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## America's peacetime crimes against Iraq

By Anthony Gregory

(Reprinted from Freedom Daily, September, 2010)

FAN editorial comment: Is this part of the reason a big part of the world hates us? Ask your congressman and senators if this article is true. If it is true, what are they going to do about it?

"Between the Gulf War and the Iraq War, the United States enforced a comprehensive sanctions policy against the Iraqi people, under the auspices of the United Nations. Whereas the hot conflict of 1990 and the one that has run from March 2003 to this day have occupied American attention, the sanctions, beginning even before Operation Desert Storm and persisting until Shock and Awe, implemented by three presidential administrations, were largely ignored. Trade restrictions simply do not elicit the primetime excitement that bombs and aircraft do. Yet the devastation from depriving a nation of international trade is easily comparable to that of war.

"On the eve of the Iraq War, moderate voices for 'peace' even insisted that the sanctions were 'working' in undermining Saddam's regime a preventing it from rearming — as though such were worthy U.S. goals in the first place. But putting that question aside, the prospect of all-out war struck many Americans as imprudent, displeasing, perhaps even immoral — even as many of those same Americans defended the sanctions regime and advocated their continuation in lieu of war.

"But more principled voices for nonintervention, and those aware of the enormity unleashed by the sanctions, had been protesting them for years. Indeed, as a practical matter, the sanctions ran counter to defending American lives on U.S. soil. Osama bin Laden cited the sanctions on Iraq, among other U.S. policies, as a main motive behind the attacks on September 11. Perhaps no single example of such policies is more horrific than the sustained and systematic destruction of Iraqi economic life — which is to say, Iraqi life — that took place in the 'peacetime' era between the two wars. To this day, thanks to the sanctions as well as the wars, the Iraqis have 'never [come] close to restoring the standard of living that most Iraqis had up to 1990,' according to Joy Gordon, whose new book, *Invisible War: the United States and the Iraq Sanctions*, is a powerful and rather comprehensive treatment of the topic.

### "War by other means

"The sanctions began in August 1990, in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. During the actual Gulf War, 160,000 bombs were dropped on Iraqi forces and infrastructure. A UN envoy soon found 75 percent of the water access and 85-90 percent of the electricity infrastructure destroyed. The bombing and sanctions demolished Iraq's relatively modern economy, turning the nation into a third-world country, and preventing it from recovering. 'Between August 1990 and December 1995, food prices increased by 4,000 to 5,000 times.'

"The result of these policies was mass devastation:

"The destruction from the 1991 bombing campaign of electric generating plants, water purification, and sewage treatment facilities resulted in cholera and typhoid epidemics. In 1990 the incidence of typhoid was 11.3 per 100,000 people; By 1994 it was more than 142 per 100,000. In 1989 there were zero cases of cholera per 100,000 people; by 1994 there were 1,344 per 100,000.

"Meanwhile, major surgeries fell to '30 percent of the presanctions level.' Most terribly, child mortality rates skyrocketed. Although there is disagreement over the data, 'the majority of the studies over the course of the sanctions regime strongly suggest that, for the period from 1990 to 2003...at least 500,000' children died of malnutrition and disease who would most likely have otherwise lived.

"The bombing and sanctions demolished Iraq's relatively modern economy, turning the nation into a third-world country.

"All in all, 'according to 1990 testimony before Congress, the sanctions eliminated 90 percent of Iraq's imports and 97 percent of its exports. As a result, per capita income went from \$3,510 in 1989 to \$450 in 1996.' Iraq's GDP, which had been \$54 billion in 1979, sank to \$10 billion in 1993.

"The destructive policies, such as the bombing of Iraq's water treatment facilities and the UN ban on the importation of chlorine, worked together.

"At first, the goal was to pressure Iraqi forces to retreat from Kuwait. But sometime after the war began, the goal shifted to one of general containment and disarmament — at least as far as the UN Security Council was concerned — while the U.S. government and Britain upheld the more ambitious goal of regime change. That was a bipartisan policy in America. Bill Clinton said in 1993, 'There is no difference between my policy and the policy of the [George H.W. Bush] Administration...I have no intention of normalizing relations with [Saddam Hussein].' And as his secretary of State Madeleine Albright made clear in 1997, 'We do not agree...that if Iraq complies with its obligations concerning weapons of mass destruction, sanctions should be lifted.'

"But if the goal was regime change, the policy was virtually destined to fail. Gordon writes,

If Saddam Hussein was supposed to be motivated by self interest, and wanted sanctions to end, then there was no reason for him to comply with the demands of the Security Council, since sanctions could not be removed without U.S. agreement and the United States repeatedly made clear that it would never remove them while Hussein was in power.

"In a chapter called 'The Magnitude of Catastrophe,' Gordon documents the extent of that destruction and finds that only the combination of war, restrictions on imports, central planning of exports, and a systematic undermining of Iraqi infrastructure could produce the calamity that occurred. The destructive policies, such as the bombing of Iraq's water treatment facilities and the UN ban on the importation of chlorine, worked together. 'Or take, for example, the ceiling on oil exports: once the ceiling on oil sales was lifted, Iraq was blocked from obtaining the equipment necessary to increase oil production. Or consider the blocked contracts for electrical equipment: even if Iraq had been allowed to buy the equipment and chemicals for water and sewage treatment, there was not sufficient electricity to power the plants.'

"Gordon writes:

The perversity and irony of the sanctions regime, imposed under the auspices of international law, is that it may have done more human damage than Saddam Hussein's persecution of ethnic groups and human rights combined.

### "Imperialistic central planning

"How did the program work? Initially, the UN forbade all member nations to import any Iraqi goods, and required them to prohibit their nationals from shipping any goods or sending funds to either Iraq or Kuwait. From August 1990 to March 1991, that included food. The program soon came to involve 'a labyrinth of UN agencies as well as the establishment of an entirely new agency within the UN.' Beginning in August 1991, Iraq was allowed to export up to \$1.6 billion every six months to trade for food and medicine. All humanitarian goods, food and medical equipment would be purchased through the '661 Committee,' which came to possess 'extremely broad responsibilities for the overall implementation of the sanctions regime. 'The 661 Committee made up of 15 delegates, 'few of whom had expertise in economic development, emergency relief, oil, or any other of the committee's substantive areas of work,' made about 6,000 decisions a year about what would be allowed into Iraq. From 1990 to 1995, that was 'the sole legal means for Iraq to import any goods.' By 1995, food was so scarce that an Iraqi government rationing program provided '1,100 calories per person per day.'

"The 661 Committee made about 6,000 decisions a year about what would be allowed into Iraq.

"And before Iraq could buy any goods, it would have to present a 'distribution plan' giving a

detailed description of the areas of need in each sector... The plan then listed every single item to be purchased, how it would be used, and where it would be used: every piece of equipment for electrical production, and the specific power plant where it would go; every chemical or instrument for water treatment, and the specific laboratory or plant where they would be used; every dose of vaccine for poultry and cattle, and every syringe, needle and scissors for veterinarians; and so forth.

"The United States and UN exercised total domination over the Iraqi economy.

"Even as Iraqi imports were controlled in this totalitarian manner, so too was its principal export, oil. By determining how much oil could be sold, the United States and UN exercised total domination over the Iraqi economy. Altogether, war and sanctions 'meant an 85 percent decline in oil production.' In 1995, the UN set up the Oil-for-Food Program, in response to problems with and criticisms of the initial sanctions regime, but the control was still cruel and becoming of a total state. 'The Oil-for-Food Programme originally allowed imports totaling \$130 per person per year. Together with existing imports, which averaged \$20 per person per year, total imports came to \$150, well below the level of the poorest Arab countries.

"Moreover, Iraq never handled any of the funds. The 'proceeds of all oil sales were deposited in [a UN] account and all payments to vendors were made from this account.' The U.S. meddling with oil prices through a socialist scheme of 'retroactive pricing' also interfered greatly with trade with Iraq. 'The chief economist at the American Petroleum Institute asked, 'How can you do business if you don't know what the price is?'"

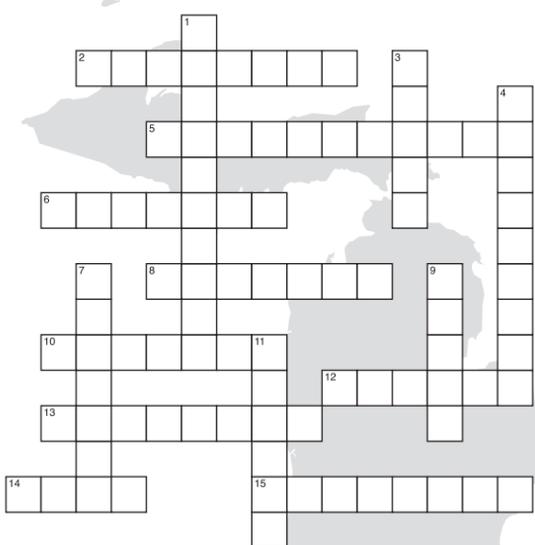
### "The United States calling the shots

"Although done through the UN, the sanctions were es-

## CROSSWORD!

### STATES OF THE UNION 01

FILL IN THE SPACES ACROSS AND DOWN WITH THE ANSWERS TO THE CLUES LISTED HERE...HAVE FUN!



#### ACROSS

- Hot Springs, \_\_\_\_\_
- The Magnolia State
- Grand Canyon National Park is here
- Home of the Indianapolis 500
- Home of Glacier National Park
- Hoover Dam is located here
- Bordered by 4 of the 5 Great Lakes
- Has an inland lake that's saltier than any ocean
- Bluegrass State

#### DOWN

- The Golden State
- 23rd state
- Land of 10,000 Lakes
- State flower: Orange Blossom
- The Lone Star State
- Home of Mt. McKinley, tallest mountain in the U.S.

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