

41 Questions to Bush Administration On U.S.-Iraq Relations in the 1980s

by Edward Spannaus

In the light of repeated statements by President Bush and Administration officials that Saddam Hussein has twice attacked Iraq's neighbors, and that he developed and used weapons of mass destruction against his own citizens and Iranian troops in the 1980s; and in light of the fact that these allegations are cited as justification for launching a pre-emptive, aggressive war against Iraq; EIR *suggests that Administration officials should answer the following questions. EIR stipulates that it has a documented, good-faith basis for each and every question.*

Was it U.S. policy, as early as 1981-82, to provide military intelligence, and arms and other military equipment, to both Iran and Iraq, while those two countries were engaged in a war against each other, a war in which one million were killed?

Did the United States agree with the policy statement of former British Trade Minister Alan Clark, to wit: "The interests of the West are well-served by Iran and Iraq fighting each other—the longer the better."

Was it the policy of the United States, or of specific U.S. government agencies, to aid Iraq so that it would not be defeated by Iran, and also to aid Iran so that it would not be defeated by Iraq?

Did Secretary of State Alexander Haig work out an agreement with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1981, under which the United States would review and approve Iranian requests to Israel, for American-made spare parts and other equipment?

Beginning in the Spring of 1982, did the United States provide to Saddam Hussein detailed battlefield intelligence on the position and strength of Iranian troop deployment, intelligence which was obtained by AWACs surveillance planes provided to Saudi Arabia in 1980?

Rumsfeld as Envoy to Iraq

Did President Reagan issuing a secret National Security Decision Directive in June 1982, which directed United States government agencies to do whatever was necessary and legal, to prevent Iraq from being defeated in its war with Iran?

Was Donald Rumsfeld designated by President Reagan

as a special envoy, and did Rumsfeld travel to Baghdad on December 19-20, 1983, and meet with Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz? Did Rumsfeld tell Aziz that "we see a number of areas of common interest," and express a desire for better relations between the United States and Iraq?

Was Rumsfeld asked to tell Aziz that the United States "would regard any major reversal of Iraq's fortunes as a strategic defeat for the West," and that he would discuss with Aziz the possibility that "the United States could lift restrictions on some military items Iraq wishes to purchase from third parties."

Did Rumsfeld meet with Saddam Hussein on Dec. 20, 1983, and deliver a personal letter to Saddam from President Reagan; and is it true that Saddam "showed obvious pleasure with the President's letter and Rumsfeld's visit and remarks," as then-National Security Council staff official Howard Teicher has reported?

Did Rumsfeld return to Iraq and meet again with Tariq Aziz on March 24, 1984, to prepare the groundwork for normalization of relations; and were full diplomatic relations between the United States and Iraq restored in 1984?

Before returning to Baghdad, did Donald Rumsfeld and Howard Teicher meet with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to discuss the Iraq situation? Did Shamir ask Rumsfeld to deliver a secret offer of assistance from Israel to Iraq? Did Rumsfeld in fact deliver the Israeli offer of assistance to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz?

In exchange for U.S. assistance, did Saddam Hussein cooperate with the United States on terrorism matters, including by providing the United States with information on Middle East terrorists, and by expelling Abu Nidal from Iraq?

Did the United States establish a direct, secure electronic communications link between Washington and Baghdad in August 1986? Was this link used to provide real-time battlefield intelligence to Saddam Hussein?

Did President Reagan send a secret message to Saddam Hussein in 1986 telling him that Iraq should step up its air war and bombing of Iran? Was this message delivered by Vice President George Bush to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who then passed it along to Saddam Hussein?

Development of Chemical Weapons

Did the CIA assist in the sale of non-U.S. origin military weapons, ammunition, and vehicles, to Iraq?

Did the United States, through the CIA, approve and assist Carlos Cardoen in the manufacture and sale of cluster bombs and other munitions to Iraq, for use against Iranian troops?

Did Iraq begin using chemical weapons in 1982-83 against Iranian troops, as the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency reportedly has stated?

Is it not true, as Fleet Marine Force Reference Public (FMFRP) 3-203 states, that Iraq developed their chemical weapons proficiency gradually during the war with Iran, and that Iraq was motivated to do so by Iranian “human wave” infantry attacks?

Is it not true, as FMFRP 3-203 states, that Iraq used chemical weapons to good effect as part of an integrated set of battlefield tactics, and not as a weapon of mass destruction?

Did U.S. officials state that there was incontrovertible evidence in March 1984, that Iraq had used nerve gas against Iranian troops?

Did the U.S. provide tactical intelligence to Iraq beginning in 1984 that enabled Iraq to “calibrate” its mustard gas attacks on Iranian troops?

Did the U.S. Department of Commerce issue licenses for over 70 shipments of biological and chemical agents between 1985 and 1989, including anthrax, botulinum, West Nile Fever virus, gas gangrene? Is it true that these shipments continued during 1989, the first year of the first Bush Administration?

Did Iraq have a highly developed public-health program in those years, in which such materials could have legitimately been used?

Is it also likely, as many experts have stated, that some of these materials were used in Iraq’s development of chemical and biological weapons?

Support to Iraq and Iran

Did Vice-President George Bush personally ask the chairman of the U.S. Export-Import Bank to provide hun-

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United Nations' inspectors in 1991 and 1992 found evidence of Iraqi chemical and biological weapons. In this photo, UN inspectors view Iraqi warheads found to contain mustard gas. Senator Byrd has highlighted documents showing that the U.S. has provided Iraq with the building blocks for its biological weapons program.

Some of the most important questions about past U.S.-Iraq relations and the development and use of chemical weapons, were raised by Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia in Senate debate, and on his website. But many more questions can and should be asked the administration.

dreds of millions of dollars of loan guarantees in February 1987?

Did Vice-President Bush meet with the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoun, in March of 1987, to tell him that licenses permitting Iraq to buy sensitive American technology had just been approved?

Was the provision of military intelligence to Iraq part of an effort which was, as a Reagan Administration official once described it, “a cynical attempt to engineer a stalemate” in the Iran-Iraq war? Or, was the Reagan-Bush Administration committed, as others have said, to ensuring an outright Iraqi victory over Iran?

Was former NSC staff official Howard Teicher correct, when he said that what he called the “intelligence dump” given to Iraq, was provided “so that Iraq could win”?

Was the so-called “Iran initiative” developed in the National Security Council staff around 1985, by such officials as Howard Teicher, Michael Ledeen, and Robert McFarlane—under which arms were provided to Iran—an attempt to counterbalance the aforesaid U.S. assistance to Iraq, as some have stated?

Did Israeli officials such as David Kimche, the Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Minister, approach U.S. officials in 1985 to urge that the United States provide covert military support to Iran?

Did the United States have information that, at the end of the Iraq-Iran War in 1988, Israel was so alarmed by Iraq's emergence as the most heavily-armed state in the Middle East, that Israel was considering carrying out a surprise attack on Iraqi missile sites?

Is it not true that there is no actual evidence that it was Iraq that used blood gases against Kurds at Halabjah in 1988?

Did the U.S. State Department and Secretary of State George Shultz make an abrupt shift in September 1988, when he suddenly began charging that Iraq had used lethal gas against Kurds?

Before Desert Storm

After George Bush became President in 1989, did his administration pressure the Ex-Im Bank to provide additional loan guarantees for Iraq?

In 1989, did the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy invite three Iraqi scientists to attend a U.S.-government-sponsored conference on nuclear weapons detonation, held in Portland, Oregon?

In March 1989, did CIA Director William Webster testify before Congress that Iraq was the largest chemical weapons producer in the world?

In October 1990, did President George Bush sign National Security Decision Directive No. 26, mandating still closer U.S. ties with Iraq?

Did the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq personally tell Saddam Hussein, on July 25, 1990, that "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, such as your border agreement with Kuwait," indicating that this was not a matter of concern to the United States?

Did Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly tell Congress on July 31, 1990: "We have no defense treaty relationships with any of the [Gulf] countries. We have historically avoided taking a position on border disputes. . . ."

On Sept. 11, 1990, did Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz charge that "Israel wants to attack Iraqi industrial and scientific sites to maintain the balance of power, which has changed."

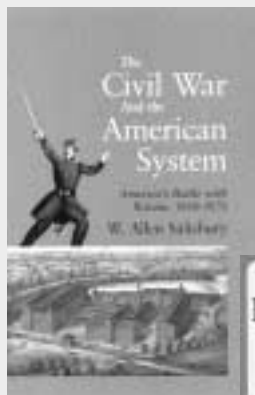
Does UNSC Resolution 687, which the Administration frequently cites as requiring Iraq to destroy all weapons of mass destruction, in fact call for "establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction"? Does this not also require the destruction of Israel's nuclear weapons?

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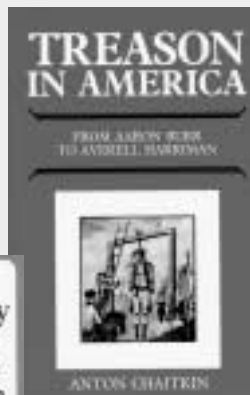
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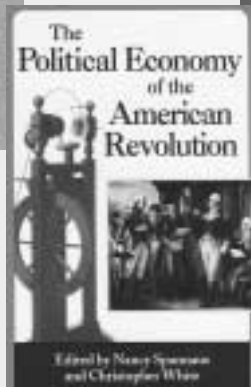
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