Sam, cholera has struck with, according to World Health Organization spokesperson, Fadel Chaib, twenty nine thousand confirmed cases, mostly in the north, but with a seven month old bottle fed baby in Basra now confirmed and two cases seemingly, in Baghdad with others unconfirmed. Since Iraq's water has long been a biological weapon, this was a disaster waiting to happen. Interestingly, Adel Muhsin, Iraq's 'Health Ministry Inspector General', thus America's friend, states that 'cholera is endemic to Iraq.' As ever, it is far more complicated.

Iraq as all tropical countries is susceptible to water borne diseases. It also has a highly complex water system, with : ' The quality of untreated water "generally .. poor;" drinking such water "could result in diarrhea," Iraq's rivers "contain biological materials, pollutants, and are laden with bacteria. Unless the water is purified with chlorine, epidemics of such diseases as cholera, hepatitis, and typhoid could occur." ' This comes from an astonishing document, discovered by Thomas J. Nagy, Associate Professor of Expert Systems, at George Washington University, in 2000, from the U.S., Defense Intelligence Agency.

However, such was the investment and care in Iraq's water system, water borne diseases plummeted and figures 1989-1990 (the embargo was implemented on 6th August 1990) that the Iraqi Health Ministry statistics show cholera as nil, typhoid fever as just 1,812 (in a population of twenty five million) amoebic dysentery as 19,615 and polio, just ten. In 1992 there were 2,100 reported cholera cases, 19,276 typhoid cases (an increase of 1060 %) 61,939 of amoebic dysentery (increase 320%) and 120 cases of polio (increase 1200%.)

The primary document, Nagy - who also has a Doctorate in Public Health - discovered was entitled: "Iraq Water Treatment Vulnerabilities," and dated January 22, 1991.(The bombing of Iraq by thirty two nations had started on 17th January.) The document, circulated to all Central Commands spells out the clear intention to bomb all Iraq's water purification and treatment facilities and how continuing sanctions will prevent Iraq from supplying clean water to its citizens.

'Iraq depends on importing specialized equipment and some chemicals to purify its water supply, most of which is heavily mineralized and frequently brackish to saline," the document states. "With no domestic sources of both water treatment replacement parts and some essential chemicals, Iraq will continue attempts to circumvent United Nations Sanctions to import these vital commodities. Failing to secure supplies will result in a shortage of pure drinking water for much of the population. This could lead to increased incidences, if not epidemics, of disease', the DIA document states.

Further, food and medicines will also be affected, the document states. "Food processing, electronic, and particularly, pharmaceutical plants require extremely pure water that is free from biological contaminants," it says. A timetable for the health decimation of the people of Iraq resulting from the loss of clean water, is carefully explained: "Iraq's overall water treatment capability will suffer a slow decline, rather than a precipitous halt," it says. "Although Iraq is already experiencing a loss of water treatment capability, it probably will take at least six months (to June 1991) before the system is fully degraded."

Connected Pentagon documents discovered by Nagy include itemizing likely outbreaks, including: ' "acute diarrhea" brought on by bacteria such as E. coli, shigella, and salmonella,

or by protozoa such as giardiasis, which will affect “particularly children,” or by rotavirus, which will also affect “particularly children,” a phrase it puts in parentheses. And it cites the possibilities of typhoid and cholera outbreaks’, he writes. Giardiasis was recorded at 73,416 cases in 1989-1990 and at 596,356 in 1992 (a rise of 810%.)

The Geneva Convention, of course, is unequivocal, as Nagy points out: ‘ The 1979 Protocol, Article 54, states: “It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove, or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive.” ‘ But what do rogue states care of the Geneva Convention?

For thirteen years all water purification chemicals were vetoed (by the U.S., and U.K., at the UN Sanctions Committee.) After the invasion the situation has worsened even from the woeful previous situation, where up to eighty percent of those who died from diarrhoeal illnesses were under five. Even potassium and saline, to replace the vital salts lost from sufferers, were vetoed. Saddam Hussein, of course, was blamed, when even chlorine was denied to Iraq. Currently, tankers of chlorine are held up at the Jordan-Iraq border, on the basis they might be used as explosives – and Baghdad, with its six million population has just one week’s supply left. Iraq’s population, again, will die, not with a bang but a whimper, as the greatest army on earth can apparently not guarantee safe passage and delivery of a potential life saver. Saddam would have, it has to be said.

Saddam Hussein placed huge importance on water projects, even denied the purification materials, and continued projects in the hope that any month the embargo would be lifted. In spite of the uprising in the south (again, encouraged by the U.S., and U.K., who then stood aside as it was bloodily quelled) two giant initiatives were implemented to provide reliable water to the parched southern provinces. In Basra and outlying districts, one for unpolluted drinking water, the other for agriculture. Started in 1992, work went on round the clock for twenty two months, involving five thousand engineers, technicians and skilled workers. It was halted due to crippling shortage of vital materials and equipment, but restarted in 1995 and finally inaugurated on 23rd December 1997. Embargoed Iraq, which now, we are asked to believe, is unable ‘to stand on its own feet’, unable to import, with factories bombed, delivered water along a two hundred and thirty eight kilometers pipeline from the Gharraf river, which, in the absence of needed chemicals, was purer than the Tigris and the Euphrates. The two ‘finest armies in the world’, have managed to deliver nothing to the population of Iraq, but heartbreak, exile, disease and death.

Another extraordinary feat was the Saddam River, also know as the ‘Third River’. This was a narrow irrigation channel, about the size of a ship canal, which ran from southern Baghdad to Basra. Unable to import, expansion of agriculture was vital. It was completed in just one hundred and eighty days, from May to December 1992. Its aims were to improve six million Donums of agricultural land and to carry away about sixty million tons of salt a year. (The salination in the region is extraordinary, traveling south, a feature is the vast mounds of salt, blown and piled along the roadsides.) The project also drained the level of pollution from the Tigris and Euphrates. It also encouraged families who had worked on the land, but left for cities due to the lack of irrigation, back to settle by its banks and re-establish farming and agricultural projects.

The West ranted against an ‘environmental catastrophe’ (though numerous western firms

had vied for the project since the 1950's, the first being a British firm, Mott McDonald - all had given up in months, saying it could not be done.) Unconcerned about the 'environmental catastrophe' of an entire nation denied near all the basics to sustain life, they were worried about the effect on the unique southern Marshes and destruction of fauna and flora and an ancient way of life of the inhabitants. The Marshes had been drained dry, was the allegation. Well no. A part had, because it prevented insurgents from Iran coming in to ferment trouble, through this vast, historically unpoliceable area. As ever, innocents did suffer, but suffering which pales against what liberation has wrought. After the 2003 invasion, the British re-flooded the drained areas and now the 'coalition' threatens Iran, because 'insurgents' from there are coming in to Iraq. Senior military decision makers, again, in every aspect, hopelessly out of their depth, in a far away place of which they know absolutely nothing.

Another vital sector in to which resources were poured, by Saddam Hussein's regime, was education, now near destroyed by the invasion, subsequent attacks by both militia, occupying forces and fear of letting children out of the house. Between 1979 and 1990, kindergarten attendance rose by an average of over twenty percent a year, with commensurate building projects. Nursery enrollment saw an annual increase of over four hundred and sixty eight percent, with buildings flourishing to accommodate the rise. Primary education rose by one hundred and twenty three percent per annum with secondary and vocational schools seeing a rate increase of students over 1247%, with more imaginative construction, as did for teacher training colleges, accommodating a rise of eight hundred and ten percent in teacher training. An additional seven great universities were built.

Huge growth during the same period was seen in road building, rail and air passengers, telecommunications, ship cargoes and building and construction in all sectors. This all, in spite of the (Western driven) eight year Iran-Iraq war which cost an estimated million lives between the two countries.

The people of Iraq are being kept on their knees, their infrastructure unrepaired, they are tortured, disappeared at the hands of and because of the invasion. The blame lies squarely in Washington and Whitehall. Four million displaced and one and a quarter million dead, according to the recent poll, by respected ORB and now a cholera epidemic. Have the 'liberators' flown in emergency and essential medicines and medical equipment to counter this, as they would if it were their troops, or their pals cowering in the Green Zone? Of course not.

From the destruction of the water system in 1991, to the ongoing slaughters which came in with the invasion, to troops random killings of Iraqis in their tens and hundreds and now a cholera epidemic, with not a hand lifted by the occupying forces, with all their infinite resources, I am again reminded of a chance conversation in a cafe in Jordan, days before the invasion. What was I doing in Jordan? I had just come back from Iraq, I said. Without preamble he said: 'America will never get their hands on Iraq and Iraq's oil, unless they kill every last one of them'. It seems they are trying to do just that, by any means possible, in the Bush's family's personal Jihad. Thomas Nagy is a Member of the Association of Genocide Scholars, who concluded that the deliberate destruction of Iraq's water system in 1991 was genocide. It seems they have a lot more work ahead. Oh, and the invasion of Iraq was sold to the American public, by their Administration linking Saddam Hussein to 11th September 2001 and Osama bin Laden. It was not Saddam, but the Bush family who were in business with the Bin Ladens. What wickedness.

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