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The Anti-War Case
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The US Administration's case for war on Iraq is an utter failure; it is based not on fact but on innuendo and rhetoric.

The US charges that Iraq "threw out" UN weapons inspectors in 1998 and is now concealing Weapons of Mass Destruction. The absurdity of all this is enormous, yet no well-informed voices opposing such claims can be found in the major news media. American citizens are, thus, ruled out from informed participation in making life-and-death decisions affecting them. What are the facts?

The UN weapons inspectors were not "thrown out", as repeatedly claimed; rather - with just a few days notice - they were hastily withdrawn by the UN because the US and Britain warned that they planned to bomb Iraq! Which they did, and have continued ever since - an action not sanctioned by the UN and contrary to international law.

Among the casualties of US mendacity in this regard are two courageous international public servants: Denis Haliday, former Asst Secy Gen of the UN and Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq until 1998, who resigned following US bombing; and his successor, Hans von Sponeck, who resigned a year later under pressure from the US. Why would the US want a UN official who was acting in a humanitarian capacity removed? Was he perhaps taking his humanitarian concerns too seriously and complaining about the humanitarian disaster that US-supported UN sanctions were causing -- to that date more than half a million Iraqi children killed by the embargo imposed against Iraq?

It is true that Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator who has "gassed his own people" and "attacked his neighbors". One neighbor he attacked was Iran in 1980 - armed and aided by a US that didn't like Iran, then or since! Now-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was the US official who visited Baghdad in 1983 - during Reagan's presidency -- to shake Saddam's hand, offering US friendship and help against the neighbor he was then invading. Diplomatic recognition by the US followed shortly thereafter! Does that indicate US principled abhorrence of invading neighbors?

Late in the war against Iran, in 1988, the people gassed by Saddam were the Kurds in northern Iraq. But much earlier - the year of Rumsfeld's cordial visit with Saddam re-establishing US relations - another target of Iraqi gas attacks was the Iranian army on Iraqi soil. Three years after Iraq's invasion, Iranian forces had counterattacked and pushed into the southern part of Iraq, including the el Faw peninsula from which most of Iraqi oil was shipped. Did the Reagan Administration then show displeasure at Iraq's use of poison gas? Not a word! The litany against Saddam is: "he gassed his own people". The fact that he gassed Iranians is never brought up. Perhaps the lack of US reaction to Iraqi use of poison gas against Iranians encouraged Saddam to carry out similar gas attacks on the Iraqi Kurds 5 years later!

The current charges that Iraq now possesses WMD are patently false and are merely a trumped-up excuse for carrying out policies desired by the US administration for other reasons. One needs only listen to the testimony of former US military officer and UN weapons inspector (1992-1998) Scott Ritter who claims that 100% of Iraqi nuclear weapons and at least 90-95% of any bio-chem weapons were destroyed by UN weapons inspectors by 1998.

Biological weapons (say anthrax) cannot sustain long-term storage; they biodegrade and become harmless powder. Any such weapons that might have survived the UN weapons-inspection program are by now goo. Nuclear weapons are easily detectable; it is impossible to conceal gamma radiation from nuclear labs producing such weapons. If such nuclear facilities now exist in Iraq, is it imaginable that Baradei's inspectors haven't yet detected them? Would the US keep it a secret from the world if they had detected such radiation? It is not enough to pound the chest and loudly proclaim the existence of WMD! The UN reports that they have so far found no evidence of nuclear labs or weapons.

Official pronouncements of any government cannot be taken at face value but must be examined in the light of past performance. (From at least 1965-66, for example, it became evident to many Americans that their government had been lying to them about Vietnam; this fact was certified by the 1971 publication of the Pentagon Papers, DoD's official history of the origins of the Vietnam War.)

- In October last year the CIA warned (and Pres Bush publicly proclaimed) that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program at Al Tuwaitha. UN weapons inspectors repeatedly scrutinized this site (12 times as of January 17) and they found - nothing!

- US and British "Intelligence" had claimed that there must be new Iraqi development of nuclear weapons at al Qaim (because of new building there, they said) but a thorough search by UN inspectors in October showed - nothing!

- Four months ago the CIA warned that several facilities in Iraq (it named 3 different sites) were active in renewed biological weapons development. UN weapons inspectors repeatedly inspected all these sites by mid January. They found - nothing!

The US wants to invade Iraq. Every week there are new announcements of troop deployments, so the desired invasion is imminent. In a speech to the UN last week, Secretary Powell presented claims of "evidence" of "new" chemical-weapons development in Iraq months before. Yet UNSC Resolution 1441 that initiated the UN inspections regime called on everyone to turn over to UN Weapons Inspectors any information they might have as to possible Iraqi violations. If the US had any credible evidence, why didn't Secretary Powell turn over the information to UN inspectors months before - when he says we "discovered" it? Could it be that the findings of UN inspectors would refute such claims before the US planned invasion?

US claims of present Iraqi development and possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction must have a purpose other than disarmament of Iraq. Some speculate that the purpose must be Iraqi oil - the second largest reserves in the world. Others might have other conjectures. But as Macchiavelli observed:

"Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely."

"Time is running out, the Bush administration keeps telling Baghdad." Why is time running out? All know that a hot-weather war in Iraq would be impossible, and hot weather is imminent. (During WWII, the Stars & Stripes carried stories in the Persian Gulf Command -- with photos -- of eggs frying on pick-up truck beds in the summer sun!)

Not to worry; cold weather will again follow the coming summer during which weapons-inspections can continue to ensure Iraqi disarmament -- assuming that is anybody's real concern! But that timing is no good! By then it would be late 2003-early 2004. Who wants a US-initiated war right smack in the middle of a re-election campaign?

It is a Bush administration imperative that it get a successful military campaign under its belt before the election campaign gets hot! It would be nice if other nations could be bullied into falling into line with US-demanded action. But Bush has made clear that lack of the world's acquiescence is not really a hindrance to his plans.

Nazi propaganda chief Goebbels maintained that, if you repeated a lie often enough, people would believe you. A natural corollary is that if you never make any reference to some certain thing, people will never imagine it to be true. So it is with Bush's war, its timing, and the elections coming next year.