

FUCK WAR

Our overriding purpose, from the beginning through to the present day, has been world domination – that is, to build and maintain the capacity to coerce everybody else on the planet: nonviolently, if possible; and violently, if necessary. But the purpose of U.S. foreign policy of domination is not just to make the rest of the world jump through hoops; the purpose is to facilitate our exploitation of resources.

- Ramsey Clark, former US Attorney General

A Dose of Reality

We often hear talk in the news about liberating the Iraqi people, about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and involvement with international terrorists. What we don't hear is the other side, the facts that are conveniently left out by the major news media, the ones that are misrepresented, spun, giving us a false view of reality. Here are just a few that I've come across:

Media reported that in the first days of the war, ground troops discovered a chemical and biological weapons facility in southern Iraq. What was not reported was that there were no chemical or biological weapons there, and that the facility hadn't been used since the early '80s, when the U.S. was supplying Iraq with these weapons for use against Iran as well as Iraqi Kurds (this is what Bush is referring to when he says Saddam gassed his own people; he fails to mention that it was with the blessing of the U.S. State Department, which refused to recognize that the

incident occurred and stepped up weapons sales to Iraq less than a month later). It was also reported that Iraq had fired between one and three Scud missiles on the opening day of the war (depending on the news source), which are banned under the inspections regime. It turned out that this report was also untrue.

According to Scott Ritter, Senior U.N. weapons inspector for 5 years, "By 1998, the chemical weapons infrastructure had been completely dismantled or destroyed by UNSCOM or by Iraq in compliance with our mandate. The biological weapons program was gone, all the major facilities eliminated. The nuclear weapons program was completely eliminated. The long-range ballistic missile program was completely eliminated. If I had to quantify Iraq's threat, I would say [it is] zero." In fact, on 15 Dec. 1998, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported

to the Security Council that it had eliminated Iraq's nuclear weapons program. Inspections had been successful. According to Security Council Resolution 687, once this occurred, sanctions were to be lifted. The U.S. has, in violation of this resolution, continued sanctions, and continues to say that inspections are useless. (Note: Dick Cheney says that it would take Iraq only a year or two to develop nuclear weapons. The CIA, however, says that it would take a minimum of 5 years, and that is without any inspections. The U.S. has been using nuclear weapons, in the form of depleted uranium, in Iraq since 1991. Cancer rates there have skyrocketed and thousands of children have been born with severe deformities.)

It is often still reported (not only by the news media, but by Donald Rumsfeld and Bush) that Iraq kicked out weapons inspectors in Dec. of '98. The truth is that they were withdrawn by UNSCOM head Richard Butler so that they would not be in danger when the U.S. began its bombing campaign dubbed "Operation Desert

Immigrant's Rights Debated in Legislature

As this year's legislative session opened in Salem, the thoughts of most voters and legislators were focused on the failure of Measure 28 and the vast budget deficit it incurred. The legislative chambers, however, have also been host to debate on a whole different series of issues centered around immigrants' rights.

Three bills, HB 2554, HB 2539 and HB 2051, are representative of a disturbing trend. These three bills call for the repeal of ORS 181.850, which prevents police officers from acting on behalf of or in collaboration with immigration officials, a key ingredient for successful community policing in immigrant communities.

Despite claims that increased communication is necessary for the sake of national security, a broad-based coalition of organizations ranging from the Oregon AFL-CIO to PCUN, Oregon's farmworker union, have argued that such legislation would only cause an increased fear and distrust of the police in immigrant communities. Due to issues of documentation, it is likely that people would leave crimes unreported or endure abuse rather than contact the police.

The movement to repeal 181.850, which ensured that the Portland Police not take part in interviewing men of Middle Eastern origin following Sept. 11, is strongly reminiscent of Proposition 187, a 1994 initiative in California

that proposed making undocumented immigrants

ineligible for numerous social services, prohibited them from obtaining drivers licenses or attending public school, and called for police cooperation with immigration authorities. It was later invalidated as unconstitutional.

Another alarming piece of legislation introduced in this session is HB 2578. This bill, sponsored by Representatives Betsy Close (R-15) and Alan Brown (R-10) requires the presentation of proof of citizenship or legal residency to obtain a driver's license, permit, or identification card. This bill recalls similar legislation defeated in 1995, which became known among Latinos as the "Driving while Hispanic" law. The most likely result of such legislation is an increase in the number of unlicensed and uninsured drivers on Oregon's roads, since the many undocumented immigrants who form the backbones of entire industries in Oregon cannot afford to simply stop driving.

SB 10, sponsored by Senator Peter Courtney, is one of the few positive proposals to emerge in this session. It has been hailed by many as a step forward in making higher education available to immigrant youth by allowing undocumented high school graduates residing in Oregon to pay in-state tuition at state colleges and universities. Even such a bill that would benefit only a small group of intelligent and dedicated students,

since most undocumented students cannot afford out-of-state tuition) and that it would go against immigration laws.

With anti-immigrant sentiments hitting close to home through these legislative proposals the importance of activism and education becomes all the more important. While these efforts to tie the hands of the immigrant community are not as immediately dramatic as the police brutality of recent weeks, such restrictions of basic rights will ultimately have an equally damaging affect on Oregon's most vulnerable population.

By Cassandra Ogren

Peppersprayed?

Don't let chemical weapons get you down – do something!

- Call Mayor Vera Katz @ 503-823-4120 and let her know you're mad as hell and you aren't gonna take it.
- File a complaint against the police by calling the Independent Police Review @ 503-823-0146 (forms also available online at www.ci.portland.or.us/auditor/ipr).
- Email Alan Graf at peopleslawyer@qwest.net.
- Call Portland Copwatch's incident report line at 503-321-5120.

Prison Is Hell

(Reflections of a person arrested March 20 and held in solitary confinement for 6 hours.)

Prison is hell on earth. It violates the essence of human dignity. Anyone who shows spirit is targeted and made to suffer through brutalization, isolation, and denial of human rights. Once a person is booked, she enters the first layer of Hell. Any sign of attitude will land one in isolation, where this hapless soul ended up for 6 hours.

The minions of Hell believe you will never act out again because you are in Hell now, and the only rules are the ones that are given to you.

They imagine human dignity crawls, beaten, through the crack under the steel door that separates you from the rest of humanity.

The one who sits and ponders remembers that although jail is Hell, it is also a construct of the human mind and therefore subject to change. The one who hallucinates after a sleepless night recalls that war is a collective nightmare, and prison a personal hell.

She dreams of cameras and cops and pinto horses thundering towards her. As the first horse charges past, she grabs its mane, hoists herself up and gallops towards the horizon. She sits on the floor, peeking through the curtain that keeps falling down, observing the petty tyrants who treat

everyone passing through Hell's gates with absolute disrespect and denial of humanity. The one who is in isolation thinks no one knows she is in there; she fears she might slip through the cracks and become one of the disappeared. She remembers the Muslim men who have already disappeared, and whose dehumanizing treatment no doubt includes torture. She prays they will soon be free.

Prison must be abolished. The men and women who work for Hell deny their humanity. They too live in Hell and bring it back to the land of the living. Society keeps prisons because people are afraid of each other. But prisons are no solution to that fear. Prison distills fear out of its inhabitants and uses it as an intoxicant for Hell's workers. Fear is the essence of prison.

By Bisquits

Reality, continued

Fox". Shortly before their withdrawal, it was learned that the U.S. was using the inspections as part of a spy operation to monitor Saddam's whereabouts and pick targets for the upcoming bombing campaign.

One of the favorite reports of the mainstream press that fizzled out shortly after it was reported was that 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta had met with a high-ranking Iraqi official in Europe not long before that infamous day. Several European intelligence agencies scratched their heads about this before the CIA discovered that this was, in fact, completely implausible. Bush commonly talks about al-Qaeda operatives being harbored and trained by Iraq. The only members of al-Qaeda ever known to have entered Iraq stayed shortly in Iraqi Kurdistan, an area in the north controlled by the Kurds, not Saddam Hussein. Osama bin Laden sees Saddam as a traitor, as he is a member of the Ba'ath Party, which came to power in Iraq as part of a CIA operation shortly after World War II.

More recently, there has been much press about holding Iraq accountable for war crimes under international law. No one ever mentions that the U.S. opposes an international criminal court, fearing that many Americans, including former presidents, will be indicted. In fact, our country has vetoed a Security Council Resolution calling on all governments to observe international law. The U.S. is the only nation to have been condemned by the World Court for international terrorism (for our invasion of Panama under Reagan). We rightly expect Iraq to follow U.N. resolutions, but undermine the Security Council's attempts to enforce them when it comes to Israel and other allies. Resolution 687, which calls for the disarmament of Iraq also calls for "establishing

in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction." Israel, however, maintains in excess of 200 nuclear weapons, which the U.S. refuses to acknowledge.

Over 30 years ago, Resolution 272 called for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. Every attempt to enforce this resolution has met with serious dissent from the U.S. Iraq and Israel are not the only countries disobeying international law. According to Politics Professor George Monbiot: "Since Bush came to office, the United States government has torn up more international treaties and disregarded more U.N. conventions than the rest of the world has in twenty years. It has scuppered the biological weapons convention while experimenting, illegally, with biological weapons of its own. It has refused to grant chemical weapons inspectors full access to its laboratories, and has destroyed attempts to launch chemical inspections in Iraq. It has ripped up the antiballistic missile treaty, and appears to be ready to violate the nuclear test ban treaty. It has permitted CIA hit squads to recommence covert operations of the kind that included, in the past, the assassination of foreign heads of state. It has sabotaged the small arms treaty, undermined the international criminal court, refused to sign the climate change protocol and, last month, sought to immobilize the U.N. convention against torture."

Not to mention that the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq are illegal under international law and have been condemned by the U.N., and that the U.S. is in violation of Resolution 661, which exempts food and medicine from being included in the sanctions (the State Department has been denying Iraqis food and medicine since the sanctions began, claiming often that they are "dual use". The U.N. has concluded, along with several international studies, that U.S. imposed sanctions are directly responsible for the deaths of 500,000 to more than a million Iraqis, mostly children. The U.S. claims that it is Saddam who is misusing the funds and disrupting distribution of resources under the oil-for-

food program. It is not mentioned, however, that Saddam never sees this money, as it is held in a special U.N. account, and that much of the money goes towards reparations for Kuwait and to the U.S. to cover war costs rather than feeding Iraqi people. The U.N. has concluded that, in fact, almost none of the food is left undistributed. When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was asked on television if it was worth the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children, she said that it was. It has also been uncovered that the U.S. intentionally bombed civilian targets during the first gulf war. On 21 June 2000, the U.N. reported that the sanctions regime "is unequivocally illegal under existing human rights law" and "could raise questions under the genocide convention."

My final concern, as I run out of space, is all this talk of liberating the Iraqi people. The last time we went to war in Iraq, we promised the Iraqi people our support and encouraged them to rise up and overthrow Saddam Hussein. They rose up, and we backed out, leaving thousands to die and be tortured by their evil dictator. Why are we so bewildered that the Iraqi people don't greet us with open arms? We betrayed them in the last gulf war, we continued to support Saddam with money and weapons while he killed and tortured his own people, and now, based on our track record in Afghanistan, Indonesia, and everywhere else where we have intervened, we are more likely to install another "regime" rather than the democracy that we talk so fondly about. There is a history here that is unmentioned. And it is the reason that 50% of Americans believe Iraq was directly involved in the attacks on 11 September. The fact that 70% of Americans polled support this war doesn't mean much when you look at it from that perspective. Get informed. Question everything. Make sure you know for sure before you support something that you may end up regretting in the future. Peace. Love.

By j. poselenzky

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