

The Current and Sad Situation in Iraq

by Janet Jagan

The reports coming out of Iraq are so alarming that they are causing consternation all over the world, and particularly in the USA. With mid-term elections for the Senate and House of Representatives of the US Congress, due on November 7, President Bush and his close officials, like the Vice President, the Defence Secretary, the Secretary of State and the UN Ambassador are in a tight squeeze. The pressure comes from everywhere, including the Democrats, leaders of the ruling Republican Party, and ordinary US citizens. The polls show that the Iraq war is of the greatest concern, even though President Bush is trying hard to shift emphasis in the November 7 elections to the state of the economy, but no one is buying that.

One of the severest blows came from the USA's loyal partner, Great Britain. Chief of the General Staff Richard Dannett said recently that British troops should leave Iraq soon because their presence is worsening security. He said that post war planning for the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq was poor and the presence of troops there was hurting British security globally. The Head of the British armed forces further said: "Britain should get ourselves out sometime soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems."

And that is really the essence of what has happened in Iraq. Over and over again, it has been explicitly pointed out that the invasion and occupation of Iraq have emboldened the terrorists, increased their deadly activities and has also encouraged the spread of terrorism, rather than stopping it. President Bush's campaign all along has been a "War on Terrorism," but the reverse has happened.

Right now, there are approximately 100 deaths a day in Iraq. The number of US soldiers killed is the highest – some 90 so far for the month of October. New and reliable research puts the figure of dead Iraqis since the invasion to 655,000, far, far above the benign figure given by Bush of some 30,000 Iraqis. In an article in the Sunday Chronicle, October 22, 2006 entitled "The Human Cost of the Iraq War," Gwynne Dyer reports on the studies done by reputable US researchers from John Hopkins University and the renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology, plus the British Medical Journal Lancet which confirm the high death rate of Iraqis.

The costs of the terrible and vastly unpopular war run in the billions – estimated at US\$811 billion! Enough to give the poor, the sick, the displaced, the hungry and the homeless a chance to survive!

Last Sunday's TV programme "60 Minutes" exposed the shocking corruption in Iraq, where US-picked officials stole almost one billion dollars. Besides all the dreadful deaths and what these mean to the remaining families, tens of thousands of Iraqis are fleeing the killing fields. The number of displaced persons are now placed at 130,000, some putting up tents far from the dangerous areas, and thousands fleeing to neighbouring countries, Syria in particular.

While the figures on Iraqi deaths and the huge exodus are alarming, what about the number of injured, and, especially the number who have been maimed for life? These must be very high, both for Iraqis and Allied troops. US figures are unavailable.

What about the new land of democracy and the better life the Americans have brought to Iraq? Everyone knows that is rubbish. Education, housing, health care, electricity, water, sewage – all these are even worse than in the time of Saddam. Iraq, right now, is a destroyed country – destroyed by the invasion (for which the reasons given by Bush turned out to be all lies) and the occupation, which absolutely no Iraqi accepts.

The USA's record in connection with prisoners and their incarceration is a blemish on the USA and increases the hatred of Americans worldwide. In the United Nations, it was observed that torture now is worse than it was under Saddam Hussein.

The US has protected itself by demanding and pressuring governments to pass laws to exempt Americans from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and from local courts when they commit misdemeanours.

That is one reason why Iraq cannot try and punish US soldiers for rape and murder. Such cases are now heard in the USA, but in the instances arising, it was Iraqi young women who were raped and other Iraqis who were murdered. One of the smallest countries in the world – Barbados – had the guts to defy the USA and refused to sign the pact. Congrats to them!

President Bush is now facing his greatest challenge. It appears, that despite US public opinion and the lowest popularity polls, he has no intention of accepting proposals to move troops out of Iraq. The results of the November 7, 2006 polls will be a significant test and may, possibly, influence the future of that devastated land called Iraq.

Copyright © Nadira Jagan-Brancier 2009