



The Effects of Sanctions on the Civilian Community of Iraq

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The reality of the effects of the sanctions against the people of Iraq is difficult to accept. As a citizen of the United States, the chief perpetrator of the sanctions, I feel a deep responsibility to be informed and inform about what the sanctions are doing to the Iraqi people. If we are truly to accomplish the goal of IPPNW to Heal the Century of Violence and hold sustainable peace as our goal, these sanctions must end and the policy of UN sanctions must be examined. What sets the disaster in Iraq apart from naturally occurring disasters is embargo UN countries are paying for: we are paying to assure the death of the Iraqi people. We know these sanctions are not controlling or harming the leaders of Iraq they are killing the voiceless. When I returned from Iraq in May, I was paralysed by what I had seen and learned. This pain gave way to the belief that only action to relieve the sanctions could help. And there are things we can do. I believe it is important that we focus on what can be done, lest we feel so powerless in the face of the problem that nothing changes. Following the slide presentation, Laurence Aboukhatir of Australia and Allan Connelly of British Columbia will join me.

By UN Security Council resolution 661, economic sanctions have been in place in Iraq since August 1990 immediately following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. These eight years, four months of sanctions have, by nearly every account, been medically and socially devastating for at least 85% of Iraq's population.

Bombing in the Gulf War, known to Iraqis as the "Bush War", after then US President George Bush, destroyed much of Iraq's infrastructure. Sanctions have prevented significant repair of the infrastructure and the combination of damaged or destroyed electrical plants, food production, water storage and sewage treatment facilities combined with the profound lack of imported food and medicine has created a medical disaster of stunning proportions.

One of the first authoritative reports regarding the tragedy in Iraq was published in the New England Journal of Medicine, September 26, 1991. A group of physicians who traveled to Iraq following the Gulf War reported:

"We found suffering of tragic proportions...(T)he youngest and most vulnerable are paying the price for the actions of others. Children are dying of preventable diseases and starvation as a direct result of the Gulf crisis (...) Although the allied bombing may have caused relatively little direct damage to the civilian population, the destruction of the infrastructure has resulted in devastating long-term consequences for health."

In 1990, using 1987 statistics, the UN Human Development Report classed Iraq as having high medium human development, 54th in the world. In 1998, based on 1995 statistics, the report place Iraq at 127th in the world. Life expectancy in 1987 was 65 years. In 1995 the life expectancy was 58 years and falling.



Following his resignation in October of this year, Denis Halliday, UN Assistant Secretary General and head of the UN Humanitarian mission in Iraq, stated "We are in the process of destroying an entire society...It is as simple and terrifying as that."

The UNICEF report of April 1993, entitled "Children, War and Sanctions" provides clear evidence of causality between the sanctions and the humanitarian situation in Iraq:

"Sanctions are inhibiting the importation of spare parts, chemicals, reagents, and the means of transportation required to provide water and sanitation services to the civilian population of Iraq. Huge quantities of resources are required if Iraq is to make any real progress towards re-establishing its pre-war capacity for managing water and sewage... What has become increasingly clear is that no significant movement toward food security can be achieved so long as the embargo remains in place. All vital contributors to food availability - agricultural production, importation of foodstuffs, economic stability and income generation, are dependent on Iraq's ability to purchase and import those items vital to the survival of the civilian population."

Prior to August, 1990, Iraq imported 70% of its food and medicine but it could afford to do this ... Iraq has at least the second largest oil fields on the planet, and they were able to trade their rich resource for food and medicine. But the sanctions and the war ended this way of living.

In May of this year, Allan Connelly and I joined 80 other delegates in a journey to Iraq led by former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Although no UN resolution prohibits air travel to Iraq, the United States has unilaterally imposed and enforced a no fly zone in north and south Iraq. This prohibition means that travel to Iraq involves a 12-18 hour bus trip from Amman, Jordan. Most of the slides you will see were taken on that visit in May. Following the slides, we will use this workshop to discuss the situation in Iraq and what can be done to address the sanctions. It is my hope that some of you may be interested in joining a trip to Iraq at the end of March 1999 to bring medical literature and supplies to the physicians there.

Slides

1. Title: "The Impact of Sanctions on the Civilian Community of Iraq
The Silent War of Mass Destruction and Creation of a Medical Disaster"
2. The Euphrates River: source for the cradle of civilization - now fouled by the emptying of raw sewage note the pipe emptying into the river
3. The boys who drink from this river
4. Water danger slide: By the end of the 1980s, 92% of the Iraqi population had access to safe drinking water. In 1998, Water Minister reports only 40% of the chlorine required for water treatment is allowed.
Cholera, dysentery, malaria and typhoid fever are the direct results of polluted water.
5. Child with diarrhea, one of the most prevalent, preventable and life-ending problems. Water is treated in Baghdad, but the level of treatment is too low to provide clean water downstream from Baghdad.
6. Cholera slide: The Iraqi Minister of Health reports: In 1989 there were no cases of cholera in Iraq. In 1997, there were 10,000 cases of cholera in Iraq.



7. Halliday quote slide: 5,000 to 6,000 Iraqi children die every month from sanctions-related causes. 7% of the total population has died during the silent war.

Food

As noted above, prior to the Gulf War, 70% of Iraq's food was imported. Through the sanctions, available food in Iraq's markets is so costly that only a small minority of people can afford to purchase food. This Fall, Richard McDowell wrote, "Wheat flour now costs 11,667 times more than it did in July, 1990, salaries average between \$2 and \$7 per month and the UN estimates that four million Iraqis about 20 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty." One Iraqi physician Allan and I spoke to stated his salary is the equivalent of \$3.75/month.

8. Oil for food slide: Production inhibited by equipment needs. Oil for food based on oil at \$22/barrel. Oil presently \$10-12/barrel = need for (impossible) doubling rate of production. >30% of revenue allocated to Kuwaiti reparations and maintenance of UNSCOM. Less than half of projected dollars available for food purchase.

The total amount deducted from oil revenues is 47%: 30% for reparations to Kuwait, plus funds for maintaining the UNSCOM inspectors and a percentage for Iraqi use of Turkish oil lines. The \$5.2 Billion/six months (\$10.4 B/year) allotted to Iraq could generate for Iraq a maximum of 5 Billion dollars annually. Denis Halliday reported that Iraq, to begin to rebuild and repair, would need a minimum of 30Billion\$/year at least six times the allotment and this with the possibility that Iraq could produce enough oil to generate that much revenue. However, there are confounding problems:

- At its peak in July 1990, according to the Energy Information Administration, Iraq produced 3.5 million barrels of oil/day, with the capacity to produce 4.5 million barrels. The present Iraq allotment through OPEC, as of June 1998 is 1.2 million barrels/day.
- As noted on the slide, the price of oil has dropped dramatically from the \$22/barrel on which UN resolution 986 was calculated.
- Spare parts for production of oil are just beginning to assist oil production.
- In 1998, again according to Denis Halliday, the electrical power in Iraq is operating at less than 40% capacity, severely limiting the capacity of the country to produce oil.
- Rations at Iraq's 52,000 food-distribution centers typically last 20 days. Iraqis sell their possessions for food and medicines and when their possessions are gone, some turn to begging or prostitution activities previously unknown in Iraqi society.

In its News Update of September 26, 1995, the FAO/WFP in a report published in Rome, noted:

"Alarming food shortages are causing irreparable damage to an entire generation of Iraqi children, a WFP emergency officer said Tuesday, reporting on the prevalence of stunting among toddlers,



many with "old man's faces" in a country where "nearly everyone seems to be emaciated".

"After 24 years in the field, mostly in Africa starting with Biafra, I didn't think anything could shock me' said Dieter Hannusch, WFP's Chief Emergency Support Officer, on his return from a 2-week assessment mission in Iraq. 'But this was comparable to the worst scenarios I have ever seen.'"

9. The food basket slide: Protein and fresh produce poor: 1998, first animal protein added. Caloric requirement/adult male: 2,900/day with minimum 2,600/day. Food basket supplies 2,030/day. Denis Halliday estimates 30% of Iraqis are chronically malnourished requiring special care to re-feed.

UN Resolution 986/111 provides for a food basket of 2,030 calories per person per day. Minimum requirements = 2,600/day. National Academy of Sciences, U.S., posts a need for 2,900/adult male/day. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization calls the food basket inadequate and unbalanced. The malnutrition of the population will require a much richer supply to begin to heal the problems of this malnutrition.

- By August 1998, in only two months had the full food basket, depleted as it is, been achieved.
 - The food production of Iraq, according to the UN Secretary General, early in 1998, "would be able to meet only 10% of required nutritional levels."
 - One way the Iraqis cope is by creating ersatz flour to replace the pure wheat flour they were accustomed to using a combination of wheat, barley and corn flour. The result: sanctions bread and we heard from several people how degrading and symbolic is this bread.
10. Baghdad market slide: Almost no people present nearly all the food we saw in the market is represented on this slide.
11. Child with kwashiorkor slide: In September, 1995, UNICEF issued a report, "The Status of Children and Women in Iraq" this report states, "This situation is unlikely to witness immediate improvement even if the economic and trade sanctions are lifted or eased.
12. Medicine slide: Basic medical supplies sanctioned. Drugs to treat diseases resulting from infrastructure destruction in severely short supply or non-existent. Parts for worn-out or broken equipment not available. Medical education materials sanctioned.

In September of this year Eric Falt, UN spokesperson, reported that delivery of medicines from the time of order takes 3 months rather than the 6 months required at the beginning of 1998. Still, the amount of medicine shipped to Iraq is insufficient for the need. Years of sanctions have created a profound lack of medical stores as well as a populace with such a high level of disease that the amount of medicine required by a "normal" population is insufficient.

Margaret Hassan, a worker for CARE International says, "The doctors here are excellent many were trained in Europe as well as Iraq but because of sanctions, they haven't had access to a medical journal for eight years. And in the sciences, what does this mean?"



13. Child with leukemia slide:

One Iraqi physician in Basra, Dr. Akram Hammoud, talking with a Voices in the Wilderness delegation in October of this year, stated, "Before the war, we received in this hospital about one cancer patient a week now I am getting an average of 40 a week."

Another physician in Basra estimated recently that the survival rate of children with leukemia is less than 10%, while the survival rate in the US and UK is generally higher than 75%.

Anti-leukemia drugs, easily available in other countries are available only through black-market or at a cost unaffordable for the vast majority of Iraqi families. One dose of Vincristine, marketed at 30 dollars, represents 10 months of salary for most Iraqi families.

14. Child with diarrhea slide:

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 25% of Iraqi babies are born with low birthweights and states that many of these children will lag in their physical and/or mental development leading to long-term health problems. The presence of epidemic diarrhea markedly decreases the life expectancy of these already compromised children.

15. Immunizations slide: Iraqi Minister of Health reports requirements for 4-5 million doses of immunizations each year. Sanctions allow 400,000 doses.

16. Immunizations slide: The lack of immunizations, clean water and medicines has created a cesspool of infectious disease. Polio, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, tuberculosis, typhoid, cholera

17. Mother holding children slide: One with post-measles pneumonia and one with pertussis. These children were being cared for in the same bed increasing the odds that neither will survive. In Saddam Teaching Hospital, a facility with a bed capacity of 400, more than 3000 children are seen each day.

Partially because of the poverty of resources available for good epidemiology, the full level of disease and death now present in Iraq is unknown. The presence of an itinerate Bedouin population who may not report a death at home adds to the difficulty of knowing precisely how many deaths are occurring. What is known:

- The number of children estimated by UNICEF to be dying of causes related to the sanctions is now 5,000 6,000/month.
- Diseases unknown 10 years ago are rampant.

A pediatric resident in the largest pediatric teaching hospital in Baghdad related to us in May that in three years on an oncology floor, no child on his unit had survived. I have read estimates of increased rates of cancer between 5 to 7 times that of pre-bombing

18. Education slide: Prior to the sanctions, 93% of children in urban areas attended elementary school. Presently, less than 75% of children attend elementary school. Teachers report 25 40% of students absent each day due to hunger/disease.



Teachers moonlight as taxi drivers and other 24-hour available jobs, to supplement their \$3/month salaries.

19. Classroom slide:
Severe lack of books and pencils, deteriorating buildings and malnourished students who, when they attend school, find it difficult to concentrate.
20. Damage to schools slide: In the south central region of Iraq, 1/3 of the schools were severely damaged by bombs. 323,000 desks are in need of repair. 84% of schools need rehabilitation. Printing facilities not functioning: textbooks and school aids are virtually non-existent.

In September 1998, UN spokesperson Eric Falt reported that the Iraqi Education Ministry stated a need for 300,000 new desks, rehabilitation for 30,000 schools and a need for 5,000 new schools. Through oil for food, 50,000 desks and 25,000 blackboards have been distributed this year. Textbook production is at 30% of need after receiving \$9.3 million in printing equipment in 1998.

21. Classroom slide: No air conditioning, erratic electrical supply...
September, 98 1000 computers to 200 schools, released from embargo and supplied by an Indian company after the computers were downgraded from Intel Pentium 133s to Intel's 486. Two unidentified members of the UN Security Council had held up release. (UN spokesperson, Eric Falt)
22. Social consequences slide: Sanctions have profound social consequences: rise in single parent families, increase in orphan rate, increase in homelessness, rise in street crime, begging and illiteracy.
23. Woman and children on the street slide:
UN agencies report widespread and increasing destitution, an increase in violent crime, previously unknown corruption, the breaking apart of families, and the rending of the social and moral fabric of society.
24. Young adults affected slide: Young adults are severely affected: increasing unemployment fostering anger and impatience, financially unable to marry and form stable homes, advances for women reversed.
25. Nearly empty street slide:
The presence of few cars, all in obvious need of repair was notable. In this oil-rich country, the price of oil is prohibitive for most citizens.
26. Loss of professionals slide: Loss of professionals, brutality, fear and hopelessness have led more than 2 million skilled and professional people to leave Iraq. The sanctions regime offers them no hope, yet the expertise they represent is essential to rebuilding the country. In the US I have met Iraqi professionals who left Iraq for survival reasons and for many reasons may never return.
27. Suad Al Azawi, PhD, nuclear scientist slide one who remains:
300 plus tons of depleted uranium were released by US tanks and aircraft. A dense, radioactive byproduct of the uranium enrichment process, DU (half-life of 4.5 Billion years) was made into armor-piercing shells that exploded and burned, releasing clouds of radioactive dust to be inhaled, ingested and absorbed through open wounds. Although the Pentagon was aware of the health risks of DU, it failed to alert US and Allied forces or Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials of the dangers.



28. Ahmariyeh bomb shelter slide: Smart bombs one pierces, one incinerates. Reports number 400 to 1,400 women and children who died in Ahmariyeh. Although it was known that civilians were present, Allied bombers destroyed this bomb shelter for security reasons. The shelter has become a symbol of war's obscenity for the Iraqi people.
29. Incinerated shadow slide:
30. Incinerated shadow slide:
31. Child with leukemia slide:

Depleted uranium waste/potential for immune suppression
Richard McDowell of Voices in the Wilderness reports that one UN document has reported a 55 percent increase reported in cancer in Iraq between 1989 and 1994.
32. Child with deformities slide:
In November of this year, according to a Voices in the Wilderness report, doctors in a hospital in Basra, where 20-30 children are born each day, reported that in October, they delivered 80 infants born with congenital deformities. This is more than three times the rate of children born with birth defects in the US. (AAP)
33. Boy with aplastic anemia slide:
I will put you in my eyes and close my eyelashes over you the grace of a smile.
34. Strengthening of Saddam slide: Sanctions in Iraq have strengthened the regime of Saddam Hussein: People starved by an enemy do not overthrow their government.
35. Woman in front of the hospital slide:
36. Halliday on sanctions slide: Denis Halliday on sanctions: Failing in established purpose. Not leading to disarmament. Cost unacceptable, killing 6,000 children/month. Sustaining a level of malnutrition...leading to physical and mental problems. Incompatible with the UN Charter, the Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
37. George Bush slide: the Bush War and the psychological effects of demonization
38. Boy at Ninevah slide:
39. Boy in car slide: Look into the eyes of these children they are not the enemy.

Denis Halliday:

"I believe the sanctions are a very blunt instrument. It's indiscriminate. It does not work in terms of its intended purpose vis a vis change in governance or approach and it discriminates in a sense against the weak and the poor and the lower echelons of the economic scale in a way that I find unacceptable, contrary to the basic human right of individuals throughout the world which we in the United Nations are so...wedded to. And as an instrument for change I find it to be a failure and a very tragic one and I think in Iraq we've all learned that lesson, including the member states. I



thinks it's a policy growing out of bankruptcy in terms of ideas how to work better with those member states who often temporarily step out of line, so to speak, with the views and the wishes of a great majority of member states world wide...some alternative has to be found and I know the United Nations, the Secretary-General is and colleagues, are working on alternative to sanctions of this type, but of course there are no simple answers but it's something that needs to be done."

Sanctions as US/UN Policy

Why employ sanctions? There is a sense that sanctions are less damaging than full-out war. Over the course of history, a few sanctions regimes have probably been "successful", causing governments to change policy, but there is a move in the UN to examine sanctions as a policy specifically the use of prolonged economic sanctions as in Iraq. Rhodesia sanctioned in 1968, following the white minority's unilateral declaration of independence. Sanctions lifted in 1979, after negotiations led to a black government. South Africa...see 7/2/98 analysis by James A. Paul.

Other sanctioned countries: UN sanctions have recently been employed or are in force in Angola, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Liberia, Libya, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan. An arms embargo remains in force against the Rwandan ex-government forces.

Some observers argue that the sanctions on Iraq are in place primarily to regulate the world's supply and price of oil but this is difficult to prove. (James A. Paul)

Economic sanctions as applied in Iraq defy international law

1. Charter of Economic Rights & Duties of States, U N General Assembly, 1974: No state may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights or to secure from it advantages of any kind.
2. Protocol 1, Additional to the Geneva Convention, 1977, Part IV, Section I, Chapter III, Article 54:
β Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited
β It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove, or render useless objects indispensable to the agricultural area for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for the 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.
3. UN General Assembly Resolution 44/215, December 22, 1989. Economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries: Calls upon the developed countries to refrain from exercising political coercion through the application of economic instruments with the purpose of inducing changes in the economic or social systems, as well as in the domestic or foreign policies of other countries:
β Reaffirms that developed countries should refrain from threatening or applying trade and financial restrictions, blockades, embargoes, and other economic sanctions, incompatible with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and in violation of undertakings contracted multilaterally and bilaterally, against



developing countries as a form of political and economic coercion that affects their political, economic, and social development.

4. International Conference on Nutrition, World Declaration on Nutrition, Food and Agriculture Organization/ World Health Organization, 1992: We recognize that access to nutritionally adequate and safe food is a right of each individual. We affirm...that food must not be used as a tool for political pressure.
5. UN General Assembly, December 1997: The UN General Assembly, representing 185 nations, voted that starvation of civilians is unlawful.

The Moving Target of Sanctions on Iraq

- Sanctions to remain in place until Iraq withdrew from Kuwait
- Sanctions to remain in place until all weapons of mass destruction were removed
- Sanctions to remain in place until all potential for weapons development destroyed
- Sanctions to remain in place until monitors satisfied themselves that the situation of no capability for weapons development were permanently obliterated and would never be regained.

Problems with realizing these goals may never fully be known

US Legal Code

We are reminded that according to United States Legal Code (Title 18'2331), terrorism is defined as:

1. involving violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the US or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the US or of any State;
2. appear to be intended:
 - a. to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
 - b. to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or
 - c. occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the US, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum...

Civilian Casualties

In WWI, the total number of civilian casualties was about 10% of the total casualties, in WWII the civilian loss was approximately 50% of the total, in the Vietnam War, civilians were 85% of the casualties. Since the end of the proclaimed Gulf War, the more than 1 million who have died are nearly all (100%) civilians.

What can be done?

- A. Be informed
- B. Use your political voice



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- C. Provision of medical supplies, education, etc.
- D. The possibility of an IPPNW-sponsored, medical-seminar-focused trip