

Pentagon admits: Intent toward Iraq is genocide

by Joseph Brewda

Senior U.S. military officers admitted in remarks published in the *Washington Post* on June 23, that the U.S. war against Iraq was intended to murder large numbers of Iraqi civilians and destroy the ability of Iraq to sustain itself as a functioning nation. The same officers, led by Lt. Gen. Charles A. Horner, who had overall command of the air campaign, and by Col. John Warden III, the deputy director of strategy, doctrine, and plans for the U.S. Air Force, also said that the continuing United Nations sanctions and embargo against Iraq have the same purpose.

Target the civilians

All throughout the war, Pentagon and White House spokesmen, and the establishment press, claimed that sophisticated precision bombing allowed the allied forces to selectively hit military targets, while protecting nearby civilian facilities and neighborhoods. It now comes out, contrary to these claims, that these “precision bombs” were deliberately used to target civilian sites for destruction.

Dismissing former claims that the damage of civilian sites was merely “collateral” or “accidental,” the officers told *Washington Post* reporter Barton Gellman that the “worst civilian suffering resulted not from bombs that went astray but from precision-guided weapons that hit exactly where intended.”

Justifying this policy, the officers said that “Iraqi civilians were not blameless for Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait.” “The definition of innocents gets to be a little bit unclear,” one of the officers, an unidentified senior figure in the Air Force, told the *Washington Post*. “They do live there and ultimately the people have some control over what goes on in their country.”

Another officer, who reportedly played a central role in the air campaign, said that targeting civilian infrastructure was necessary to destroy “all those things that allow a nation to sustain itself.” Ridiculing the claim that the bombing was not intended to harm civilians, the officer added, “People say, ‘You didn’t recognize that it was going to have an effect on water or sewage,’ ” by bombing power plants. “Well, what were we trying to do with sanctions?” he said. “Help

out the Iraqi people? No. What we were doing with the attacks on infrastructure was to accelerate the effect of the sanctions.”

Col. John Warden, Air Force deputy strategy chief, reported that destroying economic infrastructure was meant to impose “a long-term problem on the leadership that it has to deal with [for] some time.” This allows for the United States to impose its will on Iraq.

“Saddam Hussein cannot restore his own electricity,” Warden gloated. “He needs help. If there are political objectives that the U.N. coalition has, it can say ‘Saddam, when you agree to do these things, we will allow people to come in to fix your electricity.’ It gives us long-term leverage.”

Another Air Force planner added, “Big picture, we wanted to let people know, ‘Get rid of this guy and we’ll be more than happy to assist in rebuilding. We’re not going to tolerate Saddam Hussein or his regime. Fix that, and we’ll fix your electricity.’ ” Lt. Gen. Charles A. Horner, who ran the air campaign, said that a “side benefit” of destroying Iraq’s power grid was “the psychological effect on ordinary Iraqi citizens.”

Pentagon officials said that because of the bombing, “The country has roughly the generating capacity that it had in 1920—before reliance on refrigeration and sewage treatment became widespread.” Consequently, 50% of Baghdad’s sewage cannot be treated. Cholera and typhoid fever are reaching epidemic proportions as a result.

Continuing the killing

Testifying before Congress on June 17, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly stated that U.S. policy is to continue the embargo on Iraq indefinitely, and not allow it to sell oil for food, medicine, or any other need. “Our position,” he said, “is that once we are satisfied that Iraq has a legitimate need for the money, we would be willing to entertain the lifting of that particular sanction against the sale of oil.”

On June 12, the U.N. sanctions committee ruled that \$1 billion of frozen Iraqi assets held in the U.S., Britain, Switzerland, and Japan could be unfrozen to allow Iraq to purchase food and medicine. All four governments—led by the U.S.—refused to release the funds. A week later, the committee voted to allow \$3.7 billion in frozen Iraqi assets held in 25 countries to be released. The U.S. and British governments are currently strongarming other states to ensure that no money is released.

On June 21, Iraqi Ambassador to Japan Rashid Al Rifai called on the Japanese government to release Iraq’s assets, and called for an end of the sanctions. “What is the objective of sanctions? A tragedy is going on in my country. Tens of thousands of children are in great danger of death and urgently need food and medicine. We appeal to the government and the noble people of Japan to expend all urgent efforts to stop the genocide and rescue Iraqi men, women, and children who are threatened by untold dangers of annihilation.”