

The Cowardly War in Iraq

by Janet Jagan

The US war on Iraq is now in its second week and is known as the "Coalition," meaning the US and UK military invasion of Iraq.

Although the Iraqi military, at the time of writing, has so far put up resistance unexpected by the Coalition Forces, there can be no doubt about the outcome of this cowardly war. How could any country in the world overcome an invasion from the US super power - equipped with all the latest advances for military supremacy in the air, land and seas? And more so in the case of Iraq, a country denuded of basic military defences.

A British writer, John Le Carre, said this provocative bit: "How Bush and his junta succeeded in deflecting America's anger from bin Laden to Saddam Hussein is one of the great public relations conjuring tricks of history "(Time Magazine.)"

What he wrote makes sense as people the world over try to figure out why the USA has fought so strenuously to bring about its war on Iraq. It is true that President Bush made dozens of blustering promises, that must now seem embarrassing, about the imminent capture of bin Laden. It is also clear that Mr. Bush and company, try as they did, were unable to connect Saddam Hussein to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The possible reasons why the USA decided to invade Iraq are many, including Mr. Bush's desire to complete the work of his father in the 1991 war. Its also possible that a war is needed to cover-up the sinking economy in the USA, or even to show the world that the US is the super power and can do whatever it wants, including flouting the United Nations and world public opinion. Whatever, it is certain that the USA is not spending \$75 billion just to disarm and remove Saddam Hussein. There are plenty of countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa with tyrants as heads of government and with weapons of mass destruction, so maybe the presence of large quantities of oil in Iraq is the reason.

The US military is, at this moment, caught up in its own duplicity. It claims that every move is governed by the need to protect Iraqi civilians from hurt, yet it has declared Basra a "legitimate military target" with 100,000 children at risk and more so, now since the "concerned" military has busted the water system, disease and death are the next chapter in this cowardly war on Iraq.

The US military again got caught in its double standards. It has attacked the Iraqi military for showing US captured soldiers and airmen on television, but it has done the same by showing Iraqi prisoners of war on TV. The US charged the Iraqis with breaking the Geneva Convention, but the Red Cross has criticised both sides for exhibiting prisoners of war on TV. But has the US forgotten already its 600 prisoners from Afghanistan being held now for about one year at the US Guantanamo Bay military base?

These prisoners have been denied any form of legal representation to this day. The Red Cross reported that the Geneva Convention was not being observed in its treatment of prisoners who are given only 15 minutes, twice a week, outside their miserably small cells. Already, some 15 have attempted suicide over the inhuman treatment by the USA. (Since writing, the US has released 19 of these prisoners to Afghanistan. They have loudly denounced the inhuman treatment they received at the hands of their captors.)

Like all wars, it is the innocent who suffer - the aged, the women, and the children. Iraqi hospitals are now swollen with the victims of this unprincipled war while the US military still claim to be "concerned" about the safety of Iraqi civilians!

So far, the cost of the war to the US is \$75 billion. That amount, if used for the welfare of the poorest in this world, would mean the saving of hundreds of thousands of lives, lost every year due to poverty and diseases.

What a better world this would be if, instead of spending billions to kill, the billions were spent to save lives and renew hope in this troubled planet.

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