

Who are the War Criminals?

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Fate certainly deals a strange hand. President Bush Jr., commented on the conviction of President Saddam Hussein, for crimes against humanity, in Waco, Texas, site of the massacre of the Branch Davidian religious group, in April 1993, by the U.S. Army, FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Under President Clinton's watch, they laid siege to the building from February to April, subjecting those inside to continual sleep deprivation by playing deafening music and even continual screams of rabbits being slaughtered. Finally, surrounded by tanks, massive amounts of CS gas were sprayed in, then military pyrotechnic devices. Between seventy four and a hundred burned to death, including twelve between one and four years old. The building was then razed to the ground, allegedly to destroy the evidence.

From the town where this horror was perpetrated by the US military and others on American soil, Bush junior remarked of the Iraq trial outcome – in an area where US massacres have replaced daily bread – that : ‘ Iraqians’ (eh?) were now ruled by justice not terror. He should take an unaccompanied stroll round the streets of Baghdad, pop in unannounced to Abu Ghraib and view the torture chamber discovered under the now ‘democratic’ Ministry of the Interior, just for starters.

However, trying Presidents and their governments for crimes against humanity, should be even handed in ‘democracies’. Here is an inadequate list, for the land of the Gettysburg address, where on 19th November 1863, Abraham Lincoln invoked human equality and saying of those who had died in the battle for ‘liberation’ :”Thus choosing to die resisting, rather than live submitting, they fled only from dishonor...’

As Commander in Chief, President Bush Senior, President Clinton and Bush Junior, are cloaked in dishonor by their political and military's actions. The proverbial buck stops with them. Aside from the often forgotten reasons for the Kuwait invasion of 1990, which had, arguably, some validity – Kuwait's slant drilling under the border, into Iraq's Rumaila oil fields; destabilization of Iraq's currency and encroachment of settlements three hundred kilometers into Iraqi territory – the then US Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, specifically asked by Saddam Hussein on US views if all negotiation failed, replied : ‘We have no view on Arab-Arab conflicts.’ Saddam invaded, James Baker, then Secretary of State to George Bush Senior, – now declaring the Iraq invasion catastrophic disaster – vowed the US would ‘reduce Iraq to a pre-industrial age.’ The Pentagon admitted that US aircraft dropped the equivalent of seven point five Hiroshimas, intended to destroy the life support system of the country.

In strict contravention of the Geneva Convention, all ‘necessary to sustain life’ was destroyed within the first hours of bombing (January 17th 1991) water, electricity, health infrastructure, communications, schools, food stores, large scale farms, productions units,

bridges, roads, all industrial infrastructure. All needed for repair was denied under the US/UK driven embargo. During 1991, 'baseline mortality for the under fives, rose from 43.2 per thousand to 128.5 per thousand. A formerly largely well nourished nation was being compared in health and diet, to Mali and other of the world's poorest countries, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. An estimated one and a half million souls died from 'embargo related causes', to the 2003 invasion.

Further, not to be forgotten, is that after the 1991 ceasefire agreement was signed, United States aircraft bombed and incinerated thousands fleeing for Baghdad from Kuwait and Iraq's south, in accordance with that agreement. Their burned vehicles, to this day, piled high, mile after mile along the Basra highway. One US medical unit aided Iraqis surrendering and hurt, assuring them they would be safe. When they left, handing over to another unit, in good faith, that unit executed them all in cold blood. General Norman Schwarzkopf declared the Basra road slaughter 'a turkey shoot', adding : '..there was no one left to kill.'

With no UN mandate, the US and UK continued, with no legality, to bomb Iraq throughout the thirteen years of sanctions. When the Iraqi government accused them of bombing schools, mosques, monasteries, markets, repaired facilities, residential streets, the western media, largely, loyally repeated their governments' line that it was 'Iraqi propaganda.' Hospital wards frequently overflowed with the mutilated, blinded, damaged victims of Iraq's 'propaganda'. ' We met heartaches and bewilderment', wrote Debra Swinger, of the Bruderhof Community, in 1995, of the effect of the sanctions and the bombings.

On 1st January 1996, Ramsey Clark, twice US Attorney General, wrote to all Members of the UN Security Council :

'There is one crime against humanity in this last decade of the millennium, that exceeds all others in magnitude, cruelty and portent. It is the US-forced sanctions against the twenty million people of Iraq.' A detailed, shaming depiction of Iraqis plight, concludes: ' You must vote against these genocidal sanctions. Your nations should not share responsibility for the deaths of more than ten thousand Iraqis who will die before the Security Council Review in March, if sanctions are not lifted in January.' *

The shameful world body, avowed to protect 'succeeding generations', voted to maintain sanctions. The previous year, the head of the Red Cross told Clark that in one week, there had been six thousand infant deaths from diarrhoea and vomiting due to contaminated water. Rehydration and anti-biotics costing just cents a dose, would have saved most. They were blocked under US-UK pressure. ' The enjoyment of the highest standard of health is .. the fundamental right of every human being ..' states the constitution of the (UN) World Health Organization.

From wars on babies to wars on the devastated: the inevitable, illegal invasion of Iraq. John Hopkins School of Public Health's meticulous Professor Les Roberts, estimates a possible further six hundred and fifty five thousand excess deaths in Iraq - or more - due to rape, torture, destruction on a barely believable scale; hospitals which now seem well stocked under the embargo's horrors, 'Falluja's' across ancient Mesopotamia in the name of the US and UK, for which no one is held responsible, killing Iraqis: ' ..choosing to die resisting .. (fleeing) only from dishonor.' Or just for being Iraqi. Over two million Iraqi deaths later, in the sixteen year war on Iraq, democracy might really catch on in the Middle East, were three other Presidents tried for crimes against humanity. Oh, and the verdict on Saddam Hussein was also delivered on Britain's bonfire night, commemorating exactly four hundred years

since Guy Fawkes tried to blow up Parliament. A day later, Simon Carr, insightful parliamentary sketch writer for the Independent, summed up Tony Blair throwing the toys out of the pram, when questioned about the verdict on Saddam Hussein: 'I thought, ruined. '

Felicity Arbuthnot is a Global Research Contributing Editor. Her carefully documented reports on Iraq based on extensive field work have not only provided evidence of the war crimes committed by occupying forces, they reveal the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the plight of an entire nation and its people.

* The Children are Dying, Ramsey Clark, Pub: World View Forum.

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