

CEASE FIRE ON IRAQ

END THE NO-FLY ZONE BOMBINGS

April 6, 2001

Ten years ago, on April 6, 1991, Iraq signed on to United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, formalizing the cease-fire to end the "Gulf War." Today, the only major violations of the cease-fire come in the form of bombings by United States and British airplanes patrolling the so-called "no-fly zones" (NFZs) in north and south Iraq. While another resolution (#688) expresses concern that Iraq respect the rights of all its people, the zones are not specifically created or endorsed by any U.N. documents or resolutions.

On February 16, President George W. Bush ordered a bombing outside the NFZs, close to Baghdad. That attack reportedly killed 3 civilians and wounded 30 more. Since that time, there have been four more bombings (2/21, 2/22, 3/20, and 3/30). Two of those incidents involved "flare bombs," incendiary devices designed to distract anti-aircraft fire, which Iraq says are being used to burn crops and property.

Since the December, 1998 "Desert Fox" bombing of Baghdad and other parts of Iraq, U.S. and British air raids have become, in Bush's words, "routine." In 1999, they attacked 138 times; an average of once every three days; in 2000, the average came closer to once every five days. Although less frequent, there have been a total of 13 bombings just in the first 95 days of 2001; an average of once per week. Most people are not aware of these bombings. The March 30 bombing received only two sentences in the *Oregonian*. News about the bombings can, however, easily be found on the web attributed to wire services (AP, AFP, Reuters, UPI, etc.).

Agence France Presse reports that the total number of Iraqis wounded in 1999 was 371, with 156 people killed; in 2000, 556 were wounded and 159 killed; Iraq says at least 37 more have been wounded and 8 more killed this year. This is a total of 323 people, many civilians, killed as part of a near-silent ten-year war that has lasted longer than any other in U.S. history.

In addition to conventional bombs and flare-bombs, the U.S. has reportedly also been using cluster bombs (which contain 145 little bomblets and, unexploded, look like toys to children) and Joint Stand Off Weapons, tested in the February 16 attack. (JSOWs have a range of 40 miles and are guided by satellites.)



THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS CHANGING POLICY

The Bush administration is reportedly rethinking the policy of the NFZs. Unfortunately, they are sending out mixed messages. Secretary of State Colin Powell has described "three baskets" of U.S. policy in Iraq: "Regime change," the sanctions, and the no-fly zones. In early March, Powell stated that the U.S. was looking to expand the list of possible targets in the no-fly zones to include suspected weapons sites. The director of think tank GlobalSecurity.org was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* (3/8), noting that the bombings are therefore meant to replace the weapons inspectors who left Iraq in December 1998 on the eve of "Desert Fox."

Later in March, U.S. Army General Tommy Franks proposed to lower the number of NFZ flights and focus more on surveillance in order to "reduce the risk to pilots, cut costs and provide a clearer picture of what's going on in Iraq." Franks worried that the number of flights increases the risk that the Iraqis will shoot down a plane with their random anti-aircraft fire. (Although

Costs of patrolling the no-fly zones in 2000 was \$1.1 billion.

—Chicago Tribune 3/26/01

with the accidental bombing of 5 Americans and one New Zealander by U.S. planes in Kuwait on March 12, along with the military mishaps involving submarines and several other airplanes, it is clear the U.S. may pose the greatest risk to itself.)

The *Tribune* also quoted legal experts who worried that the U.S. should not end the patrols, which allegedly are to prevent Iraqi air flights, since they "provide at least some legal pretext for airstrikes on Iraq."

CEASE FIRE ON IRAQ: END THE NO-FLY ZONE BOMBINGS (April 6, 2001, cont'd)

Many countries, as well as some newspapers and reporters, are encouraging change. The *Chicago Tribune's* March 26 editorial called for a re-thinking of the no-fly zone policies, citing a "major downside" of the raids: deaths of scores of Iraqis, the outrage of other Arab nations, and eroding global respect.

Reporter John Pilger, whose British television documentary "Paying the Price: Killing the Children of Iraq" was released last year, states that British Royal Air Force pilots are protesting the way the zones are being enforced. Apparently, they are ordered to return to their base in Turkey while the Turkish Air Force flies bombing runs to attack suspected encampments of the PKK, a Kurdish group which has bases in northern Iraq. Although the NFZs were ostensibly set up to protect Iraq's minority populations in the north (the Kurds) and the south (Shi'ite Muslims), the pilots noted that those killed and wounded by the Turks and by allied planes often include the very people allegedly being protected.



Countries which condemned the U.S. bombing of Iraq on February 16 include: Russia, France, China (three permanent members of the U.N. Security Council), Malaysia, Syria, Saudi Arabia and India. Many Arab nations, once members of the coalition which fought to get Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991, have denounced the U.S. bombings, particularly in recent months. With the Palestinian uprising and the harsh Israeli response, the Arab community is uniting. At a late March summit, the Arab League—including Kuwait—called for a lifting of sanctions, and stopped short of condemning the no-fly zone policies only because of a dispute in wording between Iraq and Kuwait.

On April 2, Reuters reported that U.S. planes dropped leaflets warning Iraqi soldiers not to fire at them. As is the case with the U.S. plane which crashed into Chinese planes, one has to wonder what right the U.S. has to fly in or near these other countries' airspace without international support.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is looking at changing the sanctions on Iraq, in place since August, 1990, so that more humanitarian aid can get in, and commercial flights may resume (although some 20 countries have flown humanitarian flights into Iraq since September), while keeping all of Iraq's oil proceeds flowing through a U.N.-controlled account in Iraq. The lowest estimate of the number of people who have died as a result of the sanctions, in combination with the effects of the country's infrastructure being destroyed in the 1991 war, is 500,000. (Higher estimates are that over 1.5 million Iraqis have died.)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Call for the end of the no-fly zone patrols. They have no legal basis, they are destructive, dangerous and costly.
Tell your friends and neighbors.
Tell your elected representatives, call the media and ask them to cover this story so that people will know what is being done in their name.
While you're at it, call for an end to the sanctions. The U.N. was not created to run the world's nations in the way that they now control most of Iraq's financial resources.
The people will never be able to change their leadership if they are hungry and ill and see their government as protecting them from the outside world.

It has been ten years and we, too, signed a cease-fire agreement. It is time to set an example and obey this U.N. resolution.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Send a message to **END THE BOMBING AND LIFT THE SANCTIONS:**

UN Security Council
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017
Secretary General Kofi Annan
(212) 963-5012

Secretary of State
Colin Powell
(202) 647-6575

Secretary of Defense
Donald Rumsfeld
(703) 695-5261

Senate Committee on
Foreign Relations
(202) 224-4651

House Committee on
Foreign Affairs
(202) 225-5201

U.S. Representative
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799 UN Plaza
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