

Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq

Newsletter February 2001

The Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq (CASI) is a registered society at the University of Cambridge. Its members are all volunteers; its committee members are students. CASI is exclusively concerned with the humanitarian consequences of sanctions on Iraq. It does not support Saddam Hussein's regime and is not opposed to military sanctions on Iraq.

info@casi.org.uk

www.casi.org.uk

fax: 0870 063 5022

Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq (CASI),
c/o Seb Wills, Clare College,
Cambridge CB2 1TL, UK.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to CASI's first newsletter of 2001. The period between this publication and its predecessor has seen a change of focus in the international relations surrounding the economic sanctions and their presentation to the public. As domestic and international pressure grows for their removal, we have witnessed a series of measures taken to 'improve' the economic sanctions. Whilst these processes do alleviate some of the suffering of the Iraqi people, unfortunately they are also used to deflect attention from the fundamental problems at hand.

There has been a growing recognition that a sustainable improvement of the humanitarian situation requires not just food and medical supplies, but also the rebuilding of Iraq's infrastructure and economy, and that the present 'oil for food' programme is unable to deliver what is required. Indeed, Tun Myat, Hans von Sponeck's successor as UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, recently commented that although the current food distribution system was second to none, many families are so poor that they are forced to sell their rations in order to purchase essentials such as clothing. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation tells us that this is one of the reasons that the 'oil for food' programme has been unable to improve the unacceptably high figures of child malnutrition in Iraq. Despite some attempts to address these issues, in practice progress is slow. The 'cash component' envisaged in Security Council Resolution 1284 has yet to materialise, and the number of 'oil for food' contracts placed on hold by the US and UK has actually increased recently.

Insisting on working within the framework of SCR 1284, and faced with blank Iraqi refusal, the US and the UK have been effectively locked down in a staring competition with Baghdad. Meanwhile, countries critical to sanctions—notably France and Russia—have seized the initiative, with a consequent 'erosion' of the sanctions' legitimacy at an international level. Examples of this are the recent flurry of humanitarian flights to Iraq, and an easing of Iraq's diplomatic isolation, with visits delegations and visits from foreign politicians. The high oil prices of the past year have also favoured Iraq, handing its government a double edged weapon in the form of the threat to halt oil production, as well as generating a large revenue for the 'oil for food' program.

In the UK, the call for the lifting of sanctions is reaching new heights, with NGOs, the Church of England and much of the press calling the current policy into question. The tone

CASI TO HOLD "ALTERNATIVE POLICIES" CONFERENCE

One of the most common responses anti-sanctions campaigners face, both from the public and from government, is "sanctions aren't ideal, but there's no coherent alternative". Formulating a realistic alternative policy which addresses all the issues is indeed a difficult task. To meet this challenge, CASI is hosting its second international conference on 10th and 11th March 2001 in Cambridge. The conference, which all are welcome to attend, will be addressed by policy experts from around the world. **Full details and booking details on the back cover.**

within the political community is also changing, following the call for the lifting of non-military sanctions on Iraq by the Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman Menzies Campbell.

Within the UN, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights decided to endorse a hard-hitting working paper by Marc Bossuyt which called sanctions on Iraq 'unequivocally illegal'. Referring to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, it passed a resolution calling for 'the embargo provisions affecting the humanitarian situation of the population of Iraq to be lifted'.

The discourse surrounding the sanctions has changed in focus. It is no longer possible to seriously deny the detrimental effects of the economic sanctions on Iraq's civilian population. The question now is not 'what are the problems?' but 'what are the solutions?'. To seriously address this question, in March CASI is hosting a public conference at which academics and experts from around the world will analyse the key issues and, we hope, develop a coherent alternative policy working paper. Whilst this endeavour will stretch CASI's financial resources to the limit, we hope it will be a significant step towards offering a feasible way out of the current stalemate. For information on how to contribute to CASI or how to book a place at the conference please refer to the back cover of this newsletter. We would also appreciate your help publicising the conference by putting up the enclosed poster.

I hope you find the following useful and look forward to hearing from you,

Yours,
Yousef Ghazi-Tabatabai
Co-ordinator

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'ALTERNATIVE POLICIES' Conference Booking Form on back cover

CORRECTION TO MARCH 2000 UN OIL EXPERTS REPORT

CASI's May 2000 Newsletter mentioned the report of the UN oil experts commissioned by SCR 1284. Their March report on their January visit noted that "the group was advised, at the Ministerial level, that in the current political environment ... there would be no discussion on the matter of options for involving foreign oil companies in Iraq's oil sector" [p. 6]. When questioned by CASI at an oil conference in Versailles, Dr Faleh H. Al-Khayat, the Ministry of Oil's Director-General of Planning, explained that this was a mistranslation. He believed that he had told the oil experts that the provisions of 'oil for food' were such that no foreign company would do business in Iraq's oil sector, making this impossible to discuss. He claimed that he had challenged the experts to find a single oil company that would invest in Iraq and that, when he phoned the experts later, they had found none.

PHASE VII 180 DAY REPORT

On 1 June the Secretary-General submitted S/2000/520, his final report on Phase VII of 'oil for food'. There was a note of optimism about it: it noted efficiency improvements in the operation of 'oil for food'. At the same time, it reported that oil spare parts were accumulating in warehouses because complementary parts, without which they were useless, had yet to arrive, and because the absence of a cash component in 'oil for food' made it more difficult for the Ministry of Oil to pay to move the equipment from the warehouses. A number of the usual concerns were presented: the Iraqi government was slow in submitting contracts; the Sanctions Committee was placing too many holds, one of the consequences of which was to take land that had previously been irrigated out of irrigation. The Office of the Iraq Programme has organised in-depth assessments of the holds. The drought continued to wrack agriculture, cutting vegetable production in half and fruit production to 80% relative to 1998 [Iraqi government figures]. In Iraqi Kurdistan the situation generally continued to improve; this was slowed in its electrical sector as the Iraqi government denied visas for experts.

In conclusion, the report noted that the "nutritional and health status of the Iraqi people continues to be a major concern", but also that the Iraqi government "is in a position to reduce current malnutrition levels and to improve the health status of the Iraqi people". It recognised that public health required infrastructure, not just calories: "Clean water and a reliable electrical supply are of paramount importance to the welfare of the Iraqi people". Finally, the report was pessimistic about the implementation of the cash component and local purchase provisions foreseen by SCR 1284.

In introducing the report Benon Sevan, the Executive Director of the UN Office of the Iraq Programme, lamented the "growing tendency to politicize the ['oil for food'] programme". He described at greater length the results of the

OIP's holds investigations: roughly 20% of the holds by value were being held with no reason given by the holding missions.

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1302

On 8 June SCR 1302 was passed, beginning Phase VIII of 'oil for food'. It also called for the "fast track" import procedures pioneered by SCR 1284 (previously referred to a "green lists" by CASI) to be extended to the water and sanitation sectors; as some feel that the previous "fast track" lists serve primarily to reduce photocopying expenses in the UN's Office of the Iraq Programme, the effect of these new lists is not yet clear. Somewhat alarmingly, paragraph three of the resolution referred to "dual usage" rather than to "1051 notifiable" items. See CASI's May 2000 newsletter for a more complete discussion of both these issues.

Most politically notable was 1302's call for the establishment of a team of "independent experts to prepare by 26 November 2000 a comprehensive report and analysis of the humanitarian situation". This is something that the former Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Hans von Sponeck, had advocated; the French delegation championed this, sacrificing a wish to see Iraq allowed to pay its UN dues out of 'oil for food' to achieve this.

The assessment has caused constant trouble: an OIP source claims that the Iraqi mission approached the French before the resolution's passage, asking for the assessment to be withdrawn. This angered the French who took the view that, as the Iraqi mission had asked for it earlier in the year, they were going to get it. On 11 September, Kofi Annan reported that the Iraqi government would not allow an assessment team in. One former consultant to a Security Council member speculated that this decision reflected fears by the Iraqi government that an independent assessment would reveal its failures to make use of all opportunities available it. The French have apparently argued that even an assessment from outside would have legitimacy, while the US rejects this.

Worse yet, Annan only named Thorvald Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian Foreign Minister, to lead the mission on 30 October, less than a month before the report was due. That deadline has now passed and the report is most likely never to be produced. One UN staff member thinks that the report became something of a game, with the prize being an updated version of the 1999 Security Council Humanitarian Panel report, but signed by Kofi Annan.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS BODY CRITICISES SANCTIONS

In August, controversy was sparked off by a UN body's outspoken criticism of the sanctions on Iraq. The United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights convened for their annual three-week meeting, and adopted a resolution on 18 August [E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/L.32] entitled "Humanitarian situation of the Iraqi population". This was the fourth year in a row that the Sub-Committee, made up of 26 human rights experts named by their respective governments to serve in a personal capacity, had

dealt with the issue of Iraqi sanctions. This year, however, its statements carried an altogether new tone. In strong language, the resolution made a direct link between sanctions and the Iraqi civilian population's suffering, and stated that it was: "considering any embargo that condemned an innocent people to hunger, disease, ignorance and even death to be a flagrant violation of the economic, social and cultural rights and the right to life of the people concerned and of international law".

It invoked the 1949 Geneva Conventions which it said "prohibit the starving of civilian populations and the destruction of what is indispensable to their survival", and with this in mind "decided, without a vote, to appeal again to the international community, and to the Security Council in particular, for the embargo provisions affecting the humanitarian situation of the population of Iraq to be lifted".

The background to this resolution was a working paper by the Belgian representative Marc Bossuyt (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/33), which the Sub-Committee had commissioned in 1999, and which was published on June 21 last year. His report, entitled "The adverse consequences of economic sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights" condemned sanctions on Iraq, calling them "unequivocally illegal", and saying they had caused a humanitarian disaster "comparable to the worst catastrophes of the past decades". In another resolution, also on 18 August, [E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/L.33] the Sub-Committee decided to transmit the working paper to the Commission of Human Rights, a step CASI has been told is unprecedented. While the resolution itself made no country references, the endorsement of Bossuyt's paper made this initiative a very clear statement on sanctions on Iraq. It invited the Commission to "give due attention to the issues dealt with and to recommend appropriate measures to avoid adverse consequences for the enjoyment of human rights in the imposition and maintenance of economic sanctions".

Language like this, particularly that of Bossuyt's working paper, has not previously appeared in the statements of UN bodies, and it inevitably provoked strong reactions. The day before the adoption of the resolution, the US Ambassador to the UN, George Moose, had made a statement to the Sub-Committee in which he called Bossuyt's writing on Iraq "incorrect, biased and inflammatory". Bossuyt had also made mention of Madeleine Albright's 1996 statement on "CBS 60 minutes", that the price of half a million Iraqi children having died was "worth it", the inclusion of which Moose called "particularly egregious". Moose concluded by stating that "this report reflects unfavourably on the Sub-Commission and on its author".

In spite such disputes, the Sub-Committee resolutions and endorsement of Bossuyt's working paper is yet another voice pointing at how the use of sanctions as a coercive instrument has led to very serious contradictions in Iraq. It attracted widespread media attention, being reported by all major news agencies, and found its way into the debate again in a letter from Hans von Sponeck in the Guardian on 3 January this year, where he recommended that "The FCO should carefully study the deposition of Professor Bossuyt to the Human Rights Commission".

FAO REPORTS ON FOOD AND NUTRITION IN IRAQ

In September, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) published an assessment of the food and nutrition situation in Iraq. The report was based on the findings of a mission to Iraq in May 2000, and as well as painting a picture of the current situation, it also makes a partial assessment of the general effectiveness of 'oil for food' in improving the nutrition and general health of the Iraqi population.

Contrary to UK government claims about diversion of resources from 'oil for food', the report characterises the Government of Iraq's food rationing system as "effective". It notes that the availability of "cereals imports since 1997/98 under the oil-for-food deal has led to significant improvements in the food supply situation" [p. 31]. The combination of local purchases and 'oil for food' rations make for a total per person energy availability per day of around 2,500 kcal [p. 10], just above the level advised UN nutritional experts, which stands at 2,463 kcal/person/day [p. 9]. Nevertheless, a major problem is that "food rations do not provide a nutritionally adequate and varied diet" [p. 33]. The potential solution to this, complementing the ration with locally produced goods, is made difficult by the fact that "two consecutive years of severe drought and inadequate supply of essential agricultural equipment and inputs, including spare parts, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, have gravely affected the Iraqi agriculture sector" [pp. 14, 31]. In addition, poverty compounds this problem: "with the decline in household income, a significant number of Iraqis are not in a position to adequately complement the ration" [p. 14].

Goods started to arrive under the 'oil for food' programme in the first half of 1997, but it appears that this has little impact on the high malnutrition level of children. In South/Central Iraq malnutrition "remains unacceptably high ... since the six-monthly surveys began in 1997 it appears that there has been little further improvement except for chronic malnutrition ... still, at least about 800,000 children under the age of five are chronically malnourished" [p. 17]. These findings "corroborate ... the findings of the 1999 Mortality Survey supported by UNICEF that found more than a two-fold increase in infant and child mortality since the end of the 1980s" [p. 21].

While all age groups suffer from insufficient supply of micronutrients, caloric malnutrition problems are largely confined to children under 15. By contrast, for adults a growing concern is instead that of obesity as "more than half the adult population has some degree of overweight". The interpretation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) interpretation of this is that "the situation on the ground ... is improving ... Indeed a recent FAO/WFP mission reported that more than half the adult population in Iraq is overweight" [FCO letter 26/09/00]. Such optimism does not seem substantiated by the report, which makes clear that obesity is a health problem: "the major reported causes of death in adults are heart disease, hypertension and diabetes, all conditioned by obesity". In addition, the report hints that social disruption

is causing these problems, as "it is likely that the long-term abnormal situation of Iraqi families contributes to this condition". More specifically, "inappropriate diet, lack of physical activity, ... unemployment and the adoption of sedentary lifestyles" were named causes [p. 23].

The FCO reading of the report is strangely selective in other instances as well. Peter Hain wrote on 13 November that "there are no reliable figures on child malnutrition in the centre and south of Iraq" [House of Commons written answers]. The FCO has not indicated why it chooses to accept FAO nutrition figures for adults, but rejects those for children even when given in the same report. A more complete consideration of the report seems to suggest that four years into 'oil for food', caloric intake is just about the only nutritional requirement that has been adequately met.

The explanation for this continuing problem is that "malnutrition, especially child malnutrition, is often caused by factors other than those related to food", notably "disease and unsafe water" [p. 34]. The report also implicates overcrowding, poverty, and the lack of education. The conclusion is that "significant improvement in the health and nutrition status of the vulnerable population, and of children and mothers from these households in particular, cannot be achieved without improving these contributing factors" [p. 35].

On the bright side, in contrast to the bleak picture painted in portraying the Centre/South of Iraq, the report notes that "the implementation of the SCR 986 (oil-for-food) programme in the north, phases I-VI since 1997 has been accompanied by significant improvements in health, mortality and nutritional status" [p. 27]. Notably, wasting, resulting from acute malnutrition, has almost been eliminated in the north. The FCO again has its own explanation. In what was called a 'keynote' speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on 7 November, Peter Hain admitted to concern about the humanitarian situation in the South/Centre of Iraq, and invites us to "Contrast the situation with northern Iraq, where the same sanctions apply but Saddam's writ does not run. That is because in northern Iraq the UN is implementing the 'oil for food' programme, not the Iraqi authorities".

There might be some truth in the claim that the UN administration is more efficient than the corresponding Iraqi authorities; for example, UN staff get paid while Iraqi officials do not receive salaries from 'oil for food' money. Nevertheless, Peter Hain has yet to present the evidence that has led him to this conclusion, which his not supported by the FAO findings. On the contrary, the report notes that "in contrast to the situation in the centre/south, improvements in the nutritional situation in the north had started in 1994, prior to SCR 986". In other words, the start of the discrepant development preceded the arrival of goods under the 'oil for food' programme by almost three years. According to the FAO, the difference between the north and the South/Centre is "due to greater resources in the north, the north has 9% of the land area of Iraq but nearly 50% of the productive arable land, and receives higher levels of assistance per per-

"800,000 children under the age of five are chronically malnourished"

son. The north also benefits from the greater flexibility the use of cash gives” [p. 28].

In sum, the FAO mission provides important information about the situation in Iraq. The lasting impression is that despite hopes to the contrary, the present exceptions to sanctions (‘oil for food’) have been inadequate to address very fundamental issues. Perhaps most distressing is the continued suffering of children. While the FAO does not make any political recommendations, one cannot help but note that the report’s numerous recommendations would amount to an effective overhaul of the present workings of ‘oil for food’.

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1284 UPDATE

Thirteen months after the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1284 (17 Dec 1999), there has been no movement forward in the endeavours to have it accepted by Iraq. Talks between Iraqi ministers and Kofi Annan are scheduled for late February, but there are no signs that UNMOVIC inspectors will be let into the country. Oil Minister Amir Muhammad Rasheed underlined this again on January 17, the 10th anniversary of the Gulf War, saying that SCR 1284 “is a complete failure and we will never deal with it and it is totally impractical”. The FCO, however, still calls SCR 1284 “the way forward”, and continues its high public commitment to its implementation as the only venue for dealing with Iraq. As ever, short of regard for appealing to the Iraqi government’s regard for the suffering civilian population, it is hard to detect any mechanism whereby it would be pressured to accept the resolution; the situation continues to appear deadlocked.

Meanwhile, aspects of 1284 have continued to be incorporated into ‘oil for food’. The “fast-track” procedure of contract approval which was called for by SCR 1284 has been developed further. Under this system, contracts do not have to be individually approved by the Sanctions Committee, as long as they appear on pre-approved lists. Lists for food, educational, and health supplies had developed already when we last touched upon this in our May 2000 newsletter. Water and sanitation supplies were added on 11 August, while the health lists were expanded on 1 September. However, lists for oil spare parts approved, as called for by §18 of SCR 1284, ran into difficulties. Although first prepared in July, they were held up by one of the members of the sanctions committee, widely presumed to be the US, until they could finally be approved on 1 December.

Several other clauses of SCR 1284 have yet to be implemented. Most prominently, the implementation of a cash component [§24] is not yet near any solution, in spite of numerous statements by UN agencies about its critical importance for the running of the ‘oil for food’ programme. Another outstanding issue, is the formation of a committee for faster approval of oil spare parts, separate from the Sanctions Committee.

HUMANITARIAN CO-ORDINATOR COMMENTS ON ‘OIL FOR FOOD’

Tun Myat, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, returned to New York on 19 October, for the first time since his appointment to Baghdad in April. In a press conference on the situation in Iraq, he said that the food distribution system in Iraq under the ‘oil for food’ programme was “second to none”, but that “in order to affect the overall livelihood and nutrition state of the people, of the children, you need more than food, of course”. Unless the basics — housing, electricity, water, and sanitation — were restored, the overall well-being of the people would not improve [UN Department of Public Information (DPI) Press Briefing by UN Coordinator in Iraq 19/10/00]. In addition to the collapse of such infrastructure, he said, the major problem was poverty:

“The food distribution system ... now ensures that under the new Distribution Plan over 2,470 kcal of energy of food is

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being made available to every man, woman and child in the country. And normally that should be sufficient to sustain life and make people’s livelihoods a little bit more palatable but the fact is, of course, people have become so poor, in some cases, that they are—they can’t even afford to eat the food that they’ve been given free because for many of them, the food ration represents the major part of their income... So in order to sustain their livelihoods, they sell part of the food that they get. And that is the sorry part of it: they have to sell it in order to buy clothes and shoes or hats or whatever other things that they would require. So the sort of upturn in nutrition that we would all want to be seeing is not happening”.

180-DAY REPORT ON PHASE VIII OF ‘OIL FOR FOOD’

On 29 November, the 180-day report on phase VIII of the ‘oil for food’ programme was made available [S/2000/1132]. The report is longer than its predecessors, and contains a wealth of information on the workings of the programme. While the report on phase VII [S/2000/520] had been carefully optimistic, the tone has once again swung back to stressing intrinsic inadequacies of the present arrangements. Many distribution systems work well, especially that for foodstuffs, and a shortfall of revenue no longer is the largest hindrance to the programme. Nevertheless, other fundamental structural factors are still limiting its implementation.

There are calls for better Iraqi performance in several areas. Notably, the Secretary-General urges that higher priority is given to education, and that more resources are devoted to targeted relief for vulnerable groups. Another growing problem is a slow rate of contracting. At the conclusion of Phase VIII in early December, only 28% of its distribution plan budget had been spent. As at 15 January this figure stood at 53%, reflecting the bunching of contract submission towards the end of each Phase, although the health sector contract applications amounted to a mere 13% of those allocated in the budget [UN Department of Public Information, 18/01/01]. Benon Sevan, when introducing the report on 4 December, made clear that this problem was partly attributable to the sheer volume of contracts and the daunting task of han-

dling the ensuing bureaucracy and negotiations, but also asked the Iraqi government to contract more expediently. Tun Myat recently gave further information on this issue, stating that

“The real reason is nothing sinister ... it all boils down to a new Iraqi law from last October which eliminates the role of middlemen in supplying contracts ... Many ministries here took time to readjust their purchasing procedures, sources of supplies and identification of suppliers, ... and this is probably the main reason why some of the ministries have fallen very badly behind” [Reuters, ‘Iraqi oil-for-food no substitute for sanctions end’, 30/01/01].

The report also indicates that the need for a cash component is becoming increasingly pressing:

“The absence of an appropriate cash component has increasingly hampered the implementation of the programme. A cash component is essential for all sectors of the programme. With the increased funding level and volume of supplies and equipment being delivered to Iraq, the effective implementation of the programme cannot be achieved unless there is an early positive resolution to the present impasse” [§133].

For example, in trying to administer a programme of targeted nutrition it is not only hampered by the absence of the goods needed, but also by “the lack of a cash component for the transportation of supplies, staff training, the supervision and monitoring of malnourished children and nutrition education” [§82]. Crucial areas such as water and sanitation [§92], and education [§102] were also singled out as areas in which improvement cannot be brought about merely by providing access to goods and material, but depends on the ability to pay for the human resources needed to make use of them. Security Council Resolution 1330 (4 Dec 2000) reiterated the Council’s approval in principle of such a mechanism, and on 25 January the Iraqi government agreed to a UN mission which will examine ways of bringing this about in the oil sector. This offers some hope that action will be taken in other areas, in which there has been little progress on resolving this issue. In its absence, the resulting adverse effects seem set to grow proportionally larger as the programme grows in complexity.

The report also reiterates what for more than a year has been a main feature of the Secretary-General’s reports, that the large number of holds placed on applications remains “one of the major factors that are impeding programme delivery in the centre and south”. This is further discussed in a separate article of this newsletter.

In conclusion, the report constitutes a move away from the optimistic expectations generated by rising oil prices and consequent availability of funds. Poverty, the lack of a cash-component, “excessive” holds on contracts, the failure to submit applications timely, and the increasing bureaucracy of the programme all contribute to frustrate a sustainable improvement of the humanitarian situation in the South/Centre of Iraq.

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1330

On 4 December SCR 1330 was passed, beginning Phase IX of ‘oil for food’. Most of its measures are discussed elsewhere in this newsletter, but a short summary follows here.

As in the previous three Phases, \$600m are allocated for the purchase of oil-industry spares [§7]. The resolution also “expresses readiness to consider” paying Iraq’s UN membership dues out of ‘oil for food’ revenue, has Iraq has lost its vote in the General Assembly from failure to pay [§8]. In addition, SCR 1330 calls for an expansion of the “fast track” procedure of contract approval, with electricity and housing lists to be added, while existing lists are to be enlarged [§§10-11]. In an attempt to benefit vulnerable groups in Iraq, the deduction of revenue to the Compensation Fund is decreased from 30% to 25% [§12]. A cash component in the ‘oil for food’ programme is mentioned in terms similar to the year-old SCR 1284, but with a new willingness to prioritise the oil sector, for which 600m euros are allocated to this purpose [§15]. Paragraph 18 asks the Secretary-General to prepare proposals for the use of additional export routes for oil.

HOLDS ON CONTRACTS GROW DRASTICALLY

The last few months have seen a drastic increase in the number of “holds” placed on imports to Iraq under the ‘oil for food’ programme. These originate in the gatekeeper role of the Sanctions Committee, whose 15 members all have to approve contract applications made by Iraq under the programme. The purpose of this mechanism was set up to ensure that no ‘dual use’ items enter the country without adequate monitoring systems in place, and that no goods which do not qualify as “supplies for essential civilian needs” are purchased under the programme. Increasingly, however, applications are not accepted or rejected outright but instead have holds put on them. Almost all holds have been placed by the US and UK, reflecting the hard-line position of the two countries towards Iraq, but perhaps also the possession of the resources required to properly scrutinise contracts, which many smaller countries might not have.

For more than a year now, holds have been identified by UN staff as a major obstacle to the implementation of the ‘oil for food’ programme. The December ‘oil for food’ report of the UN Secretary-General [S/2000/1132], concluding phase VIII of the programme, provides the most recent statement on its persisting adverse effect:

“the volume of holds has risen drastically to \$2.31 billion as at 31 October 2000. This is certainly one of the major factors that are impeding programme delivery in the centre and south. Current holds on such sectors as electricity, water and sanitation and agriculture impact adversely on the poor state of nutrition in Iraq. Similarly, holds on trucks badly needed for transportation of food supplies may soon affect distribution of food rations, which is also compounded by collapsing telecommunications facilities. I therefore appeal to all parties

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concerned to fully cooperate and address the excessive number of holds placed on applications” [§128].

The Secretary-General goes on to mention the specific examples of railways, water and sanitation, electricity, telecommunications, and drought intervention as critical areas where inadequate provision is particularly attributable to holds [§§ 74, 90, 101, 108, 120]. Benon Sevan, the Director of the UN Office of the Iraq Programme, provided figures for the most critical sectors when introducing the report: “in telecommunications, electricity, agriculture, education, oil, and water and sanitation, ... respectively, 45, 34, 23, 22, 21, and 20 per cent of the total value of applications remains on hold”. Sevan had previously stated that “every hold placed on an application for an essential supply affects the implementation of the programme, or to put it another way, it hurts the Iraqi people” [Introductory statement to S/2000/857, 21/09/00]. Statistics are matched by first-hand impressions: Tun Myat, the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Iraq, concurs that holds were placed on “very critical items”, and that this was “becoming a major problem”. [UN Department of Public Information, “UN aid coordinator in Iraq urges lifting of holds on humanitarian contracts”, 19/10/00].

Such clear statements notwithstanding, the amount of holds has continued to increase dramatically, both in numerical value and in proportion to the total value of contracts circulated, as is shown in the graphs below.

Why is this trend continuing, in spite of its proven adverse effect on the humanitarian situation of Iraqi civilian population? Part of the answer is that the nature of ‘oil for food’ programme has changed. While initially conceived as a programme for short-term emergency relief, ten years of sanctions has made improvement of the humanitarian situation contingent on the rehabilitation of Iraq’s infrastructure. As a result, the volume of contracts is much higher than previously, and the goods needed have a higher potential for ‘dual use’, howsoever defined. This requires a new approach, and as Benon Sevan explains: “We cannot go on applying similar procedures which were valid at the time when it was only

food and medicine” [UN Department of Public Information (DPI), ‘UN official urges Security Council to readjust work of Iraq sanctions committee’ 4/12/00]. One initiative in this vein is the introduction of a new and more extensive monitoring mechanism on the ground in Iraq, introduced in the last ‘oil for food’ report. It is hoped that will speed up the approval of contracts that require monitoring within Iraq [S/2000/1132, §§ 43, 64, 65].

There are, however, reasons to doubt that more efficient information provision will have the desired effect, as other factors appear to influence the number of holds. In the same report, the Secretary-General’s report states that he “must note that in many cases in which the requested clarifications and/or information appeared to have been provided, the applications concerned remained on hold, without any indication of the reasons provided for the continuation of the holds concerned” [§ 40]. Benon Sevan elaborates that “the absence of timely feedback, long after the necessary clarifications are provided, may give—and in fact has given—rise to speculation as to the real motive behind the hold placed on an application” [Introductory statement to S/2000/1132 by Benon Sevan, 4/12/00].

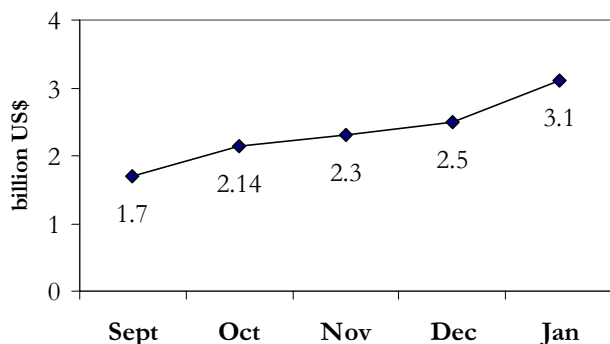
Similarly, Benon Sevan “appealed to Council members to avoid politicizing the relief effort in Iraq, asking that it allow it to ‘maintain its distinct humanitarian identity.’” [UN DPI, 4/10/00]. These remarks by people at the heart of ‘oil for food’ seem to suggest a feeling that political factors obstruct the provision of essential humanitarian supplies. Ten years into the sanctions regime, this fundamental contradiction has yet to be addressed.

COMPENSATION CONFLICTS

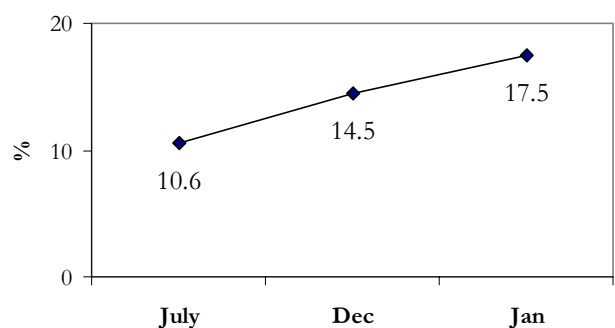
After the Gulf War, it was laid down that Iraq was liable for any economic loss and damage resulting from its invasion of Kuwait. Consequently, the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) was set up in to oversee compensation claims, and with SCR 705 (15 August 1991) it was decided that 30% of Iraq’s oil revenue should be paid into a Compensation Fund

“every hold placed on an application for an essential supply ... hurts the Iraqi people”
BENON SEVAN,
UN OFFICE OF THE IRAQ PROGRAM

Value of contracts on hold



Number of contracts on hold as percentage of total contracts circulated



Data source for both graphs: UN Office of the Iraq Programme

to this purpose. Ten years on, both the amount paid in compensation and the procedure whereby claims are processed have become increasingly questioned, and compensation has become a bone of contention within the Security Council.

The controversy started in June 2000 when the UNCC ruled that Iraq must pay \$15.9bn in damages to the Kuwaiti Petroleum Corporation. France and Russia, backed by China, Tunisia and Ukraine, refused to ratify the decision, in the first interference with the compensation process since its inception in 1991. Eventually, a compromise was reached in September 2000, whereby the claim was awarded, while in exchange a reduction of the percentage allocated for compensation from 30% to 25%, as formalised in SCR 1330 (4 December 2000). This reduction is not a new idea, although France and Russia have never before exerted pressure to get it through. As early as March 1999, the Humanitarian Panel report recommended that “the Security Council could authorize—possibly as a temporary measure—reducing by an agreed percentage the revenue allocated to the United Nations Compensation Commission” [Annex II of S/1999/356, §54, vi]. More significantly, this was in fact included in §24 of an Anglo-Dutch draft resolution which preceded SCR 1284 (17 December 1999), and which proposed a reduction to 20% on a loanable basis.

The extra revenue generated by the recent reduction to 25%—an estimated \$0.5bn in phase IX of ‘oil for food’—is “to be used for strictly humanitarian projects to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups in Iraq” [SCR 1330, §12]. It is noteworthy that this is an implicit admission that reparations and humanitarian needs compete for scarce resources. This conflict was in fact foreseen already by SCR 687 (3 April 1991), which stated that the level of payment by Iraq should take “into account the requirements of the people of Iraq, Iraq’s payment capacity ... and the needs of the Iraqi economy” [§19]. This seems to echo widely held tenets of international law. The International Law Commission, set up by the UN General Assembly as an authoritative body with responsibility for the development and codification of law, last reported on the issue in 1996, recommending that “in no case shall reparation result in depriving the population of a State of its own means of subsistence” [Ch. 3, article 42., §3]. Ten years into the reparations regime, there is good

reason to question whether this principle has been upheld; by December 2000, \$9.5bn of revenue generated under ‘oil for food’ had been paid in compensation payments, while humanitarian goods to a value of \$9.3bn had arrived in Iraq under ‘oil for food’ [Office of the Iraq programme, ‘Basic figures’]. In numerical terms, the programme could just as well be called “oil for compensation”.

Such issues are bound to become even more contentious in the future, as the nature of claims being processed is starting to change, and the compensation debt grows. By June 2000, the UNCC had finished processing almost 2.6 million

relatively small claims, filed mainly by individuals, to a total sum of \$13.5bn. The award of the Kuwaiti Petroleum Company’s claim in a stroke doubled Iraq’s compensation debt, and was the first of a series of very large claims, mainly by corporations, which now are in the pipeline. ‘Le Monde’ concludes that, assuming that one third of the outstanding claims of c. \$300 billion are awarded, and that the present rate of payment continues, Iraq would not have paid off its debt (including interest) even by 2070 [Le Monde, ‘A debt of dishonour’, Oct 2000]. While calculations differ, most observers agree with the words of Khaldun al-Naqeeb, a political sciences professor at Kuwait University, that the present arrangements ensure that “Iraq’s economic future has been mortgaged for most of the

coming century because of the hundreds of billions of dollars in claims for war reparations” [AFP, ‘Ten years lost and more bleak decades to come for Iraq’, 25/07/00].

Moreover, as reparations look set to continue long after sanctions’ lifting, a mechanism will have to be devised for securing their payment. Presently, “oil for reparations” and UN control over Iraqi revenue ensure this, but it is not clear how the process would proceed in a post-sanctions setting. SCR 692 lays down that if Iraq were to fail in its compensation obligations, “the Security Council intends to retain or to take action to reimpose the prohibition against the import of petroleum and petroleum products originating in Iraq and financial transactions related thereto” [§9]. Until an alternative settlement is reached, the compensation of victims of the Gulf War will continue to take place on the backs of other victims, i.e. the Iraqi population, adding to the sanctions’ failure to separate humanitarian needs and political aims.

“Iraq’s economic future has been mortgaged for most of the coming century because of the hundreds of billions of dollars in claims for war reparations”

International News

OIL ISSUES

Rising oil prices, and resulting increases in the revenue generated under 'oil for food', have dramatically changed Iraq's position over the past year. The July version of Peter Hain's form letter on Iraq states that increases in Iraqi oil exports are "bringing its oil revenues to a new peak". In actual fact, Iraqi oil exports in 1980 were \$26bn, or about \$53bn when inflation is adjusted for. [OPEC statistical bulletin, 1998, table 5; then inflation adjusted using US Consumer Price Index, as contained in the Statistical Abstracts of the United States for 1999]. In comparison, Iraq has averaged \$53m in exports per day over the latest phase of 'oil for food', an annualised sum of \$19bn or about 40% of its 1980 peak [UN Office of the Iraq Programme]. Nevertheless, the increased oil revenues have resulted in what the Secretary-General calls a "vast growth in the scale and complexity of the humanitarian [oil for food] programme". We discuss elsewhere in this newsletter why this has not resulted in commensurate improvements of the humanitarian situation in Iraq.

A tighter oil market has given Iraqi an increasingly important international role. In June last year, the press started reporting that rising oil prices gave Iraq, a new position of bargaining power; Saddam was thought to be "winning control of the oil market" [Wall Street Journal, 23/06/00]. While held by many to be an exaggeration, such reports have continued to surface, and on 18 January this year the Washington Post was still reporting that "Saddam may hold the key to West's prosperity", as increased Iraqi exports had a potential to offset OPEC plans to cut quotas. Madeleine Albright, however, seemed to be entirely unaware of such dynamics. When asked on ABC News if the US imported any oil from Iraq, she replied "I do not believe so. I don't think so", in stark contrast to the Energy Department's information that Iraq was the sixth-biggest supplier of oil to the United States [Reuters, 'Albright slips on Iraqi oil', 15/10/00].

The increased demand for Iraqi oil has also added an extra dimension to sanctions. Benon Sevan, the Executive Director of the UN Office of the Iraq Programme, drew attention to the dilemma in a briefing to the Security Council on 21 September last year: "On the one hand, everyone is calling on OPEC to increase the export of oil. On the other hand, the spare parts and equipment that are the minimum requirements of Iraq's oil industry, have been facing serious obstacles in the Security Council [Sanctions] Committee". Iraq has been quick to concur. Oil Minister Amir Muhammad Rashid recently stated that while Iraq's total oil production, for both exports and domestic use, averaged around 3 million barrels a day last year, and the target this year is 3.5 million barrels, Iraq could pump up to 4 million barrels a day if holds on spare parts were released [CNN, 14/01/01].

OIL CONFLICTS

Iraq has attempted to make political use of its new 'oil weapon'. Already in September, Iraq had vowed to stop using

what it considered "enemy currencies", and Jordan consequently decided in late October to stop using dollars in all dealings with Iraq [Reuters, 'Jordan to ditch dollar in trade dealings with Iraq', 25/10/00]. At the same time, Iraq threatened to suspend all oil exports if a similar move was not taken in 'oil for food' dealings. As oil prices shot up, the UN Treasury Department approved Iraq's plan, and as of 1 November the conversion to euros was effective. As the Middle East Economic Survey pointed out, what enabled Iraq to take these steps was its very large buffer in the UN escrow account. Despite repeated appeals, \$11bn had not been spent, but remain to be allocated within the scope of the 'oil for food' programme.

In mid-November, Iraq raised the stakes further, and demanded that all contracting companies pay a surcharge of 50 cents (ironically, the subdivision of the dollar, not the euro) per barrel of purchased oil, stating that failure to do so would exclude companies from further oil deals. If applied to volumes similar to those exported in November, this would divert c. \$420m (£300m) over the course of a year. Crucially, this surcharge would not be paid into the UN escrow account, but to a separate account under the direct control of the Iraqi government, and would therefore constitute a breach of sanctions. As such, it would be up to individual governments to ensure that it did not take place.

What escalated the conflict, however, was that Iraq also submitted a new pricing formula for December, proposing that the price be decreased by an amount broadly corresponding to the surcharge. After this was rejected by the UN oil overseers, Iraq suspended all oil exports on 1 December. Iraqi exports at the time accounted for 5% of the world oil supply, but Saudi Arabia and the US promised to make up for any shortfall, rendering the Iraqi threat much less effective [Financial Times, 'Oil eases on US and Saudi assurances', 1/12/00]. On 13 December Iraqi exports resumed under a compromise pricing formula, but the effects of the episode were more drawn out; by mid-January, the UN Office of the Iraq Programme estimated that Iraq had lost revenue corresponding to \$1.4bn in direct losses. It is harder to calculate what gains it might have made from driving up oil prices.

ARMS ISSUES

Nearly two years ago, inspectors from the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) were withdrawn from Iraq. A successor organisation, UNMOVIC, was set up in late 1999, but has not so far resumed inspections within Iraq. In the 'knowledge vacuum' created by this absence of inspection, debate has raged around two issues: how far was UNSCOM successful in ridding Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, and how far has an inspector-less Iraq managed to re-build its weapons since 1998.

These issues have been the setting for a surprising clash of the titans. Scott Ritter, former UNSCOM inspector and hawkish advocate of 'challenge inspections', stated in June

of this year that “given the comprehensive nature of the monitoring regime...it was possible as early as 1997 to determine that, from a qualitative standpoint, Iraq had been disarmed”. At the other pole of the debate, former UNSCOM executive chairman Richard Butler has dismissed Ritter’s claims as the ravings of a “basically good man who has gone off the rails”. He goes further, indeed, and argues that “the chemical warfare agent manufacturing facilities have been rebuilt. The same is true of their biological capacity. And I’ve seen evidence...that he [Saddam Hussein] has recalled their nuclear weapons design team”.

Butler’s position makes for better newspaper headlines. ‘IS IRAQ PLANNING TO NUKE U.S.?’ asks the Christian Broadcasting Network in August of this year. It quotes Shyam Bhatia, former Iraq correspondent for the Guardian newspaper, who argues that Saddam Hussein is “very close” to building a nuclear bomb. In the same month, a high-ranking Iraqi defector made similar claims. However, there is no shortage of learned voices dismissing such claims as alarmist. Hans Blix, executive chairman of UNMOVIC and former head of IAEA inspections, states that he has seen “nothing to substantiate” the claims that Iraq is trying to rearm. Blix also makes the critical point that qualitative disarmament is the only possible measure of “success” for the inspections team: “no inspection, however intrusive...can ever come up with a 100% answer or mapping of the capacity that Iraq has”.

Publicly, US and UK positions have not engaged with the points raised by Blix and Ritter. At the moment, the situation is characterised by stalemate. Security Council Resolution 1284, which set up UNMOVIC, states that sanctions will be suspended only once Iraq has allowed weapons inspectors back into the country. While the UK minister Peter Hain recently claimed that there were “encouraging signs” that Iraq was ready to reopen a dialogue with the UN, and recently stated that Britain was prepared to show some “flexibility” in its demands, Iraq itself has given no such signs; indeed it recently reaffirmed its opposition to SCR 1284.

The next step in this process is talks between Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Iraqi officials, scheduled to take place in late February, after having been postponed twice since November. For this arbitration to be successful, a radical departure on either side would be required. The US and UK insistence that ‘every comma’ remain in resolution 1284 is still pitted against the total Iraqi rejection of UNMOVIC and as long as this stalemate continues, the Iraqi population will continue to suffer.

‘OIL FOR FOOD’ — USES AND ABUSES

Smuggling

In addition to selling oil under the ‘oil for food’ programme, the Iraqi government smuggles oil to earn revenue. As the money raised is not supervised by the UN, it goes directly to the Iraqi government and the others involved in the oil smuggling.

While official figures for smuggled oil exports are not published, the usual estimate suggests that \$2 billion is being ex-

ported annually [Robin Allen, Financial Times, 4/10/00]. US officials publicly estimate that \$1 billion is being smuggled through Iranian waters [Robin Wright, Los Angeles Times, 6/6/00]. A former British diplomat in the Middle East suspects that the charges imposed by Iran for shipping through its waters mean that Iran earns more than the Iraqi government from these oil sales. In volume, an often quoted figure for smuggling is 100,000 barrels per day. This seems to derive from a July story which claimed that Iraq was refining 100,000 barrels per day in excess of it needs [Leon Barkho, ‘Iraq says will expand smuggling of crude oil and refined products’, Associated Press, 21/7/00].

Whatever the precise sums resulting from this smuggling, it does benefit Saddam Hussein. According to this year’s Forbes list of the World’s Working Rich, Saddam’s personal wealth has grown from about \$5 billion in 1997 to \$7 billion in mid-2000 [Forbes, ‘How Dictators Manage Their Billions’, 22/06/00].

Some of the oil sold outside of ‘oil for food’ is sold at below-market rates, in the hope of purchasing political influence. The Security Council has looked away since the early 1990s when Iraq continued the concessionary sales to Jordan that had started before sanctions. Since November, a similar agreement seems to be in place with Syria, and negotiations on analogous terms are also under way with Lebanon.

UN replenishment of Iraqi stocks

CASI’s May 2000 newsletter reported that, although the Iraqi government under-purchased proteins under ‘oil for food’, it made up for this by contributing proteins from its own stocks under an arrangement that had the UN repay it in kind.

This turns out to be only half the story. A UN consultant has since advised CASI “that this is a shell game devised by entrepreneurial Iraqi authorities to rob the UN”. The Iraqi government stocks are of lower quality than the UN stocks with which they are replaced. The consultant mentioned this in the context of grains (and estimated that the UN grains were worth about 10 times the Iraqi grains that they were replacing) but implied that it also applied to the proteins.

Exporting of ‘oil for food’ imports

The British government has long accused the Iraqi government of either exporting imports purchased under ‘oil for food’, or exporting crops more generally (q.v. Baroness Symons’ 4/2/99 statements in the Lords). There finally seems to be some evidence to support this: on 24 September the Sunday Telegraph reported on Glaxo-Wellcome’s complaint to the Foreign Office that it had found 15,000 units of Ventolin sold under ‘oil for food’ in Beirut [‘Saddam sells UN drugs on black market’, Christina Lamb].

While complaining likely ensures that Glaxo-Wellcome will not again win contracts to sell to Iraq, it was concerned about the safety (and hence legal) implications of its prescription drugs appearing on the black market. It was also worried that re-exporting interfered with Glaxo-Wellcome’s pricing policy, which may charge different rates in different countries.

The story claimed that the asthma drugs had reached Lebanon in Iraqi Ministry of Transport vehicles. From this it inferred firstly that this indicated approval from the highest levels of Iraqi government, and secondly that it undermined the belief that hardship in Iraq might be due to the sanctions. The second of these conclusions is clearly false: that Iraq's government fails to take all steps to offset the effects of the sanctions does not mean that the sanctions have no effect.

At a New York press briefing on 19 October, the head of the UN programme in Iraq, Tun Myat, explained that his office was investigating this claim. He did explain that the sprays sold for about \$60–\$70 outside of Iraq while, inside Iraq, were distributed for almost nothing. He therefore suspected that a “few enterprising people” had realised this.

As a note of background, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation reported as early as 1993 that Iraqis were often selling components of their government ration in the markets. They were doing this, it felt, for the same reasons that people buy and sell anywhere: the contents of the rations did not necessarily match their needs. As stated above, Myat reported in his October 19 briefing that this practice still continues.

ERODING THE SANCTIONS

The past year has seen remarkable changes in Iraq's standing in the world, with a steady easing of Baghdad's diplomatic isolation. Two clear examples of this are the high attendance at the Baghdad Trade Fair last November and the recent flurry of flights to Iraq. The success of the Iraqi regime in restoring international ties has been aided by at least three factors. First, rising oil demand has made Iraq a more attractive trading partner. Second, the US prominent role in the Iraqi case has been largely neutralised due to a year of presidential campaigning, its controversial intervention in the Palestine-Israel conflict, and its fixation to SCR 1284 as the framework for any further discussion on the embargo. Third, neighbouring countries are realising that, like it or not, Saddam has not been toppled by the sanctions and the time has come to move on.

Outraged by the recent killings of Palestinians since confrontations with Israel restarted last September, many Arabs have come to appreciate Saddam as a power in the front against Israel and as a voice of discontent with US policy in the Middle East Countries which used to trade actively with Iraq have suffered for ten years the nasty side effects of the embargo and are therefore eager to see an end to the sanctions. Some of Iraq's neighbours are moreover preparing for the moment when Iraq's reconstruction is “auctioned” to the outside world. In addition, solidarity with ordinary Iraqis is growing among the Arab public, putting pressure on governments to help Iraq out of the crisis. It is then understandable that Arab leaders should overcome their fear of Saddam to engage in a ‘rapprochement’ towards the Iraqi regime.

The **Baghdad Trade Fair** (November 2000) hosted 1,554 companies from 45 countries, up from 960 companies from 36 countries in 1999. The biggest delegations were from France, Russia and China. Official delegations were sent by Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Greece, Turkey and China. Britain was represented only by Vapormatic, a company which makes agricultural spare parts.

PEOPLE AND COUNTRIES SPEAKING OUT

Sanctions were imposed on Iraq with the purpose of annihilating Saddam's aggressive capacity, so that countries in the region and the Kurds and Shiites of Iraq are no longer under threat. Until last year most Gulf countries had welcomed the UN's policy, and their acquiescence was central to its legitimacy. However, in the last few months there has been a shift in the regional perception of UN's methods.

There is a sense that the UN, under US influence, leads a policy of double standards in the Middle East: it applies rigour to Iraq, but refuses to protect the Palestinians from the Israeli onslaughts. An Iranian official said last November that while the “United States defends the Zionist regime and its atrocities against the Palestinians, which is a token of terrorism, it is not entitled to accuse other states of terrorism and set conditions for them”. He added that the countries in the region “can bring security to the area under the auspices of convergence, participation and cooperation”.

Even Iran and Kuwait, both victims of Iraqi aggression, are now contesting the embargo.

Last July, Jordanian Prime Minister, Abdul-Raouf al-Rawabdeh, demanded “the lifting of sanctions against Iraq and the preserving of the unity of its people and its land”. This posture has gradually spread to other countries in the region, and even to countries which previously were more hostile. Notably, on November 14 Iranian foreign minister Dr. Kamal Kharrazi called for lifting the UN sanctions against Iraq. On January 22 an editorial letter in Kuwaiti newspaper al-Rai al-Aam called for

the lifting of the sanctions and for the creation of an International Tribunal to condemn Saddam. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister congratulated the editor-in-chief, punctuating that Saddam should abide to UN demands.

Thus even Iran and Kuwait, both victims of Iraqi aggression and with all the reasons to dread their neighbour, are now contesting the embargo. This is a serious blow to the motives underlying sanctions, calling the role of US and Britain as guardians in the region into question.

There have also been joint Arab initiatives against sanctions. At the Arab League Summit held last October at Cairo—the first attended by Iraq since 1991—the heads of State from Jordan, Yemen, Sudan and Palestine called for the end of the embargo. On 30-31 December, at a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Qatar and the UAE launched a proposal

to cancel the support of the group to UN sanctions, but Saudi Arabia and Bahrain rejected it.

Recent Arab pronouncements mesh with a movement worldwide. In June the Italian lower house voted in favour of restoring diplomatic ties with Iraq and to work for the lifting of sanctions. A similar resolution was passed by the Dutch parliament in November. As permanent members of the UN Security Council, France and Russia have tried in vain to persuade the US of the need for a complete review of the resolutions on sanctions. They would like to modify the present regime so as to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and to work on the basis of well-defined objectives.

Today several governments are urging the UN to unconditionally lift the sanctions: India, Syria, Egypt, Venezuela, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The US and UK are largely isolated in their dichard resolution to maintain them.

Last August, President Hugo Chavez "ratified Venezuela's position to support any accord against any kind of boycott to Iraq or any country". During a trip to Indonesia, he shared with President Abdurrahman Wahid a deep repulse for the perpetrators of the embargo: "Who has the right to really have an innocent child die there? Let God have pity on the soul of those who act that way. I think the time has come for it to be over". Wahid expressed intentions to visit Baghdad shortly. The US administration got the message, and their

reaction was quick. First Boucher, the Department of State spokesman, deemed Chavez's trip as something the US would "keep in mind in future dealings with Chavez and his government". Then Albright warned Wahid that visiting Baghdad would be inappropriate and ill-advised, and blatantly asked him to keep out of the way: "President Wahid has a great deal to do in Indonesia", she said. Nevertheless, such pressure is proving increasingly inadequate in influencing third parties' positions.

NEW US GOVERNMENT FACES 'OLD' SADDAM

In the run up to the Presidential elections, Washington remained relatively quiet on Iraq. Briefings emphasised the success of the embargo in containing Saddam and the benefits brought to the Iraqi people by the 'oil for food' programme. There was little reference to the devastating effects of the blockade, and if Saddam was pointed out as the sole person responsible for the suffering in Iraq.

During the election campaign, both the Democrat and the Republican candidates pronounced in favour of "tougher" sanctions. Both endorsed the ousting of Saddam's regime as a long term aim for US policy and promised immediate action in the event of any aggression by Iraq. Although no political bloc publicly opposed the embargo, a few individuals did. On November 26th the Undersecretary for Political Af-

"AIRODING" SANCTIONS

On August 17 Baghdad airport re-opened, after years of closure to civilian traffic. Rehabilitation jobs had been long and costly, for the airport was badly damaged by Western air-raids in 1991. On August 19 a Russian airliner landed in Baghdad. Since then, more than 80 planes have landed, mainly from European and Arab countries. Politicians, businessmen, anti-sanction campaigners, doctors, aid-workers, even footballers, are now travelling to Baghdad by air. They often bring humanitarian goods, such as medicines, medical equipment, food and school supplies.

Because no UN resolution deals explicitly with passenger flights to Iraq, there is ongoing controversy about how much control to place on them. The most relevant is resolution 670, Paragraph 3 which "Decides that all States ... shall deny permission to any aircraft to take off from their territory if the aircraft would carry any cargo to or from Iraq or Kuwait other than food in humanitarian circumstances, subject to authorization by the Council or the Committee established by resolution 661". The US and Britain insist that the authorization be claimed on a case-by-case basis. Namely, that for each flight to Baghdad the Sanctions Committee examines the proposed cargo in advance, and grant or deny permission to depart accordingly. France and Russia argue for a laxer interpretation. They claim that by simply notifying the Committee prior to each flight, a government is complying with regulations, and that it is up to each government to control the cargo.

Further considerations complicate the debate. Why are violations of sanctions overlooked when it comes to vehicles crossing the Iraqi borders, notably in the case of Turkey? How do later UN resolutions, with a tendency to ease the embargo, affect the argument? Should lists of passengers be also handed to the Committee before every departure? The latter question has arisen from demands by the US and Britain; that passengers should be controlled is definitely not suggested in UN resolutions.

The Sanctions Committee has yet to clarify procedures. While the confusion continues, some French and Russian Baghdad-bound planes have taken off without even notifying the committee. Less powerful countries have taken fewer risks: almost all their flights await formal approval. In November, though, the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) demanded, during a meeting in Qatar, the end of the no-fly zones and recommended its 56 member countries to ignore the air restrictions. Russia and Jordan are striving to resume scheduled flights to Baghdad, while Saddam wages to recover 37 Iraqi civilian planes from Tunisia, Jordan and Iran. He ordered that they be flown abroad on the eve of the Gulf War, to protect them from destruction.

It seems that the wrangling continues behind the scenes, through extra-official action. According to an Egyptian official, "The British delegate to the Sanctions Committee asked Lloyds not to insure humanitarian flights which fly to Baghdad without explicit Committee approval, which led to the suspension of several humanitarian flights to Baghdad".

fairs, Thomas Pickering, made a case for “softer” sanctions. He argued that the fall of Saddam’s regime, a necessary condition for peace in the region, could only be achieved by the Iraqi people.

Now Bush has won the election and formed government. The new Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has been shocked by the amount of sanctions the US Foreign Office has to handle: “they just keep coming, and I think I’ve seen about half a dozen new ones ... in the last couple of weeks” he said when he testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “I would encourage the Congress to stop for a while. I mean stop, look and listen before you impose a sanction”, “let’s talk about it before you slap another bureaucratic process on me”. Although he plans to reduce the number of sanctions to a bare minimum, there are two countries which he is strongly believes should remain under sanctions: Cuba and Iraq. Concerning Iraq he explained:

“Saddam Hussein is still in power. But what a mess he has made of his nation over the past 10 years while the rest of the world has moved on. While we have seen our economy flourish ... he sits there trapped in the past. Instead of seeking peace and prosperity for his people, we see a weakened Iraq that utters threats and pursues horrible weapons to terrorize its neighbours”. “We owe it to its neighbours ... that they are no longer threatened that Iraq is ready to live in the world and not apart from it. And until Iraq makes that decision and lives by it, we will remain resolute”.

There is a clear defence-department orientation in the new government. Dick Cheney, the new Vice-president, and Colin Powell held top positions in the Pentagon under George Bush senior, and were involved in Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1991. This may bring more aggressiveness to US diplomacy: the new team promises a more strategic and firm approach to sanctions. At his nomination, Powell pledged: “We will work with our allies to re-energise the sanctions regime”. Echoing this, Bush’s National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, also contends that the “sanctions regime (to Iraq) needs to be reinforced and strengthened I think it’s very clear we have a big job to do in trying to re-energize”. Such promises seem infeasible even to British officials. On January 16th Peter Hain dismissed the possibility of US diplomats effecting a “revival of sanctions”, since they will have to “grapple with the realities of current circumstances”.

PLAYING AT TOPPLING

George Bush is concerned that US forces have been “over-deployed” and has repeatedly expressed intentions to cut down US participation in peacekeeping operations worldwide. What seems certain is that the new trend would not spare Saddam. Condoleezza Rice clarified this point already last October: “The United States is the only power that can handle a show-

down in the Gulf, mount the kind of force that is needed to protect Saudi Arabia ... And extended peacekeeping detracts from our readiness for these kinds of global missions”.

Some of Bush’s top nominees see the use of force as a valid way to finish with Saddam. During the presidential campaign Cheney suggested that a Bush administration might “have to take military action to forcibly remove Saddam from power”. In 1998 Donald Rumsfeld, the new head of Pentagon, said that “removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power will require a full complement of diplomatic, political and military actions”. Condoleezza Rice, meanwhile, holds that, at the slightest misdeed by Saddam, Washington should “really try to hurt him, not just deliver a pinprick air-strike” as Clinton did.

THE INC AND THE IRAQ LIBERATION ACT

More directly, the US has attempted to attain its aims by working with the Iraq National Congress, which is an umbrella group for parts of the Iraqi opposition. It originated as a guerrilla army in 1992, with heavy CIA backing, and had bases in northern and southern Iraq. In 1996 Saddam, at the invitation of the KDP (one of the two main Kurdish factions), sent tanks into the north and forced the hasty evacuation of 6,000 INC fighters and supporters. This put an end to the armed phase of the INC.

In 1998 Donald Rumsfeld headed the commission that designed and lobbied for the Iraq Liberation Act, which would entitle the US government to disburse \$97 million towards arming and training INC militants. The project became law in 1999.

However, the Clinton administration considered it ill-advised to openly arm a group of rebels and doubted that the INC could ever become a serious opposition to Saddam. Hence, the plan remained stalled until last October, when Clinton disbursed \$4m for non-lethal training of 100 INC members and agreed to found a centre for the INC in Tehran. Just before leaving office, Clinton donated another \$12m, but to date no weapons have been delivered to the rebels. However, in the new government there are strong advocates of the INC who will press towards the “full implementation of the Iraq Liberation Act”. Rumsfeld may finally manage to provide what he called “lethal aid”.

One of the INC leaders, Ahmed Chalabi, has personal ties with Rumsfeld and Cheney and might exploit them to gain more intensive support from the US. He admits that preparing the present INC numbers would not suffice to win a full war against Saddam, but contends that it would allow for little victories, which in turn would encourage defections from Iraq’s army: indecisive soldiers “would have a place to go to”.

Westminster Watch

THE FUTURE OF SANCTIONS REPORT

CASI's May 2000 newsletter reported on the International Development Select Committee's 10 February report, "The Future of Sanctions". On 16 May, the government produced its response. These are usually produced within two months; one interpretation is that this response was delayed because of the report's complicated nature, which required a response for various government departments (including the Department for International Development, the Treasury and the Foreign Office).

The government's response, while often sensible, resembled a letter from the Foreign Office when it discussed the situation in Iraq. It began by noting that the "Government fully agrees with the conclusion of the Committee that the responsibility for the plight of the Iraqi people must ultimately lie with the Iraqi leadership" and went on to describe the faults of the Iraqi leadership. The response does not recognise that the sanctions on Iraq cause hardship directly, by design, nor that the indirect hardship caused by Iraqi government policies is still an indirect consequence of the sanctions.

Bowen Wells (Cons - Hertford and Stortford) opened the 29 June Commons debate on the report and its response. He criticised the government's response as "complacent and, in many ways, flabby". Ann Clwyd (Lab - Cynon Valley) blamed the Iraqi government for all the hardship in Iraq. She argued that the sanctions put pressure on the Iraqi regime, which she compared to the Nazis or the Khmer Rouge. She listed its abuses at length.

Oona King (Lab - Bethnal Green and Bow) started by remarking that, when the Committee began its work, her thoughts were "largely informed by" the view that holds "Saddam Hussein ... ultimately responsible for the suffering of the Iraqi people". Acknowledging the deaths attributed directly to the Iraqi regime, she then reported Unicef's estimate that a half million extra children under five had died under sanctions. In her comments, she quoted approvingly from a letter by Andrea Needham, of Voices in the Wilderness UK. Noting that the sanctions on Iraq had "failed to dislodge Saddam Hussein" while hurting "the ordinary people of Iraq", she observed that one sanction not currently applied against Iraq is the use of the International Criminal Court, a very targeted form of sanction. She concluded by remarking on the lack of common sense in the case of Iraq and recommended the consideration of targeted sanctions.

Nigel Jones (LibDem - Cheltenham) confirmed, from first hand experience, the Iraqi regime's disregard for human rights. He argued for continued but smarter sanctions and claimed that recognising that the choice for Iraqi regime members was between remaining in power and oblivion was "the starting point for all his strategic consultations". Jones' later comments did not differentiate between types of sanctions: he argued, for example, that the "sanctions are necessary to stop

[Saddam Hussein] building up his arsenal". He identified the importance of using Russia to mediate some form of settlement with Iraq.

Richard Spring (Con - West Suffolk) noted the importance of sanctions and expressed his fear that, unless they were properly targeted, confidence would be lost in them and the ability to use them reduced. At the same time, he noted that private financial sanctions (e.g. freezing regime members' bank accounts) remained untested.

A parliamentary source involved in the Select Committee's report told CASI that Committee members have been surprised by the government's hostile treatment of Hans von Sponeck. He had impressed them when giving testimony for the original report.

DEBATES

On 22 May, Tam Dalyell (Lab - Linlithgow) put five questions on Iraq to Peter Hain in the House of Commons. He asked: why the British government continued to report hoarding of supplies by the Iraqi government when the UN reported the opposite; why the recommendation by the President of the Security Council that the impact of sanctions be monitored had not been applied to Iraq's case; what the UK, as the sponsor of SCR 1284, was doing to end the stalemate that it had created; how the government responded to educated Iraqis' increasing references to both sanctions-related suffering in Iraq and to human rights violations; and, what the government intended to do about widespread smuggling in Iraq.

Hain's response praised SCR 1284 and blamed the Iraqi government for hardship. On smuggling, he did support Iran's impounding of some tankers and said that he was pressing Turkey as well. He had met with various people to seek the implementation of SCR 1284.

The following day saw debate on Iraq in the Lords. Lord Islwyn (Lab) quoted Denis Halliday, Hans von Sponeck, Amnesty International and the Security Council's Humanitarian Panel report. He concluded by noting that "Surely it is time to end the sanctions".

Responding, the Lord Bishop of Hereford agreed that the sanctions were harming the innocent, and that "there are some serious questions about the way in which Resolution 1284 is working". Surprisingly, he argued against a de-linking of the "sanctions policy, which has had such a devastating impact on health and welfare, from military and political considerations". He did not give reasons for his position beyond the hope that, if "the Iraqi Government were to comply with Resolution 1284" then sanctions could be lifted. One Church source commented angrily on this argument afterwards. The source felt that the Bishop had presented it because he was uninformed about this issue, and had joined the debate simply because he was the Bishop in attendance at the time.

NO-FLY ZONES REPORT

On 2 August the Select Committee on Defence released its thirteenth report, on the no-fly zones. The report began by concluding that their patrolling by the UK “is a humanitarian mission to protect ethnic and religious minorities and neighbouring countries of these regions from the terror and oppression exercised by Saddam Hussein and his regime”. Throughout the report, there is no indication given that the Committee members are aware that Iraq’s Shiites, for whom the southern no-fly zone was allegedly established, form the majority of Iraq’s population.

The report believes that “Saddam’s intentions towards the minority peoples [sic] has not changed and, although he has less ability to attack them from the air, repression on a lesser scale has continued through ground attacks”.

The report cannot find more than “a tenuous basis in current international customary law” but nevertheless has “no doubt that UK participation in the no-fly zone operations

over Iraq is justified on moral and humanitarian grounds”. The evidence for this conclusion is never presented. This disinterest in evidence weakens the conclusion as there may be at least one argument in favour of at least the northern no-fly zone: that many of Iraq’s Kurds regard it as a symbolic guarantee of their security. The ability to claim that the zones have led to any reduction in human rights abuses is further reduced by the admission that patrol planes only attack ground targets if they themselves are targeted: attacks by Iraqi government forces on civilian populations do not earn a response. In contrast to the report’s optimistic assessment, the Washington Post quoted a pilot who had done four tours of duty in the zones: “I think almost everybody thinks it is a waste of time” [‘Containing Iraq: A Forgotten War’, 25/10/00].

A significant section of the report is devoted to “relations with host countries and other Gulf States”. This section laments the current separation between defence sales and defence assistance and recommends that the “MoD should be prepared, on occasion, to be more direct in linking the promotion of UK equipment to military assistance”.

Lord Rea (Lab) argued that the sanctions were responsible for civilian suffering, which did not touch Iraq’s leadership. They did not help control Iraq’s weapons, now only pursued by “sporadic bombing from a great height”, which Rea felt was “an ineffective and inhumane way to achieve that”.

On 7 November, after a summer recess, the Commons again discussed Iraq. Donald Anderson (Lab - Swansea East), Steve McCabe (Lab - Birmingham, Hall Green), Menzies Campbell (LibDem - North-East Fife) and Sir David Madel (Con - South-West Bedfordshire) all asked about the humanitarian situation in Iraq. Sir David asked whether all members of the Security Council agreed that Iraq’s compliance with the terms of SCR 1284 would lead to sanctions’ suspension. Campbell asked:

Is not it obvious that policy towards Iraq is based on containment by utilising the deterrent effect of credible military force? What possible contribution do non-military sanctions make to that policy? They do grievous harm to the ordinary people of Iraq, they have no effect on Saddam Hussein, his whisky or his brutality, they give him an enormous propaganda advantage and they cause grave disquiet throughout the Arab world. Ten years after the end of the Gulf war, is not it time for the United Nations to lift the non-military sanctions?

Hain avoided these questions.

In Prime Minister’s questions on 22 November, Tony Blair himself faced questions on Iraq. Dr Norman Godman (Lab - Greenock and Inverclyde) asked whether Blair agreed, “that there is deep concern everywhere over the dreadful misery inflicted upon the Iraqi people by the sanctions regime? Has not the time come for the Government to agree to support the case for the suspension of sanctions, even though that might cause anger in Washington? Sanctions have to go, do they not?” Blair did not.

It is encouraging both to see parliamentarians from all parties who have not previously engaged the government on Iraq’s

humanitarian situation doing so with such intelligence and determination.

CIVIL SOCIETY OPPOSITION TO SANCTIONS MAINSTREAM

Over the past year, sanctions on Iraq has attracted more and more attention from civil society. What used to be a topic of limited and often uneasy discussion has developed into an issue of widespread concern. And an increasingly broad spectrum is coming to the conclusion that the present policy needs to be revised.

From within the Church of England, several statements have put sanctions into questions. In an address to the Church Club of New York on 14 September, the Archbishop of Canterbury noted the Iraqi people’s severe suffering, and said that while “there are arguments about the extent to which that is Saddam Hussein’s own fault. But the evidence still suggests that the negative effect of sanctions is out of proportion to the good achieved ... this suggests at the very least that they need to be reconfigured to impact on those they are intended to target”. In July, the Church’s International and Development Affairs Committee published a report entitled “Iraq - a decade of sanctions”. Reporting from a visit in April, the Committee reported on the “harm caused by the comprehensive sanctions policy” and stated that “the United Nations should ... consider substituting the present sanctions regime with an arms embargo and financial sanctions specifically targeted against the Iraq’s ruling elite”. On 14 November, Coventry Cathedral sent out a clear signal of similar sentiment, awarding the International Peace and Reconciliation Award of Cathedral and City of Coventry to Hans von Sponeck.

NGOs have also increasingly been vocal on the sanctions issue. In August, six international organisations—Global Policy Forum, Human Rights Watch, Mennonite Central Committee, Peace Action Education Fund, Quaker United Nations Office, and Save the Children UK—sent a joint letter to the

Security Council. They said that “whatever the extent of Iraqi non-compliance with the provisions of that resolution, the Council must recognise that the sanctions have contributed in a major way to persistent life-threatening conditions in the country” and called “upon Security Council member states in the strongest terms to take the further steps that are necessary to protect and advance these fundamental rights of civilians”.

As we report in our article on Westminster in this newsletter, a change in the discourse of the political community is also taking place. While the Labour and Conservative parties remain broadly unchanged in their positions on sanctions, the Liberal Democrats took a new step at their annual party conference in September. Noting that the present sanctions amount “containment—and nothing more”, the Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman Menzies Campbell called for a lifting of non-military sanctions on Iraq. Focusing on the scope for exploitation of sanctions by the Iraqi leadership, Campbell said: “non-military sanctions do not hurt Saddam Hussein and the elite who surround him. But they are used by him to hurt his own people. After ten years it is time to deny him that opportunity” and “that it should now become the policy of the British Government that sanctions other than those directly relevant to military or military related equipment should be lifted”.

As well as the Church, NGO and political voices, much of the press is now also calling sanctions into question. On 27 May, the prestigious medical journal ‘the Lancet’ ran articles on the health situation in Iraq. In its editorial, it said that “The courageous policy ... is to suspend (not abandon) sanctions lest upcoming generations of Iraqis, out of resentment, suffering, and isolation, grow up to be as aggressive as their

current leader”. Another statement came from the Guardian, which has been producing its own political manifesto in advance of the general elections anticipated this year. Closely modelled in style on the Labour Party consultation process, the resulting document stated that “The next Labour government should also: ... Unilaterally withdraw from the sanctions regime against Iraq if no solution to the current impasse is found within six months of the election”. The ‘original’ itself, Labour’s document “Britain in the World”, however, states little more than a suggestion that sanctions should be “less harsh on people”. What does this mean? One is left to wonder if Labour is hoping to make people less dependent on the economy?

The 10th anniversary of sanctions attracted widespread media attention, and perhaps more than any occasion provided an insight into current press attitudes. Critical voices came from unexpected quarters. On 26 July, Time Magazine’s columnist Tony Karon wrote a piece entitled “Undiplomatic Dispatch: Iraq Sanctions Are Nasty, and They Don’t Work”, in which he outlined the failure of the present sanctions. As he pointed out: “sanctions do not a policy make; they’re a holding pattern”. Two days later, Newsweek’s Rod Nordland reported from Iraq, and had a plain message: “There is no doubt that sanctions have badly hurt the Iraqi people”.

With the voices of Time and Newsweek adding to the criticism, the US and UK government are getting increasingly isolated. Civil society, however, is moving. While conclusions differ, no serious voice disputes that sanctions afflict hardship, almost all advocate a new look at the present policy, and many call for the lifting of sanctions. It is time for the government to listen to mainstream opinion.

Campaigning News

THE EMAIL LISTS

It's time to wish a happy 3rd birthday to the CASI email lists, which were set up at the end of January 1998. Along with the website, the email lists represent the public face of CASI for most people who come into contact with us. The **announcements lists**, to which we send the newsletter plus occasional messages about our activities, now have more than 1000 subscribers worldwide, compared to just over 800 last spring.

CASI also runs an email **discussion list** on which subscribers share news, information, and campaigning tactics. A roundup of news items from around the world is posted each week, and we would like to thank the list members who have put so much work into compiling these. A searchable archive of the discussion list is kept on our website and can be a useful resource. There are currently 2616 messages in the

archive and 218 list members. About half the subscribers are UK residents, while the rest live in countries including Malaysia, Cuba, Canada, Germany, Australia, Norway, Italy, Trinidad, the US, Switzerland, Ireland, Denmark, South Africa, France, and Iraq itself.

To join any of our email lists, see www.casi.org.uk/lists.html or contact lists-manager@casi.org.uk.

CASI WEBSITE EVOLUTION

CASI’s famous website (www.casi.org.uk) continues to steadily evolve, both in content and appearance. As well as information about our activities and copies of our newsletters, it contains links to a vast array of documentation on sanctions from a range of sources.

DIRECT ACTION

The past six months have seen a number of non-violent direct actions against sanctions on Iraq, including the high-profile August 2000 'die-in' on the 10th anniversary of the imposition of sanctions on Iraq, coordinated by Voices in the Wilderness UK. More recent acts of protest have included an international 'week of action' in November, a 'day of silence' in December, a blockade of parliament in January which probably featured more police than protesters, and the infamous tomato-throwing incident in Bristol. Perhaps Tony Blair could claim the resultant dry cleaning costs from the UN Compensation Commission?

DECEMBER CONFERENCE

The first weekend of December saw an anti-sanctions activists' conference, organised by Voices UK and co-sponsored by CASI. Those who attended were treated to a highly motivating speech by Hans von Sponeck (which you can listen to on the CASI website). All in all, the weekend was a great opportunity to meet other anti-sanctions campaigners from across the country to share ideas and plan activities. One of the most striking aspects of the weekend was the sheer number of activists present who had visited Iraq in recent months. The weekend also sparked the formation of "Manchester CASI", based at the university. Incorporated into the conference was a National Coordinating Meeting (for more information about these six-weekly gatherings of anti-sanctions groups please contact CASI or Voices UK).

NATIONAL PETITION

Don't forget to help gather signatures for the current National/Constituency Petition against sanctions on Iraq. The petition operates on a parliamentary constituency basis, with a Local Contact in each constituency to coordinate activities. There is also a national version of the petition for situations where those present will be from a variety of constituencies. Copies of the petition and details of how it works are at the petition's interactive website, www.notinournames.org.uk (developed by CASI), or are available by phone on 0845 458 9571. The deadline for returning completed sheets to Local Contacts has been extended to 11th April, and the deadline for Local Contacts to send a copy of the signatures to the Voices UK office is now 23rd April, owing to a revised estimate of the date of the

general election. There is still time to become the Local Contact for your constituency—please see the website or contact us for more information.

CASIP'S ACTIVITIES

In recent months CASI's energies have been focused mainly on collaborations with other groups and preparation for the upcoming conference. We have also hosted talks in Cambridge by Felicity Arbuthnot (who inspired CASI's creation in 1997), Chris Doyle of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) and Richard Byrne of Voices UK, and in conjunction with CamPeace we have manned an anti-sanctions stall in Cambridge on several occasions. Various CASI committee members have given talks in Cambridge and elsewhere. In June, Colin Rowat and Yousef Ghazi-Tabatabai apprehensively mingled with multinational corporations when they attended a conference on 'The Economics, Geopolitics and Investment Terms in the Middle East' in Versailles, where Colin presented a paper about UN agency reports on Iraq. In December Colin Rowat travelled to Iraq with Chris Doyle of CAABU to conduct interviews with Iraqi and international agencies.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR OTHER ANTI-SANCTIONS GROUPS

CASI's contact details are on the front cover. The contact details of two of the more prominent anti-sanctions organisations mentioned in this newsletter are below. There are many other anti-sanctions groups than these, especially local groups. Contact details for many of them are listed on our website.

Voices in the Wilderness UK — organise sanctions breaking trips to Iraq, coordinate non-violent direct action, produce highly recommended newsletter and briefings. They also organise a monthly letter-writing campaign.

voices@viwuk.freemove.co.uk
<http://welcome.to/voicesuk>
tel. 01865 243232
16B Cherwell Street, Oxford, OX4 1BG

The Mariam Appeal — founded by George Galloway MP
trish@mariamappeal.com
www.mariamappeal.com
tel. 0207 403 5200
13a Borough High St., London SE1 9SE

If you have found this newsletter interesting or useful, please turn the page for ...

- ... Upcoming Events
- ... Conference Booking Form
- ... CASI Book Orders
- ... Information about how to support CASI

UPCOMING EVENTS

22nd–28th February 2001: 24-hour week long picket outside the House of Commons. Organised by the Mariam Appeal—contact 0207 403 5200 or trish@mariamappeal.com

28th February 2001, 7:30pm: Rally: ‘No more war, no more sanctions’, Grand Committee Room, House of Commons. Speakers include John Pilger, George Galloway, Tony Benn. Contact the Mariam Appeal—details as above.

10th–11th March 2001: “Alternative Policies to Sanctions on Iraq” public conference in Cambridge, hosted by CASI. Details & order form below.

NOVEMBER 1999 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS STILL AVAILABLE



Copies of the published proceedings of CASI’s conference ‘Sanctions on Iraq: background, consequences & strategies’ are available for just £6 inc. P&P (£10 / \$15 outside UK). The 220 page book (ISBN 1-903488-22-2) features edited transcripts of the papers presented by the 18 expert speakers at the conference. Place your order using the form below.

Alternative Policies to Sanctions on Iraq

10–11 March 2001, Cambridge, UK

Boosted by the positive feedback from its November 1999 conference, CASI is pleased to announce that it is to host a second international conference over the weekend of 10-11 March 2001.

The Conference will examine how the international community could feasibly lift economic sanctions without jeopardising regional or international security. It will also inquire into the effects an end to economic sanctions would have on Iraq’s internal humanitarian situation. While the Foreign Office claims that those of us opposing the continuation of economic sanctions can offer no coherent alternative, we are moving the debate forward to confront the real policy options facing the world’s leaders. The final session will open a debate on how the current political stalemate between the major players in the UN can be broken.

Experts from a variety of disciplinary and occupational backgrounds will speak at the conference, including **Hans von Sponeck**, former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, **George Joffé**, of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, **Kamil Mahdi**, from the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, **Abbas Al-Nasrawi**, from the University of Vermont, **Charles Tripp**, from the School of Oriental and African Studies, **Gareth Stansfield**, from the Iraqi Kurdistan Research Programme, and **Eric Herring**, from Bristol University.

The Conference is open to all those interested in the future of Iraq and its people. Places are limited, so please make your booking as soon as possible using the form below, or contact us if you have any enquiries. Please help us to publicise the conference by displaying the enclosed poster (more copies are available on request!)

**www.casi.org.uk/conf2001/
conference@casi.org.uk**

Tel: 01223 364592 (eve/weekend) or 01223 337344 (office hours)

CASI is funded solely by donations from its supporters. Organising an international conference, even when all work is carried out by volunteers, incurs significant expense. Ongoing projects such as the production and distribution of newsletters also cost money: printing and posting this newsletter

Appeal

alone will cost around £500. Over the coming few months, our finances will be stretched to their limit, and we therefore ask that you consider making a donation to CASI to enable us to continue operating; at the moment our activities are constrained by our finances! You can use the form below.

Order Form

Bookings for the CASI conference on 10th/11th March 2001 (we will confirm your booking & send full details by email or post).

Name: Saturday 10th March ONLY places @ £10 (£4 unwaged)
 Address: Sunday 11th March ONLY places @ £10 (£4 unwaged)
 Whole weekend places @ £17 (£6 unwaged)

Copies of “Sanctions on Iraq: background, consequences & strategies”:

Email: copies @ £6 inc. P&P

Tel:

Fax:

Please send completed form & payment to: CASI orders, c/o Seb Wills, Clare College, Cambridge CB2 1TL, UK.

Donation

TOTAL ENCLOSED £
 (cheque/postal order payable to “CASI”)