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Promoting Social Justice, Human Rights, and Peace

HIDDEN WARS OF DESERT STORM (Part I of II)

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"On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein's forces cross the border into Kuwait, triggering the largest international crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union, A coalition-force led by the United States is assembled and then launches a massive air-assault against Iraq before finally starting the largest ground offensive ever since WW2 in the name of liberating Kuwait. On February 28, 1991, having fulfilled its mission, the international coalition abruptly stops the war against Iraq : the last Iraqi troops are evicted from Kuwait or taken prisoners. Victory is total. However, a decade after it was imposed to force Saddam out of Kuwait, the embargo over Iraq is still in place."

The assault had absolutely nothing to do with freedom and democracy (Ramsey Clark) - You had to keep the image of the good guys (Randa Habib) - So the press was kept out (Paul Sullivan) - It is a trap and Iraq fell in it (Jordan Foreign Minister) - The US wanted that war (Phyllis Bennis) - The mosquitoes and flies put up a bigger fight than they did (Morocco Oman) - A large portion of Saddam's army never came into Kuwait (Norman Schwarzkopf) - They didn't see tank tracks in the desert (Jean Heller) - There was no war, Iraq was defenseless (Ramsey Clark) - It is a genocide, period (Labib Kamhawi) - Very na'ive to think that the embargo would remove Saddam Hussein from power (Dennis Halliday) - The embargo strengthened the regime of Saddam Hussein (Fadel Chalabi) - The CIA actually supported Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath Party (Bill Hartung) - Perhaps they have other secret intentions I am not aware of (Ahmed Al -Jabar) - If indeed the government lied, does that surprise anyone ? (Jean Heller)

"To understand why this embargo still stands and why the Gulf War happened in the first place, it is necessary to look at the history of Western involvement in the Middle-East. "

"In the 1920s, European and American oil companies discover and begin to exploit the first oil-fields in the Middle-East. The potential of these fields would become

particularly critical to oil-poor western Europe. The profit-margins are huge while the cut to local regimes is minimal and the price of oil at the well is almost the same as mineral water. " WW2 changes this equation. Despite their victory over Nazi Germany, both France and England are gravely debilitated and begin losing their grip over their former colonies. In the Middle-East, new leaders come to power, removing monarchies no longer protected by the former colonial forces and swept away by popular revolutions. "

"However, the British and French role in the Middle-East is now being taken over by the big winner of the War, the United States of America. Despite its own oil resources, the US comes to realize the strategic importance of the Middle-East oil, to contain the Soviet Union, to rebuild Western Europe and to confirm the American industrial boom. But Washington hopes to maintain the inexpensive Middle-East oil bonanza of before WW2. The new Middle-East regimes think otherwise and when they seek to retake control of their own national wealth, it strikes a cord of panic in Washington, London and Paris. It is war against Egypt when Nasser seizes the Suez Canal, In Iran, Mossadegh nationalizes oilfields and kicks the British oil companies out. He is subsequently ousted by a CIA-orchestrated coup that puts the Shah back in command. In Iraq, as General Abdel Karim Qassem takes over and nationalizes the oilfields, the West cries "communism ". "

Ahmed Al Bayati, London Rep. of Supreme Council for Islamic Revol. In Iraq:

Saddam came to power in 1968. This coup came as a result of an oil deal between Iraq and a French company, IRAB. This contract upset the West and the Americans in particular. So they encouraged a coup in Iraq at that time.

Bill Hartung, International Arms Market specialist:

The United States has had sort of a love-hate relationship with Saddam Hussein, which is not something many people in this country are aware of, going back to the late 50s and early 60s when the CIA supported Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath Party in the coup that brought him to power.

Fadel Chalabi, Former Iraqi Oil Minister:

The vice Prime Minister, a Ba'athist who died, called Al Saadi said in a book which he published in Beirut that "we, the Ba'athists, came to power in an American train, he said that".

"Despite his already well-known ruthlessness, Saddam Hussein remains the "Good Guy" of the West until 1972. This year, the OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, agrees to raise the price of the barrel from \$ 3.00 to \$ 22.00. Iraq follows suit and nationalizes its oilfields. Saddam is then deemed unreliable by Washington and as a result branded a terrorist leader. The US then shifts all of its support to its long-standing ally in the region, the Shah of Iran. "

Former Attorney-General Ramsey Clark:

For 25 years, from 1953, the Shah of Iran was the US surrogate in the Persian Gulf and in the Middle-East region. The US sold him about \$ 22 billion in arms from 1972 to 1976. The Shah was our man. "The hope of control by the West of the Middle-East Jades in 1979 when the Shah is overthrown by anti-Western, fundamentalist leader Ayatollah Khomeini. By then, Saddam Hussein becomes again a viable card in Washington's hand. He becomes the actual President of Iraq after 11 years of being its acting Vice-President, and then perpetrates a sweeping purge of his opponents and attacks Iran -without provocation or apparent reason."

Arms expert Bill Hartung:

The Stockholm Peace Research Institute has found that 52 different countries supplied weapons to Iran or Iraq during the war and 29 countries supplied both sides. The very same countries that were saying how horrible the war was were using that war to stimulate their arms industries, to test some of their new weapon designs.

State Rep. Iraq Program Director David Welch:

We did have some very limited engagement with the government of Iraq, actually a lot less so that other governments and both protagonists were under arms embargoes during that period, arms embargoes that the United States for its part didn't violate.

Bill Hartung:

The United States was perhaps the most hypocritical of the countries that supplied arms to the war because its public position was "we're not gonna arm Iran, we're not gonna arm Iraq" when quietly, secretly they were actually arming both sides of the conflict.

"Saddam Hussein's ambition however is to develop Iraq's own non-conventional, mass-destruction weapons. An inquiry conducted by US Congress in 1992 reveals that the American contribution to this effort is quite significant as well and is fully monitored by the CIA and the US State Department whose reports as early as the late 70s have been detailing the extent of Iraq's mass-destruction weapon-programs and its repetitive use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops and Kurdish opponents. "

State Rep. David Welch:

In 1988, we had no idea that Saddam Hussein would be using chemical weapons on his own people. If we had known all this in advance, well, we would have made our policy quite a bit different in 1988, I'm sure.

"Voices start being heard within the US Government asking about the wisdom of giving Iraq huge credits intended for purchasing US agricultural goods but used instead to buy helicopters, armored trucks, unreasonable amounts of pesticides, germs and advanced arms-making technologies. The US State Department and the White House

under Presidents Reagan and then Bush systematically quell all the inquiry attempts from Congress and the Treasury Department."

"From massive arms-purchases to the development of costly military research programs, Saddam Hussein has ruined formerly rich Iraq. By the end of his war against Iran in 1988, the country is in the red for \$ 40 billion. It is precisely at this time, starting in 1988, when Iraq is most desperate to maximize its oil income that yet another crisis begins unfolding."

Oil market expert Siu Hin Lee:

OPEC keeps the price of oil stable by limiting how much oil each OPEC member-country can produce. In 1989, after the end of the Iraq/Iran war, Kuwait suddenly exceeded its quotas by 20 %, driving the price of oil down on the world market. As a result of Kuwait's production hike, Iraq lost almost a third of its oil income. And this was at a time when Iraq was desperate for money. So the Iraqis felt that Kuwait was stabbing them in the back.

*"Welcomed by the West, this move by Kuwait hurts both the Iraqis' economy and pride as they remember that Kuwait used to be part of their territory before it was carved off by the British in 1928. Over the following months, tension escalates to the point of Saddam Hussein publicly threatening Kuwait. Given that Kuwait remains one of the primary oil-suppliers to the west, the official response of the US State Department to Saddam's saber-rattling is rather surprising: **"US State Rep, briefing (6 days prior to Kuwait invasion):***

There is no special security commitment with Kuwait.

AFP Randa Habib:

The Americans had given indirectly an encouragement to Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait.

"If the Middle-East stability is indeed a desirable goal for all, why did the West fuel such a brutal dictator as Saddam Hussein with credits, weapons and advanced technologies ? And why would the US State Department repeatedly tell Saddam it has no defense agreement with Kuwait ? "

State Rep. David Welch: You know, it should come as no surprise that at the end of one war and to reduce the threat that we saw in this region from the consequences of that conflict, we would seek to direct either party in a more productive way, including Iraq.

Former Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Al-Kasem:

I do not say that what Iraq committed in invading Kuwait is acceptable to any of the Arab countries, no, it is not, but the way and the attitude that preceded the crisis made

everyone aware that there must have been other plans to entrap Iraq into this situation. It is a trap, unfortunately Iraq fell in it.

"On August 2, 1990, convinced the US Government would not interfere, Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait. While US officials publicly express shock and surprise, the Pentagon is ready for action, having rehearsed this very situation for several months prior to Iraq's attack on Kuwait".

General Norman Schwarzkopf:

We went ahead and did an exercise, what is called a command post exercise, which is what Internal Look was, to test our ability to deal with this particular scenario, and also to uncover any commanding control problem that might exist, any doctrine problem that might exist between the air force, the Navy and the Armed Forces. And it just so happened that we were in the middle of conducting the Internal Look command post exercise at the same time when the crisis developed in the Gulf.

Former US Marine & Gulf War Veteran Morocco Omari:

Prior to that, when I was doing my training, all the officers were telling us about the built-up..., the thing with Iraq possibly going to Kuwait and attacking Kuwait, and they told us to be prepared for it because it was very serious and they said that they had been knowing this for about two years prior to this, you know. So a lot of this stuff was already going on, they knew that they would probably be going to..., and they were preparing us to go over to Desert Storm.

"Hardly a few hours after Saddam's invasion, all Iraqi assets in the US are frozen and the US Navy starts enforcing a blockade of the Iraqi coast even before the UN gets a chance to convene. A couple of days later, delegations from the US Departments of State and Defense fly to Ryad to try to convince the Saudi Government that the Iraqi troops are indeed threatening their borders. The official press release mentions showing the Saudis satellite picture evidence of the Iraqi build-up at the Saudi border."

St. Petersburg Times investigative reporter Jean Heller:

The Defense Department never made public any photographs that proved their point. And I doubt that they exist.

"In January 1991, the St. Petersburg Times along with ABC runs a story based on commercial satellite pictures that happened to have been taken over Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at the time of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait."

Jean Heller:

The airport in the Kuwaiti capital appeared to have been abandoned which it wouldn't be. If you think about it for a minute, if you're trying to supply a quarter of a million

troops, it takes a lot of food, a lot of camping equipment, a lot of fuel for the tanks. They didn't see tanks tracks in the sand in the desert and they would not have worn away because satellites pictures are still pickling up images of sand tracks in the desert of Northern Africa that were left during WW2. I happened to know the Press Secretary of Defense personally, and I asked him : "look, you know me, we've known each-other for a long time, let me look at some of the US intelligence satellite photos, prove to me that I'm wrong. I don't need to take them out of the building, I don't need to copy them. Prove to me that we are wrong and we won't run the story". And he refused to do so that. He refused to do it on a number of occasions. As a reporter, I'm not supposed to conclude anything, but everyone else who was familiar with this story and familiar with the satellite photographs has concluded that the administration lied to the Saudis, to the world in order in order to get the invitation to come into the Middle-East to protect the innocent. What does it say about the government ? If in fact the fact the government lied, does that surprise anyone ?

"If indeed the US Government misled the Saudis about the Iraqis threatening their borders, what was the purpose ? Ever since WW2, the US administration had been making countless efforts to convince the Saudis to allow the largely Christian US troops onto the holy land of Mecca, supposedly to protect Saudi Arabia but namely to secure its vast oil-fields. Ever since OPEC raised the price of oil in the early 70s, this concern has become even more acute, epitomized by State Secretary Henry Kissinger 's famous statement: "Oil is too important to be left to the Arabs ".

Gen. Schwarzkopf:

Well, you have to understand that there were principal focuses over the world amounting to military commands. You had the focus of the European command on the NATO situation, you had the focus of the Pacific Command, for instance on the Pacific, the Atlantic on the battle in the Atlantic, but there were certain areas in the world that had no focus. The Middle-East was an area. The problem was that no Arab country wanted a major US military headquarters in their country.

St. Petersburg Times' Jean Heller:

In 1990, the Bush administration was trying to convince the Saudis that the threat from the Iraqis was real because we couldn't go in there, the Allies, the British, the French, the Americans and the others could not go in there without an invitation from the Saudis. The Saudis had to feel threatened in order to invite the allies to come in for protection.

"On August 7, 1990, the Saudi Government officially accepts the insisting protection offer from Washington. The very next day, the US military steam-roller starts flying in - without even notifying Congress. Within a few months, over half-a million American troops would be deployed in Saudi Arabia. After persuading the Saudis, the US Government now has to convince the American public and the world that the threat is

real and that it justifies a gigantic US military build-up in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the pressure is on to find a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the crisis. However, war is already in the minds of others. UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar himself flies to Baghdad and meets with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. He fails though to convince him that the international threat will be real if he chooses to remain in Kuwait. His failure however doesn't meet only despair and frustration upon his return to New York. "

Former UN Iraq Program Dir. Dennis Halliday:

Saddam Hussein had indicated a willingness to compromise, mediate and withdraw his troops. Also the Arab states were given a chance to mediate but they were given 48 hours, I believe, by President Bush. So in summary, I think the Americans didn't want a diplomatic solution at that late stage, I am talking about after the invasion.

World & UN affairs specialist/writer Phyllis Bennis:

Yemen voted against the use-of-force resolution. And no sooner had the Ambassador of Yemen put down his hand after the vote that there was a US representative at his side saying : "that will be the most expensive no-vote you will ever cast". And sure enough, three days later, the US cut-off its entire aid-budget to Yemen, the poorest nation in the Arab world.

"On November 29, 1990, driven by the US delegation, the UN Security Council passes the war resolution with a deadline set for January 15. There would be no turning back at this point."

Phyllis Bennis:

That was the US itself that made the decision of the Gulf crisis, the crisis brought about by Iraq's illegal invasion of Kuwait, would not be solved by diplomatic means but only by military means. The US wanted that war.

"January 17, 1991, 3:00 am Iraq-time. Hell breaks loose on Baghdad. The formidable firepower of the coalition amassed primarily by the United States over the past five months reveals its awesome might. Televisions worldwide start showing images of a supposedly fool-proof, high precision campaign of so-called surgical bombings said to hit nothing but Iraqi military targets."

President of National Gulf War Veterans Resource Center Paul Sullivan:

During the Gulf War, the Government decided to keep the Press out, so the Press was kept out and you didn't know what was going on.

Ramsey Clark:

Typically, the US military claimed that its bombing of Iraq was highly accurate. Nothing can be further from the truth. 110,000 aerial sorties and 85,000 tons of bombs,

the equivalent of seven and a half Hiroshimas in 42 days, you could see the indiscriminate nature of the bombing. It probably killed 150,000, maybe 200,000 people, thousands and thousands of civilians indirectly. There is no question from the evidence of the bombing that the United States deliberately planned the destruction of the economic support system for the Iraqi population. If you just take water, they knocked out reservoir dams in the North, they knocked out pumping stations for water pipelines bringing the water down, they knocked out filtration plants to purify the water so you can drink it without getting sick. On food, they systematically attacked the food chain from one end of the country to the other. They knocked out all electrical power within hours, they knocked out transportation, they showed you can destroy a country and deprive it of essential life-support systems without ever setting foot on it, through cruise-missiles and aerial bombardments.

"February 23, 1991, five weeks after the start of the most formidable bombing campaign in history, the coalition ground forces start rolling in Kuwait. The allied offensive gets fast and deep into Kuwait without encountering significant resistance. The Iraqi military leviathan is nowhere in sight and the troops still present in Kuwait are simply no match for the modern coalition forces. "

USMC Morocco Omari:

When we went to Kuwait, we were expecting, you know, this 5 million-man army, these big monsters, and when we got there, they were like chihuahuas. I mean, the mosquitoes and flies put up a bigger fight than they did.

General Schwarzkopf:

We knew our capability was much better than theirs.

USMC Morocco Omari:

These people were just like regular Joe's. Hey somebody comes to your house and says "either fight the Americans or I kill your family". Of course, you're gonna say : "gimme the gun", you know, they had no other choice". These guys didn't even know how to shoot their weapons. They wore regular clothes, you'd pick up AK 47, they are filled with sand, it is just like what is it ?

"By the end of February 1991, when the dust from the coalition ground offensive starts to settle, the big surprise is not finding the large Iraqi force previously reported by Washington. "

Jean Heller:

In mid-September, the Bush administration was saying that there were 250,000 Iraqi troops and 1,500 tanks amassing at the Saudi border for possible invasion. Now, I'm not saying there were none there. The people fleeing Kuwait passed Iraqi soldiers.

They passed quite a few Iraqi soldiers. So there were some there, just probably not a force of the size that would invade Saudi Arabia.

General Schwarzkopf:

You have to remember that a very large portion of Saddam's army never came into Kuwait. He kept a large part of his army back along the border with Iran and within the capital, his Republican Guards specifically. "On February 28, 1991, the other big surprise is the announcement of a cease-fire when the allied forces were already pushing deep into Iraq. "

USMC Morocco Omari:

We took Kuwait, all of Kuwait, in less than 24 hours, the Marines. The Army went through Southern Iraq and took within a 24-hour period. And we stopped. And everybody was like "wow, why didn't we get Saddam ? You felt like you went over there, you did your job, but you didn't get to finish your job.

Ramsey Clark:

The United States military could have moved at the end of the bombing period straight into Baghdad in less than 24 hours. It was a political decision not to do it.

"On February 26, 1991, two days prior to Washington declaring cease-fire, a new element had appeared in the Iraqi equation. Tired of twelve years of ruthless dictatorship, a great portion of the Iraqi population had started an uprising against the regime in Baghdad. The news was withheld by the media as the Bush administration didn 't want to make it look like they would stop the war to spare Saddam Hussein's regime."

Jordanian journalist Michel Haj:

People began to demonstrate on the streets, carrying arms and destroying things. The demonstrations continued on the following day. President Bush at that moment began thinking: "we have to stop the war". And that's how he surprised General Colin Powell on the 27th of February by telling him: "let us stop the war now". And when he asked : "what do you mean by now ?", he said : "now at that moment". And he did that in spite of the objections of Schwarzkopf.

General Schwarzkopf:

If we had been allowed to go on for one or two more days, we have totally destroyed the Iraqi forces and that would have a battle of annihilation. I said that when they first called me from Washington and asked me what my plans were, I said : "we plan to continue the operations".

"By early March 1991, the rebellion is starting to spread all across Iraq. The Bush administration's response is a surprising support of Saddam's regime. "

Jordanian journalist Michel Haj

What happened of course in Safwan, the way that General Schwarzkopf gave a lot to the Iraqis on the 3rd of March when they met in Safwan at the border with Kuwait. When he allowed them to use helicopters, even armed helicopters, I came to the conclusion that there was some kind of deal.

General Schwarzkopf:

I said yes, you can fly your helicopters. (...) Now subsequently, helicopters were used to suppress the rebels.

Michel Hai:

The Americans would cease-fire, which was a very unexpected early cease-fire in order to give a chance to the Iraqis, to allow the Iraqis to be able to eliminate the rebellion in the South. For the next two years, there was no real attempt to topple the Iraqi regime in Baghdad. And there were no American attack although there were so many reasons, and President Bush threatened so many times to go back to war because Iraq is not supervising their promise in the 687 UN resolution. But real fighting did not happen, real war didn't happen.

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Michel Hai:

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Part II

"A decade later, the victory is much less clear cut. The Iraqi forces are long gone from Kuwait but the UN-sanctioned embargo is still in place over Iraq. The toll on its ordinary citizens is staggering. "

International relations/UN expert Phyllis Bennis (voice only):

There has never been an international sanction regime even close to as rigorous and as tightly imposed as the sanctions that have been imposed on Iraq.

Jordan Human Right Association President Labib Kamhawi (voice only):

Saddam Hussein is one thing and what is happening with the Iraqi people is a different thing. The Iraqi people is starving, people are dying.

Baghdad Gulf War Remembrance Museum Dir. Nassira Sadoun:

Every one of us has lost children or members of their families. No one Iraqi can say that he lost no one. Every one of us loses our beloved.

Dennis Halliday:

Back in 1990, economic sanctions were seen I believe as a good alternative to military activity and forces. Since then however, they have been sustained over nine years. They have had an impact on the people of Iraq which in the view of many of us is genocidal in the sense that economic sanctions on top of the damages done by the Americans and others in the Gulf War has led to the death of one or possibly one and a half million Iraqi people and particularly children. So the maintenance of these economic sanctions breach the Geneva Convention on warfare because as we all know, civilians are not to be targeted in war nor in economic sanction programs.

Dr. Monaf Shaker, Saddam Hospital for Children. Baghdad (Voice only):

The general conditions in our country deteriorated since 1990. Also the deficiency of the vaccinations, including the absence of basic things like toilet paper, led to the outbreak of many infectious diseases

Basra Children Hospital Pediatric Dr. Feras Abdul Abass (voice only):

Before the war, I never saw any child suffering from malnutrition in our country. Aldra Saleh, six year-old baby. Her weight corresponds to the age of one year or less because of the deficiency of protein. This is another type of malnutrition. Six month-old infant who suffers from chronic diarrhea and he needs special formula of milk to stop the diarrhea. This medical milk is not available.

"In 1991, the United Nations voted a resolution meant to ease the impact of sanctions on the Iraqi population."

State Rep. David Welch :

The idea behind the "oil-for-food" program was simple that is Iraq could use a certain

amount of its oil-revenues for the purpose of taking care of the needs of the Iraqi people.

Jordan Human Right Association President Dr. Lafaib Kamhawi:

When the things started, there were some incidents that were like black comedy. There was one company that had a contract to supply eggs and the contract was sent for approval and it seems that the American delegate, even without looking, put it on hold and asked for explanation about the end use for this product. And the answer came back: you boil it, or you fry and you eat it, these are eggs !" This should give you an idea about how things are done.

Dennis Halliday:

So oil-for-food in my view, even if it has maintained a level of intake in terms of food, inadequate although as it certainly is, has failed to address the needs of the Iraqi and thus we have seen the maintenance of malnutrition, the death of infants in particular.

Basra Children Hospital Pediatric Dr. Feras Abdul Abass:

Since yesterday, we lost two babies because of the shortage of oxygen due to no electrical power necessary to make oxygen. This baby is going to die at any time because of lack of oxygen. So we chose this baby because his weight is higher than this one. Chances of survival of this baby are higher than this baby. I feel sad because I can't do anything, I can't save these patients.

State Rep. David Welch:

We have no grudge or animosity against the people of Iraq. Our problem is with its government.

Basra Children Hospital Pediatric Dr. Feras Abdul Abass:

This baby's named Amel Salem, one-year-old infant, and we diagnosed pneumonia. And she could not receive the proper treatment of antibiotics, and therefore the baby died. Especially we have shortage of claforum antibiotics. This patient needed it.

Jordan Human Rights Assoc. President Dr. Kamhawi

What is it With the UN and the Americans to impose sanctions on medicine ? Only crazy people would do this, I mean, this is medicine. What is multi-use ? Are they going to make atomic bombs out of a few tablets of medicine here or there ?

State Rep. David Welch:

Let me make clear that the purpose of the Security Council resolution with sanctions as their tool was so that Iraq should not be a threat to peace and security again.

Former UNSCOM team leader Scott Ritter:

We uncovered the bulk of what the Iraqi were able to produce in terms of chemical

weapons, biological weapons, ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. The infrastructures in which Iraq used to produce these weapons have largely been dismantled, destroyed or under monitoring by the arms inspectors. So we have a good idea of what's left, it's not very much.

Phyllis Bennis:

Despite that, the US has constantly moved the goalpost. It's not enough if they comply by the requirements regarding weapons of mass destruction. Instead of saying: "if you abide by the requirements of the UN resolutions, sanctions will be lifted", the US message is : "it doesn't matter whether you comply or not, we are not going to lift the sanctions anyway".

Former UN Iraq Program director Dennis Halliday:

When UNSCOM began, I believe it was a legitimate effort to track down and destroy dangerous weaponry. And in fact, the Atomic Energy Agency and others were just about ready to clear UNSCOM, their work and agreed that Iraq was clean. Then Richard Butler was appointed and he re-opened many of the issues that in fact had been closed and seemed to bring a new element in the investigation, perhaps very much supported by Washington.

UNSCOM Scott Ritter:

The action of its executive chairman Richard Butler and in concert with the United States government allowed UNSCOM to be manipulated in a way that was outside the guideline set forth by its true boss, the Security Council. The United States and the United Kingdom used UNSCOM as a trigger for the initiation of military actions, the United States and Great Britain used information gathered by weapon-inspectors to provide targets for their bombings. This is an accepted fact. So UNSCOM, as an organization, has been discredited.

Dennis Halliday:

It is true that an inspection entity of that sort can be manipulated politically and give an excuse to the more aggressive member-states for further military action. And in a sense, we have that every day, almost every day of the week when United Kingdom and American planes are bombing Iraq.

Baghdad Gulf War Remembrance Museum Dir. Nassira Sadoun:

The Americans say they are bombing what they call Iraqi radars, which is not true, they are bombing infrastructures, they are bombing houses of people, they have even bombed a tent of Bedouins with their animals and their whole family who are dead. Every single day, there has been a bombing over Iraq, but not one media has spoken about that.

AFP Amman Bureau Chief Randa Habib:

If you don't see it in the media abroad, it is because I think it's becoming too small stories, it's not as interesting as before.

Michel Hai:

On the 17th of January 1993, Bush sent 42 missiles on that day, one of them hitting the Al Rashid Hotel when I was there.

Bleeding man at Al-nn 12, Rashid Hotel:

I am a journalist, a German journalist from BildZeitung. I think I'm the only one who was injured.

State Rep. David Welch:

The air-attacks that you refer to are defensive in nature. Since 1991, there has been a no-fly zone in the North of Iraq. This no-fly zone was imposed, I will recall for your audience, after the Iraqi regime forced the exodus of over half-a-million Kurdish inhabitants of Northern Iraq. The UN passed resolution 688 that say that this should not happen and then a no-fly zone was imposed.

Phyllis Beonisi:

There is no reference in any UN resolution to the establishment of a no-fly zone in Northern and Southern Iraq. The US has imposed and with the British kept them in place, and the results is that civilians in the North and in the South whose lives are ostensibly to be protected by the establishment of those no-fly zones are being killed not by Iraqi soldiers or by Iraqi planes but by American bombings that go off-course. That is who is killing the Iraqi civilians in the southern and Northern no-fly zones. One of the very bitter lessons of these years of war, both military war and economic war against Iraq is that for the United States and for most governments in the Security Council, humanitarian considerations are simply not enough to influence policy. We have of course the famous statement by Madeleine Albright in 1996 when she was asked about the death at that time of half-a-million Iraqi children that had died as a result of sanctions and of course she did not dispute the figure, she simply thought about it for a moment and then said : "on balance, we think it's worth it".

"The "60 Minutes " show entitled "Punishing Saddam " where State Secretary Madeleine Albright made this insensitive remark aired on May 12, 1996. It has since been censored by CBS under political pressure. If indeed the price is worth it as Ms. Albright declared, again who is paying that price ? And what does it buy ? Is it really an attempt to force Saddam out of power as is being claimed by the United States administration ?"

State Rep. Pavid Welch:

The Iraqi Liberation Act is an additional expression of our concern about the regime

that is in charge in Baghdad. The United States believe that this situation involving Iraq would be immeasurably better were Saddam no longer the leader of Iraq. The act passed by Congress is designed to provide support and resources.

Iraqi opposition figure and writer in London Ahmed Al Jabar:

Well, according to the Iraqi Liberation Act, they say that they are ready to give the Iraqi opposition non-lethal equipment, they are thinking about computers, and mobiles, desks and so-on. And I don't think that by mobiles and computers, we will be able to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

"In other parts of the world, Washington has never proved to come short of ideas and solid means to get rid of governments deemed hostile or worth removing."

Ahmed Al Jabar:

In 1992 when we first established the INC, we were planning to have an uprising, a national resistance against the regime. In April 1995, we started this uprising, the military operations of it but again the Americans refused to support that uprising and at the end, Saddam was able to crush it.

"To this day, Saddam Hussein remains Washington's most convenient bogeyman justifying the continuing pressure on Iraq and in the Gulf region in general."

Dennis Halliday:

There was a belief, I think, for many years that somehow sanctions would lead to the removal of Saddam Hussein. Very naive because in fact, economic sanctions and their impact have made Saddam Hussein stronger.

Former Iraqi Oil Minister Fadel Chalabi:

Why did the embargo strengthen the regime of Saddam Hussein ? First, because the mere livelihood of people became dependent on the government, so he controls people by starving them. But more important, the embargo has created a new class living very comfortably attached to him, you see a nobody getting some hundreds times as much as a doctor. Why ? Because he is part of the security system, and therefore he should be fed well, he should be given good accommodations. He created a power-base of people whose daily interests are tied to him, so that when he goes, they lose all these privileges.

Dennis Halliday:

Sanctions have sustained Saddam Hussein in power and that many of us worldwide believe that it is also a policy of the United States. They need Saddam Hussein in Iraq because of the Saddam Hussein threat quote-and-quote, the Americans have sold arms on a massive scale to the Arab states, the Gulf, Israel of course, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

International arms-trade specialist William Hartung:

After the Gulf War, US arms manufacturers and the Pentagon took advantage of making new arms sales to the Middle-East at the rate of about a billion dollars a month.

Former Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Al-Kasemn:

The oil-producing country in 1990 had hundreds of millions of dollars in reserves, now they have maybe hundreds of billions in debt

"But Saddam also serves a more direct goal for the Pentagon. "

Former Attorney-General Ramsey Clark:

The United States had to have a justification to remain in the area. It intended to retain major military forces that could protect and control all the natural resources of the region. It was not particularly welcome by the people of Saudi Arabia who didn't really want US troops on their soil. So Saddam was chosen to remain the devil that would justify the presence of the American angels in that region.

Bill Hartung:

After the Gulf War, the build-up in places like King Khaled Military City, which was supposed to be temporary, has become sort of a bridge for possible long-term US military base in Saudi Arabia and the Middle-East. There are now thousands of US troops regularly in Saudi Arabia. So at least, on a de-facto basis, Saudi Arabia has become a military base for US forces in the Middle-East. Unless there is a change of regime, the base could well end up being permanent in Saudi Arabia.

"Proclaimed as a sweeping victory by almost all Western media, the Gulf War and the subsequent crisis with Iraq have indeed amounted to a super victory for Washington : paramount arms-sales at a level never seen before, at last huge, permanent military bases in Saudi Arabia resulting in a better control of the oil-flow and a better leverage on its pricing. The great losers on the other hand are the Iraqi population still under a Stalin-like dictatorship and slowly dying from starvation. But the losers however are not just distant populations of the Middle-East. Some of the victims of the Gulf War have also turned out to be right amongst the presumable victors of the war."

Gulf War Vets President Paul Sullivan: In 1991, most Americans were very happy that the Gulf War apparently had ended. It was a quick, decisive victory and hundreds of thousands of US troops were returning home for parades. What happened a few months later was that thousands of American veterans started reporting medical problems, such as achy joints, memory problems, they kept falling ill, they were getting rashes and there was no explanation.

AFP Amman Bureau Chief Randa Habib:

Concerning the type of weapons used by the Allies during the Gulf War, the first warning came from soldiers themselves whether in Britain or in the US when they started complaining about symptoms that were related to the Gulf War and to the use of the weapons. So it is obvious that it took so long before people took it seriously because there was this conspiracy of silence.

Paul Sullivan:

The first response of the US military, the US government was to ignore it, to deny that there was any problem with the health status of American Gulf War veterans.

Randa Habib:

You had to keep the image of the good guys, namely the allies, and the bad guy who is Saddam. It's Saddam Hussein who would use chemical weapons and who would harm his own population and the world with this type of weapons and it didn't look very nice to show that the allies had used themselves weapons that were harmful.

PIX: 696,628 US troops served in the Gulf War -- 183,629 filed for service-related disabilities -- 9,592 US Gulf War Vets have died as of 1/1/2000.

"In the 1970s through the 1980s, the Pentagon in complete secrecy started experimenting with a new type of high perforation shell made of the heaviest, hardest, most plentiful metal around, readily available without mining costs or efforts, a metal that just happened to be sitting there in the hands of the US Department of Energy: uranium waste."

Nuclear physics professor/former POP contractor Doug Rokke:

The US Department of Energy and other nations said, that are involved in the enrichment, therefore have tremendous amount of that waste leftover and they need to find a use for it

"Depleted uranium rounds reached combat for the first time during the Gulf War. These rounds pierce anything known to this day, penetrating the thickest armor-plates like butter. The downside ? They are radioactive, contain traces of plutonium, the most toxic metal on Earth and their debris remain radioactive for about 4.5 billion years. "

Paul Sullivan:

Depleted uranium is a very hazardous toxic waste. For example, depleted uranium settles in the bones, it settles in the lungs, it settles in the liver, in the kidneys and also in the muscles and the testicles. This is not an experiment upon rats. Depleted uranium also crosses from a mother through the placenta to her fetus. All this information is widely available. However, the Pentagon in their overwhelming desire, their passion to

use depleted uranium weapons, is trying to suppress the medical researches about its high toxicity.

Gulf War veteran & anti-depleted uranium activist Dan Fahey:

I could go through their earliest reports on this issue, you know, this is one from 1990 where they say : "the most exposed individuals are the soldiers who go to the battlefield after DU rounds are shot", saying that civilians and soldiers can suffer health effects from the ingestion and inhalation of DU dust, and even saying that once people realize the health and environmental effects on this weapon, there might be a move to ban it. And this July 1990, this is just six months or so before the war. You have to wonder why no warning was ever disseminated to any ground forces prior to the war, even just to say : "stay away from the vehicles that have been hit, don't go climbing onto the equipment afterwards".

Paul Sullivan:

What the military didn't do is that they didn't tell the soldiers that the ammunition used in our airplanes and our tanks during the Gulf War was made out of this highly toxic radioactive substance.

USMC Morocco Omari:

Because we didn't know about the radioactive waste being used as ammunitions, people were just picking up things in the Desert, people were picking up whatever they could find as a war trophy. I think, if they would have known, they would have never touched it.

Paul Sullivan:

More than 436,000 US troops are confirmed to have entered into those areas of radioactive toxic waste. And sadly, some soldiers camped in areas contaminated by depleted uranium radioactive toxic waste for up to two months without any idea, without any warning at all.

Anti-PU activist Dan Fahey:

And I just want to say something about the Iraqis too. I have talked to people who went to Iraq. And I have also seen photos of bedouins who go out in the desert and they go to the destroyed tanks. And I've seen photos of them literally digging in the sand next to the tanks for scrap-metal, and they have been doing this for years. And they take the scrap-metal that they can find and they go and they sell it so that they can buy food. This is the situation in Iraq.

Basra Cancer Professor Dr. Anuar Abdul Mehsen:

If we compare the mortality rate, that is the number of patients who die because of cancers, in 1988, we had only 34 patients who died because of cancer. But in 1998, we recorded 428 patients who died because of cancer. Cancers that normally affect elderly

people, now they are seen in younger age groups. I have a patient who has cancer of the ovaries who is 11 years old.

"In Basra, cancer and death strike the children even before they are born. At the Children's Hospital, malformed babies happen at the frightening rate of 1 or 2 a day. "

Doug Rokke:

Who's responsible today ? At the highest level, the United States made the decision to produce and use uranium 238 otherwise known as depleted uranium in combat.

Dan Fahey:

The Department of Energy is in charge of maintaining the stockpile of depleted uranium in this country, which we have about one-and-a-half billion Lbs. What they want to do is recycling into commercial use their stockpile so they don't have to hold it anymore. And a lot of this is just going to go to defense industries to be used as ammunitions.

"The Pentagon has good reasons to deny the toxicity of uranium waste and the contamination of both the local populations and the allied forces. "

Doug Rokke:

They cannot admit that today many of us are sick, many Iraqis are sick and it's all about two things: liability and dollars to clean up the mess that was created around the world.

"Medical tests and treatments have also been delayed or denied to most Gulf War veterans in an effort to evade both moral responsibility and healthcare costs. "

Gulf War veteran Hector Class:

The Army spent three years trying to discharge me without pension. They just kicked me out and didn't want to take responsibility for my medical condition.

"As shocking and disturbing as it is, this attitude from the Pentagon is nothing new."

Paul Sullivan:

The use of radioactive toxic waste called depleted uranium by the military is another sad chapter in the long and tortured history of the United States military. During WW2 and shortly afterwards, hundreds of US soldiers were told to stand outside and witness atomic bomb blasts. It was not until the 1990s that many of these veterans stepped forward and demanded healthcare and benefits as a result of being human guinea pigs. During the 1960s and 70s, the United States military used a defoliant called "agent-orange" that contains the deadly cancer-causing agent dioxin. This agent-orange was spread on trees and shrubs in Vietnam in order to destroy all the foliage.

Dan Fahey:

The debate went on for agent-orange for years when the Pentagon was saying : "no-one has been exposed to enough to cause any health problem". And we are in the same boat today with depleted uranium.

Paul Sullivan:

The amount of lies told by the US Government on these issues is so spectacular as to be mind-boggling.

"Depleted uranium rounds have not only been spread all over Kuwait and Southern Iraq, they have also been sprinkled all across Kosovo and Serbia and are shot on a daily basis in such places as Vieques, Puerto-Rico, and Okinawa, Japan, for training purposes and without any warning to the local populations. Today, fifteen countries altogether possess and shoot ammunitions made of radioactive nuclear waste and are ready to sell them to whoever wants to buy them. "

Doug Rokke:

We don't have to litter the battlefield with something which is hazardous for 4.5 billion years, as a consequence, the world needs to ban the use of uranium ammunition, period !

"Many more laws and international safeguard regulations need to be enacted to prevent the recurrence of any such ordeal, from the part of any government and against any population or country in the world."

Former Iraqi OilMinister Fadel Chalabi:

The embargo amounts to as much a crime to the Iraqi people as the invasion of Kuwait is said. Both are criminal, both are responsible for the misery of this people which I believe is a country with resources, with very good history, with good civilization, with a very advanced, professional middle-class which is now all destroyed.

Phyllis Beonis:

One of the things that we need within the United Nations is an oversight panel to make sure that UN Security Council resolutions do not themselves violate international laws. What we have with the sanction resolution in Iraq is a decision, a resolution by the Council that violates the fundamental international laws as codified in the Geneva Conventions that say that civilians cannot be targeted. And sanctions if nothing else target civilians. They are themselves a violation of international law. There needs to be an oversight method within the United Nations to make sure that this can never happen again.