

## EIR Feature

# Iraq embargo will sabotage Eurasian development

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The United Nations Security Council voted on May 17 to continue the sanctions against Iraq. With the exception of Russia, which reportedly suggested that some lip service be given to Iraq's "good will" in fulfilling the U.N. resolutions, none of the other members of the "Permanent Five" group made a peep. Just prior to the meeting, however, both France and China had raised their voices loudly, calling for relaxation of the embargo. Earlier, in April, U.N. inspector Rolf Ekeus expressed satisfaction with Iraq's compliance, and recommended that a six-month "trial period" be established, during which time continuing fulfillment of the resolutions would be monitored, before the stranglehold were finally lifted. It had been widely mooted, on the basis of Ekeus's public statements, that some gesture would be made at the periodic New York meeting toward lifting the sanctions.

With the May 17 decision, all such speculation has gone out the window. As a spokesman at the Geneva-based U.N. humanitarian program for Iraq told *EIR* the following day, "We talked to the U.S. before the [U.N.] meeting, and they didn't have any intention of shifting position." The only conclusion one can draw from the Security Council's outrageous behavior (they did not even have the grace to issue a comment on their decree), is that they are committed to strangling Iraq, presumably until it is dead.

The implications of this decision, rammed through by the U.K. and its co-thinkers in the U.S. delegation, are enormous. Most immediately, it constitutes a death sentence for the Iraqi population, especially its children, aged, and infirm. As international humanitarian aid organizations have independently documented, unless sanctions are lifted, the specter of famine stalks the land, and attendant social upheavals must be feared. Secondly, the decision intends to sabotage a development dynamic which would have been unleashed with Iraq's re-entry into world trade. And, related to this, it tips the scales in favor of that faction in the Middle East peace process which wants to turn the region into a World Bank-



*A girl sells family treasures at the Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad. Middle class families are being forced to sell off their personal possessions to foreigners, in order to get the money to live.*

controlled speculators' paradise, rather than initiate advanced-technology-vectored economic growth.

### **Cause of death: embargo**

The toll which the 44-month embargo is taking on the civilian population can only be described as genocidal. Official estimates, from the Health Ministry, for example, reckon that 1 million Iraqis have died as a result of the embargo. Although the poorer strata are harder hit by the skyrocketing inflation, and cannot afford to buy anything on the black market to supplement government rations, the sanctions are killing Iraqis of all income brackets and all social layers. The immediate cause is the total lack of medicine and the consequent crippling of the hospital system, which was one of the best before the war. One journalist who interviewed us, for example, was in mourning for her aunt, who had just died very young. The woman had required oxygen, but the hospital she was in had none. Another professor, the leader of a professional association, had a relative suffering from cancer who required surgery which, due to the embargo, could not be performed in Iraq. The chemotherapy being used to treat her was running out. A woman married to a renal surgeon reported that her husband had simply stopped performing kidney transplants, because there is no medicine available to prevent rejection. Another person reported that women are selling their newborn children to adoptive parents for money with which they hope to keep the remaining family members alive. A young journalist who has had a foot ampu-

tated due to bone infection has been denied a visa to Germany for medical treatment which might save the leg. Literally every family has lost a relative to the embargo.

The paralysis in the health sector is devastating. During a trip to Iraq over May 1-9, the author and Anton Chaitkin of *EIR* visited the University of Mosul, a city in the north. There, Dr. Jamal S. Mulla-Abed, the dean of the College of Medicine, explained that medical students in their final year are unable to fulfill their internship requirements, since "there are no patients in the hospitals for them to treat." Patients requiring hospitalization are largely not admitted because the medical means to treat them are lacking. These include basic materials such as bandages, syringes, anesthetics, basic medication, and materials needed in diagnostics (X-ray film, glass slides for microscopic examination, etc.).

Furthermore, medical students as well as doctors have been denied access to information regarding advances in medicine in the rest of the world, as a visit to the medical school library made clear. On the dozens of racks devoted to periodicals were hundreds of single copies of the leading medical journals in English. The dates on the journals were all the same: Summer 1990, or July 1990, or 2nd Quarter 1990. It was as if time had stopped. Even subscriptions which had been pre-paid and had not expired at the time of the Kuwait crisis were terminated unilaterally by the publishers. Sabotage of the mail in the United States has prevented delivery of copies of journals sent by individual doctors in the United States to their colleagues. The same impression of

entering a time-machine and travelling back three and a half years was created in the main university library, with its 400,000 volumes and 3,000 periodicals. The modern, computerized filing system provides ready access to publications, up to summer 1990.

In an effort to supply study materials for students of medicine as well as other departments, the Mosul University has tried to gear up its own production of pamphlets and books, at the Dar al-Kutub printing and publishing company. Although it has an impressive array of modern computer and typesetting machines, they are being underutilized, because they have access to only one-third of the paper needed, due to the embargo. A rack stood in the corridor full of plates ready for printing, waiting for paper. Due to lack of spare parts, modern equipment is used less, and old-fashioned lead type composition is done manually, as is collating and binding. In 1990, the operation churned out publications at a rate of 2.5 per day, for 294 days a year, but now it is down to 1.5 per day. Dar al Kuttub, which had an important contract with McGraw Hill that was stopped by the blockade, prints for all the universities in Iraq as well as for the private sector.

Educational institutions cope with the scarcity of books by collecting them at year's end and reissuing them to the next semester's class. More life-threatening for the whole population is the lack of food at accessible prices. Food

rations, as Minister of Trade Dr. Mohammed Mehdi Salih explained in his interview with *EIR* (see p. 26), provide for just over half the daily requirements of basic items, such as flour, rice, cooking oil, and the like. The lack of sugar has made sweets disappear, even from the menus of the best hotels. The only recourse Iraqi citizens have to supplement rations is the open market, which is well stocked with fruits, vegetables, even meat, but at astronomical prices. The national currency, the dinar, whose official rate is one to the dollar, has been devalued on the black market from \$1 to 200 dinars in late January, to \$1 to 300 dinars in May. Thus, the search for dollars has become a daily obsession, transforming law-abiding citizens into petty criminals. Well-to-do women fear driving alone at night, lest they be attacked and their cars stolen. It is not only children who have begun to hawk items at traffic lights, or beg outright, but also hotel employees, taxi drivers, and the formerly wealthy classes will also try to find buyers for personal possessions.

The psychological effect of having been cut off from the outside world and deprived of basic necessities, as if thrust into a windowless room and subjected to brainwashing, is to produce rage. It is not uncommon to find women, for example, at the beautiful Jonah mosque in Mosul, accost Americans verbally, and relate their personal suffering in tones of rage. "You can keep up the embargo for another month,



*The "open market" in Baghdad. The food sold here is so expensive as to be beyond the reach of most Iraqis. With an average monthly salary of 250-400 dinars, the price of a dozen eggs is 155 dinars; a kilogram of beef is 195 dinars.*

another year, another 10 years," said one young mother defiantly, "but we will not die; as a people we will not die." Even professionals, like university teachers who earn relatively high salaries in pre-war terms, have been transformed by the inability to provide for their families into persons gripped by a hatred for America and "the West." One professor stated bluntly that he taught his students "never to forget or to forgive," and warned that "when these Iraqi children, who have grown up through the aggression and the embargo, become the leaders of the country in 20 years, they will pay you back."

Clearly, those responsible for tightening the noose around Iraq's neck are speculating on the possibility that, given time, such rage could explode in social unrest, which they would attempt to manipulate against the ruling Baath Party government.

### **Geopolitical aims of the embargo**

At the March sanctions review meeting at the U.N., France and China dared to raise dissenting voices against the embargo, proposing that at least the Sanctions Committee acknowledge that Iraq had complied with the U.N. resolutions. Russia uttered a similar, weak protest at the May meeting. But all were evidently blackmailed by the U.K. and United States into toeing the line.

The reasons why three of the Permanent Five have broken ranks are primarily economic. France, Russia, and China are all suffering the impact of the depression, and the aggravating effects of International Monetary Fund (IMF) insanity, in the form of "free market" economics. They all need what Iraq has to offer—not only oil, but a huge market for advanced industrial and consumer goods. France, after having sent a parliamentary delegation to Baghdad, made known in March that its two oil giants, Elf Aquitaine and Total, had prepared contracts for developing some of Iraq's new oil fields as soon as the embargo were lifted. The Russian Federation has been talking to the Iraqis about repayment of the latter's \$6 billion debt, in oil and goods. Furthermore, Moscow and Baghdad have been discussing an oil and agriculture program worth \$9 billion, a sum which dwarfs the \$3.5 billion over five years promised by the West. Even Germany, whose export-dependent economy is unravelling at breathtaking speed, is quietly crawling onto the bandwagon. CDU parliamentarian Hans Sterken made known in April that the Bundestag would send a delegation to Iraq in the summer, and German firms are carefully remaking contact with their Iraqi counterparts. Plans are afoot for high-level Iraqi government representatives to visit Germany. The Italians, who took part in a European Parliament trip to Iraq months ago, are now moving openly with a large delegation of 30 businessmen and politicians visiting Baghdad. Even American businessmen have been seen courting prospective trade partners there.

Iraqi Trade Minister Dr. Mohammed Mehdi Salih spelled it out to *EIR* in figures which speak for themselves: In the 44

months of sanctions, an estimated \$55 billion has been lost, in oil revenues which Iraq would have spent for imports of food and goods related to its domestic projects.

Herein lies the deeper reason why the U.K. and United States are so stubbornly clinging to the genocidal sanctions, why the war was launched in summer 1990 in the first place. Although the intent to kill off as many Iraqis as possible through the combined effects of bombings and blockade conforms to the malthusian policy outlines of the notorious 1974 U.S. National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM-200), which spelled out a depopulation thrust against resource-rich developing sector countries, the decision to launch Operation Desert Storm came when it did for broader geopolitical reasons. Europe, led by a Germany in the process of reunification, was poised to answer the historic challenge of building itself up "from the Atlantic to the Urals," through massive infrastructure development, which would have made Eurasia the high-technology locomotive for world economic recovery.

This perspective, outlined at the time by Lyndon LaRouche in his "Berlin-Paris-Vienna Productive Triangle" program, would have generated the production of advanced technological industrial goods for transfer to the developing sector. Because such a perspective constituted a geopolitical nightmare for the British, who have historically viewed Eurasian economic cooperation as a mortal threat to their imperial rule, then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, as she recounts in her memoirs, was deployed to organize an all-too-willing President George Bush to launch the aggression against Iraq. Iraq, rather than another oil-producing country, had been targeted decades earlier because of its unique commitment to allocating oil revenues for infrastructure, as a prerequisite to industrialization, not only for itself, but for the Arab world. Thus, the war aims of Desert Storm were explicitly defined, not as forcing an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, but as "bombing Iraq back to the Stone Age" or to the "pre-industrial stage." Thus, too, the linkage introduced long after the original sanctions were voted up, demanding a change in government in exchange for lifting the embargo, targeted Iraq's leadership because of its consistent policy of scientific and technological advance over decades.

The only rationale for maintaining the illegal sanctions, from the British oligarchical standpoint, lies in pursuit of this policy, to keep Iraq in a "pre-industrial stage," to destabilize its government and to prevent at all costs a Eurasian-Middle East development dynamic from taking hold. What the British fear in the current situation of imminent financial blow-out, is that the industrial giants of Europe, which were bamboozled into supporting the aggression in 1990-91, particularly France, Germany, Italy, and the crisis-wracked Russian Federation, might launch vast development projects in a post-embargo Iraq. It is not the financial gain that such projects would yield that constitute a threat per se, but the policy implications they embody. Rather than smashing the

Third World, as current British policy dictates, through the vehicle of a one-worldist governing body called the U.N., renewed trade relations of the sort which Paris, Moscow, Rome and, probably, Bonn have been preparing with Iraq, would define a policy outlook of peaceful relations through mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Not only would Iraq's economy be rebuilt, but its status as a sovereign nation in the process of industrialization would be restored and enhanced.

Stated bluntly, the U.N. agenda calls for deindustrialization, depopulation, and the deconstruction of the nation-state, all of which would be threatened, were France to clinch its Elf Aquitaine and Total deals with Iraq. Trade deals of the sort and dimensions discussed between the Iraqis and the Russians, to the tune of \$9 billion, would signal a shift away from the shock therapy approach imposed by the IMF on Russia. The fact, furthermore, that Russian President Boris Yeltsin recently called for a high-speed rail line from Moscow to Paris, echoing the LaRouche idea, surely set off alarm bells in London and Washington, just days prior to the Security Council meeting on Iraq.

The plot behind the arm-twisting that went on inside the Security Council's "Permanent Five" is yet thicker. The question to consider is: How is it possible for the American secretary of state to emote over the historic significance of the Israel-PLO agreement and Israel's subsequent granting of Palestinian autonomy, in the interests of Middle East peace, just days after uttering an unequivocal condemnation of Iraq and reiterating his determination to maintain the embargo, before the convening of the U.N. meeting? It is an economic fact that the only nation in the region which has the technological capabilities and physical economic base to provide a motor force for regional development is Iraq. Therefore, maintaining the stranglehold through sanctions is tantamount, in purely economic terms, to sabotaging a "great projects" approach to the Middle East.

It is political fact that, although leading figures in Israel, Jordan, and the Palestine Liberation Organization are committed precisely to introducing advanced technologies into the Mideast to generate real, physical economic growth, there is a nasty crew headquartered in London and working through the World Bank which is pursuing an economic policy course aimed at transforming the region into a "free enterprise zone" predicated on consumer goods and services produced by cheap labor of the sort dictated by the International Monetary Fund. There is good reason to hypothesize that the overriding concern behind the U.K. and U.S. insistence on sanctions is to prevent the development dynamic from being unleashed among the parties to the peace agreement.

Thus, the decision rubber-stamped at the Security Council meeting was not only an outrageous assault against Iraq, but it was also a policy intervention designed to smash a Eurasian-Middle East development configuration which was looming large to British eyes—almost the ghost of 1990.

## EIR in dialogue with Iraqi intellectuals

In the first week of May, Muriel Mirak-Weissbach and Anton Chaitkin of *EIR* conducted a lecture tour in Iraq, on invitation of the Institute for Foreign Service, associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They addressed groups of intellectuals and political personalities associated with the leading institutions of the country, which included Mustansiriyah University and the University of Baghdad (both in the capital), Mosul University, the Union of Arab Historians, the Association of Iraqi Economists, and the Institute for Foreign Service in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The speakers addressed the current strategic crisis from the standpoint of the historical conflict between British oligarchism, and its economic school of liberalism, and the American, republican system of national industrial economy. Chaitkin reviewed research on the development of British geopolitics, from the time of Lord Palmerston, including treatment of Nazism and Zionism as geopolitical projects, as well as current plans to deploy the U.N. as a one-worldist dictatorship. Mirak-Weissbach concentrated on the philosophical and historical foundations of a new, just world economic order, presenting Lyndon LaRouche's economic method and programs, as well as his approach to making a renaissance in science.

### 'What can we expect from America?'

Dr. Sa'adoon Zubaydi, dean of the Institute of Foreign Service, introduced the speakers, noting that after having gone through the traumatic experience of the aggression and embargo, Iraqis are asking what they can expect from the world, particularly from "the most important country, America." Which tendency will prevail in the United States, the tradition of the American Revolution, which made America a nation "which others should have looked up to, in the fight against colonialism," or the imperialist tendency rooted in Britain? Considerable discussion was dedicated to the implications of Britain's takeover of U.S. politics, particularly regarding America's responsibility for the Gulf war. Was the American government not responsible for Desert Storm? An animated debate broke out at Mustansiriyah University and, later, in Mosul, on the true reasons behind Desert Storm, as many had not fully explored the implications of the threat posed to British geopolitical interests by the eastern European revolutions of 1989 and 1990, and the