



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.40, No.28

July 23rd, 2004

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"I left the ward, leaned against a wall and prayed that the ground would open and swallow me. I wrote at the time, 'I now know it is actually possible to die of shame.'"*
– Felicity Arbuthnot, Iraq, 1991

SHAME, ALL IS SHAME by Betty Luks:

Our sister publication, the British *On Target*, has a lengthy report on some realities in Iraq that we in the 'dumbed-down' west are not meant to know about. As I read the article, I was reminded that in the early days of Australia's involvement in the war of aggression against the Iraqi people, I received a letter from a prominent Australian who took me to task for not supporting John Howard and his cronies in what they were doing in our name.

That person couldn't – or wouldn't – distinguish between protest against politicians involving Australians in a war of aggression, against a people who had done us no harm (and as we now know, presented us no threat) and loyalty and support towards our servicemen and women on active duty.

Ten Years of Sanctions & the Depleted Uranium We're Not Meant to Know About – Taken from the British *On Target*, May, 2004:

"United Kingdom journalist and activist Felicity Arbuthnot has visited Iraq on numerous occasions since the 1991 Gulf War. She has written and broadcast widely on Iraq and was also senior researcher for John Pilger's award-winning documentary 'Paying the Price – Killing the Children of Iraq'. She has gone where others fear to tread; on dangerous streets, towns, villages and highways of the Middle East. She is not on the political 'take' such that she prospers, as do many 'talking heads' pontificating from the safety of cities in the West, or under guard in foreign hotels.

As the Coalition bludgeons the ancient cultural structures of the Middle East with an alien western-style 'd'markrazy' on the pretext of 'liberating' the people of the oil-rich Iraq, the destruction, the maiming and loss of lives continues to rise.

Felicity could not help but ask – '**Are these people real?**' as she heard Brig-Gen. Mark Kimmitt idiotically rambling that the Iraqi people 'will forgive us' for the appalling atrocities – worse, the flagrant cultural humiliation – of the Abu Ghraib prison.

The one element which has fundamentally altered the conduct and course of this present and any

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future war is the use of nuclear weapons. As the Iraqi people have found out to their utter agony, so will the Coalition of the willing servicemen; that once contaminated by the depleted uranium from the real 'weapons of mass destruction', the territory now held by the victors, is just as dangerous to both victor and vanquished alike.

The pattern of war has changed – forever. Recklessly and unprofessionally, the 'Coalition of the Willing' has flouted the nuclear principle; it has wrought a tragedy that is unfolding for friend and foe alike, as well as innocent civilians, the magnitude of which we are only now becoming aware.

Thirteen Years of Sanctions and the Depleted Uranium: Felicity wrote – When Martii Ahtisarri, then Special Rapporteur to the United Nations, visited Iraq in March 1991, just after the Gulf War, he wrote: **"Nothing we heard or wrote could have prepared us for this particular devastation – a country reduced to a pre-industrial age for a considerable time to come."**

United Nations reports on Iraq's water, electricity, health care, and education in 1989 described Iraq as near First World standards. The country was regarded as having the most sophisticated medical facilities in the Middle East. The embargo implemented on Hiroshima Day, 1990, to pressure Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, had an almost instant negative impact.

Iraq imported a broad range of items, 70 percent of everything, from pharmaceuticals to film, educational materials to parts for the electricity grid, water purifying chemicals to everything necessary for waste management; and at the consumer level also, almost everything that a developed society takes for granted was imported.

With all trade denied, the Iraqi dinar (ID), worth US\$3 in 1989, became virtually worthless: ID250, formerly US\$750 did not even buy a postage stamp in neighbouring Jordan. Staple foods multiplied up to 11,000-fold in price. With no trade, unemployment spiralled, and many, in a country where obesity had been a problem, faced hunger and deprivation. The United States and United Kingdom-driven United Nations sanctions, in fact, mirrored a pitiless Middle Ages siege. With Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait the embargo should have been lifted, but a further relentless United States and United Kingdom-driven "war of moving goal posts" began, and the majority of children in Iraq – who are fourteen years old now – have never known a normal childhood...

Ten months after the war, I stood in the paediatric intensive care unit of Baghdad's formerly flagship Paediatric Hospital. A young couple stood, faces frozen with terror, as a nurse tried frantically to clear the airway of their perfect, tiny, premature baby. There was no suction equipment.

"It is at a time like this, all your training becomes a reflex action," remarked my companion, Dr. Janet Cameron, from Glasgow, Scotland, "and in a unit like this, you know exactly where everything will be – but there is nothing here."

The fledgling life turned from pink to an ethereal grey, to blue, flickered, and went out.

Hiroshima Day: Since then, over a million lives have gone out due to "embargo related causes", a silent holocaust initiated on Hiroshima Day.

Doctors were remarking in bewilderment at the rise in childhood cancers and in birth deformities, which they were ironically comparing with those they had seen in textbooks after the nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands in the 1950s.

In 1991, only the United States and the United Kingdom's top military planners knew they had used radioactive and chemically toxic depleted uranium (D.U.) weapons against the Iraqis.

Just weeks later, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Agency wrote a "self initiated" report and sent it to the United Kingdom Government, warning that if "fifty tonnes of the residual D.U. dust had been left "in the region" there would, they estimated, be 500,000 extra cancer deaths by the end of the century (the year 2000). The Pentagon eventually admitted to an estimate of 325 tons; some independent analysts estimate as much as 900 tons. Estimates of the added burden of last year's (2003) illegal invasion are that up to a further 2,000 tons of the residual dust remain to poison water, fauna, flora and to be inhaled by the population and the occupiers, causing cancers and genetic mutations in the yet-to-be-conceived.

D.U. remains radioactive for 4,500,000,000 years. Some scientists estimate that it will be poisoning the earth, the unborn, and the newborn "when the sun goes out."

Iraq, the land of ancient Mesopotamia – like Afghanistan and the Balkans – has become a silent potential "Weapons of Mass destruction" for the population and geographical neighbours...

What we sow.... In the West, 70 percent of cancers are now largely curable or with long remissions. In Iraq they are almost always a death sentence. On another early visit after the war, I went to a ward where just two small boys, aged three and five, lay alone, in an attempt to isolate them. They had acute myeloid leukaemia and hopelessly compromised immune systems, rendering them vulnerable to any infection. The three-year-old, whose name translated as "the Vital one", was covered with bruises from the leaking capillaries bleeding internally and rigid with pain.

There was not even an aspirin available. His eyes were full of unshed tears and I realised he had taught himself not to cry – sobs would rack his agonised little body further. Leaving, I stooped to stroke the face of the five-year-old, who was in an identical condition. In a gesture that must have cost more than could be imagined, he reached and clutched my hand tightly, as do children everywhere, responding to affection.

I left the ward, leaned against a wall and prayed that the ground would open up and swallow me. I wrote at the time, "I now know it is actually possible to die of shame."

Editor's comment: I try to imagine how these war planners look on the people whom they are about to order to be bombed, strafed, maimed or killed; their houses destroyed and their livelihood taken away from them, thus reducing them to starvation level. What about the 'holier than thou' attitudes of such people as those who imposed the ten years of sanctions on the people knowing there would be such horrendous effects.

Do the war planners see these people as their fellow human beings – or do they see them as merely 'cattle' – their lives of no consequence whatsoever.

John Howard has not uttered one single public word of regret at what his government has been a party to in Iraq. What on earth makes that man 'tick'? I can understand a people fighting for their homeland if it was threatened by invasion and occupation, even coming to the help of another friendly nation under threat. I cannot understand the double standard displayed by the sanctimonious leaders of the western world who continue to claim 'the high moral ground' in this war of aggression, and the horrendous 'legacy' of contaminated environment and soil they have left the people of that sad land - for how many years to come?

The full article is far too long for the pages of this weekly journal, so, for those who would like to read it in full, it will be placed at a later date on the League's website in the British *On Target's* files, under the heading of "Recipe for Eternal Vengeance: Legacy of the American-led Coalition in Iraq", May 2004.

WHAT FUTURE FOR A WAGGING TAIL? It has surprised many how a policy-bare, timid party such as the National Party still survives. Latest figures show Queensland's National Party sliding even further in the polls. It daren't do anything save snap at the heels of a good-humoured Labor Premier, who has risen even further since the recent election.

John Anderson made the heroic statement that to sign a Free Trade Agreement which did not include sugar would be "un-Australian". The Nationals would stand where all about them had fled. But they caved in before any pressure was applied.

On July 2nd, 2004, 1,200 primary producers from the beef, dairy, pork, egg and small crop industries assembled in Roma passed a vote of no confidence in the Coalition's Minister for Agriculture Warren Truss. Some attending were from as far afield as Victoria and the Northern Territory. John Anderson was there but notable for his silence. What could he say?

In half a century Australia has lost 300,000 farmers. We are down to under 80,000, with many in awful trouble. During all that time, the "champions of the bush" – the Nationals – have sat on their hands and attacked anyone who drew attention to their shortcomings.

DAIRY RE-REGULATION by Jeremy Lee: The de-regulation of the Dairy Industry was a mindless disaster that came out of the globalist mentality. Small family farmers who had provided sterling service to Australia for hundreds of years were virtually forced to hand their incomes to the powerful, giant supermarket chains. Many committed suicide. Others walked off their farms, with a government "hand-out" for doing so.

Following a Dairymens' protest outside his electorate office on July 7th, Howard Minister and Member for Groom Ian MacFarlane made a statement that, when enough Dairy farmers wanted it, re-regulation could be restored.

Enough dairy farmers where, Mr. MacFarlane? In your electorate? In your State? And are you running polls to find out what dairy farmers think? And what would Woolies and Coles say?

DROUGHT CONDITIONS: Whilst southern parts of South Australia and West Australia have had good winter rains, not so the north, and a Queensland supporter 'on a farm west of Toowoomba' wrote: "The whole land is in the grip of a drought. I don't know how the people on the land can keep on their properties."

Even the larger-town newspapers are waking up to the fact that a quarter of the nation's remaining dairy farmers could be forced off the land because of the long-term impact of the drought upon their already depleted back-up resources. (*Ballarat Courier* 23/6/04).

A survey of Australians dairy farmers found that 15 percent said they were not likely to be on the land within three years, while another 10 percent said they were not too likely to hold on to their properties. Eighty percent of dairy farmers were adversely affected by the 2002 drought, the survey found, with milk production down 11 percent nationally. And 55 percent of the nation's remaining 11,000 dairy farmers are yet to return to pre-drought production.

"ON TARGET" is printed and published by The Australian League of Rights, 145 Russell St., Melbourne.
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Subscription \$40.00 p.a.