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The War on Iraq : Five US Presidents, Five British Prime Ministers, Thirty Years of Duplicity, and Counting....

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Twenty years ago this August, with a green light from America, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. He had walked in to possibly the biggest trap in modern history, unleashing Iraq's two decade decimation, untold suffering, illegal bombings, return of diseases previously eradicated and what can also only be described as UN-sponsored infanticide.

The reason for the Kuwait invasion, has been air brushed out of the fact books by Britain and America, and been presented as the irrational and dangerous act of a belligerent tyrant who was a threat to his neighbours. He had, they pointed out piously, attacked, then fought an eight year war with Iran, and exactly two years to the month, after the 20th August 1988 ceasefire, invaded Kuwait, on 2nd August 1990.

It was, of course, not quite that simple. After the US engineered the fall of the democratic government of Mossadegh, in Iran, resultant from his nationalizing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP) in 1953. After two years of economically ravaging sanctions, The US installed Shah Reza Pahvlavi (whose savage state police, SAVAK, were trained by General Norman Schwartzkopf, Snr., father of General "Storming" Norman Schwartzopf of the 1991 Gulf war, who famously declared at the time of the ceasefire: "... no one left

to kill ..") Under the Shah, oil arrangements satisfactory to the United States were, of course, restored.

Five years later, across the border in Iraq, the British installed monarchy was overthrown and the popular leader of the anti-British uprising, Abdel Karim Kassem, began nationalizing the country's Western assets. It took the CIA just five more years to bring about his overthrow. They picked the wrong collaborators, the nascent Ba'ath Party, with Saddam Hussein as Vice President, embarked on nationalizing the oil industry. President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger schemed with Iran to arm the Kurds and weaken the Iraqi government. Iraq was placed on list of supporters of terrorism.

Interestingly, Saddam, and the Shah quietly came to US-excluded, mutually beneficial agreement - and aid to the Kurds was cut.

In 1980, the year after the Shah was overthrown, to grass roots Iranian jubilation, President Jimmy Carter announced the "Carter Doctrine", with breath taking political arrogance, granting the US the unilateral right to intervene in the Persian Gulf region to protect US oil demands. With (broadly) a US political nod and wink, Iraq invaded Iran - the US aiding both sides in a war where the million lives estimated lost equal that of Rwanda and Armenia, each which have been cited as a genocide.

Iraq was also perceived as a more secular buffer again fundamentalist tendencies in Iran, under Ayatollah Khomeini. (Ironically, now, Iraq is largely politically dominated by fundamentalist Iranian-backed factions, which came in with the invasion, due, seemingly, to blind ignorance of the region by the British and Americans, their useless "diplomats" and unemployable "Middle East experts.")

Carter won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize. His Carter Center blurb informs: "President Carter has been committed to peace in the Middle East since his White House days (and) advancing human rights, accountability and the rule of law", in the region. Devotion is to : "Peace with Justice"; "Waging Peace."

In 1984, President Reagan ordered the sharing of top secret intelligence with Iraq - and also with Iran. The following year, Colonel Oliver North of Iran-Contra infamy, informed Iranian authorities that the US would help Iran overthrow Saddam Hussein.

Subsequently, when Iraq looked vulnerable in America's (arguably) proxy bloodbath, US military hardware and other assistance was ratcheted up. Breathtaking duplicity being the order of the decade, General Norman Schwarzkopf, then head of CENTCOM quietly intervened by re-flagging Kuwaiti tankers (with US flags) thus if attacked, it would be deemed an attack on the United States. The US began bombing Iranian oil platforms.

The scales tipped for Iraq, and in August 1988 the ceasefire was signed - and the (US) Center for Strategic and International Studies immediately began a two years study on the outcome of a war between the United States and Iraq. The following year, with much of

Iraq's youth "stone dead ..", terribly wounded or imprisoned in Iran, its Air Force near wiped out, and the country financially on its knees, the US renamed War Plan 1002 - dreamt up to counter a Soviet confrontation - War Plan 1002-90, designating Iraq the new threat.

Iraq, needing to recoup the \$billions the war had cost, now addressed the problem of Kuwait's alleged systematic "slant drilling" under the Iraq/Kuwait border, in to Iraq's Rumeila oil field, syphoning off, claimed Iraq, millions of \$'s worth of oil. Iraq wanted - and desperately needed - reparation. Not in dispute is that over the eight years of war, Kuwait had moved its borders northwards in to Iraq by some considerable distance, by establishing encroaching settlements. Iraq wanted its territory back. Kuwait and the Gulf states were also manipulating oil prices, to hard pressed Iraq's disadvantage, with Washington's backing, claimed Iraq, with some justification.

Iraq, additionally, wanted to negotiate to lease two islands, Warbah and Bubiyan, from Kuwait, for additional access to the Gulf, which would also have reduced residual tensions with Tehran.* Tiny Kuwait, population at the time, under two million - "an oil company masquerading as a country", as one commentator remarked unkindly - confident of mighty Washington's backing, refused negotiation - as it had in 1975 and 1980.

After two years of attempts to resolve the problems with Kuwait, in late July, 1990, Saddam Hussein met with US Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie. With the border tensions mounting, she told him that: "I have direct instruction from the President (Bush Sr.,) to seek better relations with Iraq." She even expressed the United States apology for a critical article on Iraq by the American Information Agency, designating resultant broadcasted comments: "..cheap and unjust." Adding that : "President Bush ... is not going to declare an economic war against Iraq."

She continued: "I admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. I know you need funds. We understand that and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country." (How arrogantly, patronisingly kind.) Then: "But we have no opinion on Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border dispute with Kuwait." Her conversation followed on from a meeting the previous April, between Glaspie and President Saddam, with five US Senators, Robert Dole, Alan Simpson, Howard Metzenbaum, James McClure and Frank Murkowski, who had travelled to Iraq, with President Bush's blessings, ostensibly to form better relations and trade relations with Iraq and to assure that President Bush would oppose any suggestion of sanctions on Iraq.

President Saddam commented later to Glaspie that anyway: "There is nothing left for us to buy from America except wheat. Every time we want to buy something they say it is forbidden. I am afraid, one day, you will say 'You are going to make gunpowder out of wheat.' " (1)

The response to the invasion of Kuwait, was, of course, an embargo of unique severity, imposed on Hiroshima Day (6th August) 1990 (UNSCR 661.) All overseas assets were

frozen, as were oil sales, thus, effectively all imports in a country which imported two thirds of absolutely everything (on advice given by the United Nations via their UN Food and Agriculture Organization.) Iraq faced famine. Infant mortality doubled in just four months, by December 1990. Advice to any country when outside consultants counsel relinquishing self-sufficiency : Don't do it.

The day before the embargo was imposed, President H.W. Bush stated: "What's emerging is nobody seems to be showing up as willing to accept anything less than total withdrawal from Kuwait of the Iraqi forces, and no puppet regime. We've been down that road, and there will be no puppet regime that will be accepted by any countries that I'm familiar with. And there seems to be a united front out there that says Iraq, having committed brutal, naked aggression, ought to get out, and that this concept of their installing some puppet -- leaving behind -- will not be acceptable.

... There is no intention on the part of any of these countries to accept a puppet government, and that signal is going out loud and clear to Iraq. I will not discuss with you what my options are or might be, but they're wide open, I can assure you of that."

Britain's then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher - whose son, Mark, was allegedly doing arms deals across the Middle East, using his mother's status - pitched in on Hiroshima Day : " ... I think it is quite different when you have a nation which has violated all rules of United Nations Charter, which has gone in with guns and tanks to take and invade another country, which would have far-reaching consequences if it were left like that for every other country in the world ... " (Given America's British-backed, bombings, invasions, imposed, useless, corrupt, foreign passport holding puppet governments, imposed since the Balkans in 1999 alone, irony is redundant.)

Without Congressional approval, Bush ordered forty thousand US troops to "defend Saudi Arabia", despite no sign of any intention by Iraq to attack the Kingdom. Washington lied that Iraq's troops were massing on Saudi's border. They were not.

Entirely forgotten, is that just ten days after the invasion, Saddam Hussein, a staunch supporter of Palestinian rights, announced that Iraq would withdraw from Kuwait, if Israel withdrew from Israeli occupied Palestinian territories. The United States rejected the offer, out of hand. Subsequently Iraq proposed withdrawal without the stipulation relating to Palestine. Washington rejected it as "a complete nonstarter." For Washington, seemingly, war, war, is ever preferable to jaw, jaw. Heaven forbid peace should ever reign, the military industrial complex's billion \$s munitions bonanza would dry up and the remnants of the US economy with it. (For graphic unravelling of the unholy conspiracy in this, between media, military and politics, see: "The Global Economic Crisis - The Great Depression of the XXI Century", Chossudovsky and Marshall, www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=20425)

The US having refused all negotiation, then dispatched an extra three hundred and sixty thousand US troops to the Gulf at the end of November, the UN Security Council passed UNSCR 678, threatening force of Iraq did not withdraw by January 15th - Iraq having

offered to withdraw, albeit with conditions on August 12th., and without conditions a short time later.

In Geneva, on 9th January 1991, then Secretary of State James Baker (a "diplomat" who stated: "We will reduce Iraq to a pre-industrial age") met Iraq's Foreign Minister, Tareq Aziz, with a letter from Bush Snr., promising the destruction of Iraq, if Kuwait was not withdrawn from by 15th January. Tareq Aziz stated he would not deliver the letter.

On 17th January the forty two day assault on Iraq began, as now well documented, deliberately destroying all infrastructure necessary to sustain society, including the deliberate targeting of all water purification facilities, with an exact time line of how long it would take Iraq's complex water system "to fully degrade" issued to all NATO Command Headquarters.(2) Somewhere in Iraq's ashes lay all the painstakingly crafted legal Treaties, Conventions and Principles, on war crimes and treatment of civilians in conflict, never to surface again, as far as the US and UK were concerned, arguably now officially signed up to "rogue state" status.

On 21st February, the USSR stated that Iraq had agreed to a complete withdrawal, without conditions. The United States rejected unless they had left by mid-day on 23rd. Interestingly, on the rare occasions the US and UK moot a withdrawal, the public is told, ad nauseum, that this is a complicated process which takes time and can not be achieved overnight. The US ground assault, however, almost could be. It started on 23rd February. Three days later, when the Iraqi troops did withdraw, they with civilians, were strafed mercilessly from both ends of the road to Basra, resulting in a massacre, or for General Norman Schwarzkopf, a seemingly psychologically disturbed individual : "A turkey shoot."

The ceasefire was finally agreed by America on February 28th., five months and sixteen days of decimation, after Saddam Hussein had first offered to withdraw.

Two days later, the US killed thousands more, heading from the south, towards Baghdad. Another war crime of enormity, for which no one has ever faced trial.

In the light of the near-unprecedented illegality of all which has happened to Iraq, before 1991 and subsequently, the thirteen years of bombings, the famine-style deprivation, and then the illegal invasion built on lie, upon lie, it is worth returning to Margaret Thatcher, who quoted the fine words of St Francis ("Where there is discord, may we bring harmony, where there is error, may we bring truth ... and where there is despair, may we bring hope") from the steps of Downing Street, on 4th May 1979, the day she took office.

Further, in Afghanistan's invasion and ongoing massacres by the occupiers, a gate crashing daily more resembling the towering illegality of that of Iraq, here are more of the 1990 Hiroshima Day's now laughable lauding of the values and integrity of the US and UK: "The West is dealing with a person who, without warning, has gone into the territory of another state with tanks, aircraft and guns, has fought and taken that state against international law, against the will of that state, and has set up a puppet regime.

That is the act of an aggressor which must be stopped. While a person who will take such action on one state will take it against another state if he is not stopped."

"President Saddam Hussein and Iraq are aggressors. They have invaded another country, they have taken it by force—that is not the way we do things in this world. Other countries have rights, they have their right to their nationhood, they have the right to their territorial integrity. He has been rightly branded as an aggressor, contrary to international law, and it is not a question of taunting, it is a question of earning the condemnation of the world and the appropriate action which follows." The "Iron lady" Thatcher, was as subservient to Bush Snr., as her slippery successor, Blair was to Clinton and baby Bush.

On the 21st August, Thatcher opined: "I think it is as well to remind ourselves how this whole position started. It started because Saddam Hussein substituted the rule of force for the rule of law and invaded an independent country and that cannot be allowed to stand."

This August, an estimated three million dead later, in Iraq, as the bell now tolls ever louder for Iran, with the near identical sleights of hand and word being played out, as were against Iraq. Farcical, were it not so sinisterly demented, Iran is (says the US and UK) hell bent on making "weapons of mass destruction", remember them? The one's the crazies are still searching for in Iraq? The ones Iraq accounted for not having in 11,800 pages, delivered to the UN in December 2002 and stolen by the US mission to the UN?

The substitution of "the rule of force for the rule of law", seemingly imminent, are there governments, statesmen and women, world bodies and institutions, unions; is there enough people power to halt the juggernaut on the Armageddon highway?

With the United Nations, as ever, either complicit, or asleep at the wheel, can "We the people" finally ".. save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", and the equivalent unimaginable horrors of the equivalent of multiple Hiroshimas and Nagasakis.