

Genocide for Oil by Steve Diamond – nhcatsteve (at) yahoo.com

A timeline of the Middle East from colonial to modern times.

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"If Kuwait grew carrots we wouldn't give a damn."

Lawrence Korb, former U.S. assistant defense secretary (5)

"We spend all day broadcasting on the radio and TV telling people back home what's happening here. And we learn what's happening here by spending all day monitoring the radio and TV broadcasts from back home."

P.J. O'Rourke, U.S. journalist. From "Give War A Chance" (5)

"Television was our chief tool in selling our policy."

- Richard Hass, US National Security Council, on the US war with Iraq.

Source: New York Times, Nov. 5, 1991, p. B3.

"By God, we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all!"

- President George Bush, on the success of shaping public opinion for the US-Iraq War. Source: Newsweek, March 11, 1991.

It is only possible to understand the ongoing war in Iraq by taking an honest look at history. The following timeline presents accepted historical facts that almost never come to light in classrooms or on the news, but can be verified at your local library in encyclopedias, almanacs, history texts, and on the Internet. Let me emphasize that most of my sources for these facts are mainstream encyclopedias and chronologies (see citations at the end). I encourage you to check for yourself, because the truth can be hard to believe.

1897: Kuwait becomes a British colony ("protectorate") and remains so until 1961. We now know that Kuwait has more than 10% of the world's estimated oil reserves. From the beginning, Kuwait was a sheikdom and not a democracy. (4) Currently, only 15% of the people in Kuwait are allowed to vote. (2)

1917: During World War I Iraq is invaded and captured by the British. (4)

1920: The League of Nations declares British control over Iraq. (4)

1921-32: Britain makes Iraq a kingdom. (2) (4) This begins a pro-western government until 1958. (4) Sir Percy Cox of the British Colonial Office draws a border to create Kuwait out of the Basra province of Iraq, ending Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf. (Richardson). ("Western nations" refers to the US and western Europe.)

July 24, 1922: The League of Nations declares that a Jewish homeland will be established in Palestine. (After WW I, no nation wanted to absorb the masses of Jewish refugees.)

Oct 14, 1927: Oil prospectors from a joint French, British, and US company strike oil in Northern Iraq. It gushes 140 feet up at a rate of 80,000 barrels a day, and takes 10 days to bring under control. One American receives a 5% interest in the field. (3)

1936-41: Seven military coups occur in Iraq. (4)

1938: The British mandate over Iraq ends. British military bases remain. (4) Massive oil reserves are discovered in Kuwait. (1)

1940: Oil production begins in Kuwait. A joint British-American company controls it until 1974. (4)

May 14, 1948: The state of Israel is established.

1951: Iran's popular Mossadegh government expels the repressive Shah monarchy and nationalizes the holdings of what is now "British Petroleum" oil company. Western countries immediately implement sanctions. (Richardson)

Aug 19, 1953: The CIA engineers and finances a coup to overthrow the legitimate government in Iran, and puts the Shah back in power. Allegedly, this is to prevent a Soviet takeover. (4) CIA agents like General Schwartzkopf Sr. and Israel's secret police (Margolis 1-12-98) help to form Iran's brutal police force (Richardson) who torture and murder tens of thousands of people. (Margolis)

1958: A leftist popular revolution occurs in Iraq. (2) General Kassem rules the new republic. (4) With the British installed monarchy gone, he nationalizes western assets in Iraq. (Richardson)

1962: Kurds in Iraq demand an independent nation and gain control over northern Iraq. The rebellion collapses in 1975 (4) when Iran withdraws support. (2) Some fighting continues (4), including Iraq bombing Kurdish villages in Iran.

1968: A coup in Iraq (partially funded by the CIA) puts the Ba'ath party in power, which is led by Saddam Hussein starting in 1979. (4) (2) (Richardson)

Dec, 1970: OPEC nations (Middle East oil exporters) agree to cut oil production and raise prices to profit from their nations' resources.

1972: Iraq nationalizes most industry (including oil), breaks up large land holdings, (2) and becomes industrialized. (4) Russia sends Iraq weapons and advisors, but relations are later strained and Iraq starts to trade more with the West. (2) Iraq is one of the largest oil producers of the Middle East. (4) Western nations organize a boycott of Iraqi oil. (3)

1973: Arab-Israeli war. Iraq sends forces to aid Syria. (2) Most western countries including the U.S. support Israel. (4)

Feb, 1973: "Israel shot down a Libyan civilian airliner that had strayed over the Israeli-occupied Sinai, killing over 100 people. Israeli claims that they thought the plane might be intending a terrorist kamikaze attack were not credible, given that the airliner was flying away from Israel when it was blasted out of the sky; their assertions that they had provided the airliner's pilot with ample warning were simply false." (Zmag)

1974: OPEC oil prices keep rising as Arabs finally control their own resources. (3)

1978: OPEC countries, led by Libya and Iraq, drastically raise oil prices again. (3)
Kuwait participates in this "oil embargo." (4)

1979: Ayatollah Khomeini overthrows the Shah of Iran. Khomeini is anti-western and nationalistic, and threatens to instigate Arab cooperation and unity against foreign exploitation.

Feb 17, 1979: Iran's new government sets oil export prices 30% higher than OPEC does. Since the U.S. imports 6% of its oil from Iran, there are fuel shortages. (3)

Nov 4, 1979: Iranian militants seize the US embassy in Teheran, take hostages, and demand that the U.S. return the Shah for punishment. (4)

Oct 18, 1980: The Reagan campaign bribes Iran with the promise of weapons in exchange for a delay in the release of American hostages, which results in Carter losing the election (see "The October Surprise"). Later, as part of the "Iran-Contra Affair" Reagan uses secret arms sales to Iran to provide \$48 million to fund his illegal war against the people of Nicaragua. (3) Admiral Poindexter and Oliver North resign and refuse to answer congress' questions. (3) On Dec 24, 1992 President Bush pardons 6 former Reagan administration officials for lying to Congress. (3)

Remember that president Bush is a Yale graduate, former bomber pilot, former director of the CIA and later headed an oil-drilling firm in Texas. He was also ambassador to the UN and chief of the US liaison office in China. (4) His son, also named George Bush, has worked in the oil industry, then was the governor of Texas before becoming president.

1980-88: Iran-Iraq war begins (4) when Iraqi fighter-bombers attack. Iraq tries to seize Iran's oil-rich province of Khuzistan. Suffering massive casualties, Iran drives the Iraqi troops back across the border in May 1982. (2) At the end of the war, over 1 million people were dead and massive war debts remained. Kuwait supported Iraq in the war (2) including \$15 billion in loans. (3) The U.S. also sent large amounts of military aid to Iraq during this time.

June 7, 1981: Israel bombs a nuclear reactor near Baghdad, claiming that it could be used to produce nuclear weapons. (2) This was called a "pre-emptive strike." Israel currently has over 300 nuclear devices, nuclear submarines, and ballistic missiles. The technician who exposed this fact (Mordechai Vanunu) was captured abroad by secret agents and is still in an Israeli prison.

1984: Iraq uses chemical/biological weapons against Iran. (4) Previously, President Reagan had delivered 40 shipments of biological weapons agents to Iraq for use against Iran. (Boyle 2-6-98) The "first use" of chemical and biological weapons was banned by the 1925 Geneva Convention. (4)

1984, November: Full diplomatic relations established between US and Iraq. (Peace Action)

1986: The U.S. and Israel provide covert military aide to Iran in an attempt to get American hostages released. (3)

1986: The U.S. launches several cruise missiles in an attempt to assassinate Qaddafi, leader of Libya. His palace is destroyed and daughter killed. (Zmag)

1987: Kuwait requests U.S. naval protection against Iranian attacks. Reagan agrees in order to prevent Kuwait from asking Moscow for the same favor. (3) U.S. warplanes begin bombing Iranian oil rigs and naval vessels (4) to defend Kuwaiti oil tankers. (2)

May 17, 1987: An Iraqi plane launches a missile on the USS Stark on patrol in the Persian Gulf defending oil tankers. 37 U.S. sailors die. Saddam Hussein apologizes, claiming it was an accident. (2)

March 16, 1988: Iraqi forces use poison gas against Kurds, killing at least 4,000 people. A German company originally built the chemical weapons facilities. (3) Update – While it is certain that chemical/biological weapons were used by both sides in the Iran/Iraq war, this particularly infamous incident in the Iraqi town of Halabja may have actually been done by Iran.

July 3, 1988: A US ship shoots down an Iranian commercial airliner, claiming that they thought it was an (American made) F-14 fighter jet. All 290 passengers are killed. (2)

Aug 1988: The U.N. brokers a cease-fire for the Iran-Iraq war. (2) Iraq demands that Kuwait stop side-drilling into the disputed Ramallah oil fields and raise oil prices so that it can repay its war debts.

Dec 21, 1988: Pan-Am flight 103 explodes over Scotland. The U.S. and Britain accuse two Libyans of the bombing. The U.N. accuses the Libyan government of being behind the bombings and imposes sanctions in 1992 that are still in effect.

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/dr_ibrahim_ighneiwa/lib-west.htm

The alleged bombers are later extradited to Scotland, and US sanctions against Libya continue.

1989: A US delegation visits Baghdad and demands that Iraq privatize its oil industry. Iraq refuses. (Peace Action)

Aug 2, 1990: Iraq invades and overruns Kuwait, "its 19th province." The Gulf "War" begins. (4) The U.N. quickly bans all trade with Iraq and moves to protect the assets of the "legitimate" government of Kuwait. (2) U.N. Resolution 678 states that member nations have the authority "to use all necessary means" to force Iraq's withdrawal. Syria, labeled a "terrorist state," is bribed with massive amounts of weapons and aid, while China, a human rights abuser, is given an extra \$114 million through the World Bank for not vetoing UN 678. Bush, formerly called a "wimp" by the press sets an ultimatum of Jan 16 (Richardson) and starts massive troop buildups.

1990: Oil prices soar after Iraq seizes Kuwait. With Kuwait, Iraq briefly controls nearly 20% of the world's oil. (3)

Aug 18, 1990: Saddam Hussein holds 10,000 foreigners hostage, later released. (3)

Jan 12, 1991: Congress authorizes war against Iraq. (3)

Jan 16, 1991: The U.S./U.N. start bombing. (2) 80 million pounds of bombs are dropped on Iraq. (Richardson) In the first weeks of the "war," U.S. pilots fly more than 1,000 missions per day. (3) Fuel-air explosives, napalm, and cluster bombs are used. Entire regions are "carpet bombed," destroying nearly all industry, utilities, water treatment plants, bridges, crops, and communications. Civilian infrastructure is specifically targeted. (Richardson) Only 7% of the bombs dropped are "smart bombs." (NHPA)

Jan 17, 1991: Despite popular opposition from the Turkish people, Turkey's parliament votes to let US planes use Turkish bases for attacks on Iraq. (3) The Kurds have been fighting for their culture and self-determination from both Iraq and Turkey, hoping to create a homeland out of parts of both countries. Both Turkey and Iraq have responded by trying to annihilate the rebels. Turkey is a member of NATO but has not been invited into the European economic Union. The U.S. arms Turkey, which is a questionably democratic country that recently had a military coup. Former UNSCOM arms inspector Scott Ritter has referred to northern Iraq as "Kurdistan." Defense of the Kurds was the excuse that the U.S. used to forcibly ban Iraqi fighter planes from flying over their own country.

Feb 23, 1991: The US led coalition starts a ground attack against Iraq. (2) At least 600,000 pounds of depleted uranium munitions are fired by the U.S. and left in Iraq. (DU Ed project) The U.S. loses about 130 soldiers (mostly to "friendly fire") while about 150,000 Iraqi soldiers are killed (Richardson) and 175,000 taken prisoner. (2)

Feb 27, 1991: Kuwait is "liberated." Palestinians and other suspected Iraqi sympathizers are repressed and abused by the returning sheikdom. (2)

1991: Responding to Bush's frequent and public calls for the Iraqi people to "rise up," Iraqi Shiites and Kurds try to overthrow the Iraqi government. Bush then refuses to "interfere," signs a cease-fire agreement with Saddam Hussein, and allows his helicopter gunships to fly freely. Hussein also sends out his tanks to crush the uprising. Many

Kurdish civilians die or become refugees. The goal was never to get rid of Hussein, rather Bush wanted to ensure stability and access to oil at low prices. (Moyers) (3) The Gulf "War" ends. (4) Saddam is forced to agree to destroy all "weapons of mass destruction" and permit UN inspections. (2) At first the U.S. states that the sanctions will be lifted when all the weapons are destroyed, later this is changed to say that the sanctions will be lifted after Iraq's "CAPACITY to produce weapons of mass destruction" is eliminated. Since chemical weapons can be cheaply made with a small beer fermenter and a little scientific knowledge, it is clear that the U.S. has no intention of ending the deadly economic warfare against Iraq any time soon. In 2002, U.S. officials started talking openly about plans to remove all the scientists in Iraq who might know how to build chemical or biological weapons. Knowledge is dangerous.

March 21, 1991: Congressional hearing with April Glaspie, then ambassador to Iraq. Here is an excerpt (provided by Congressman Smith's office):

Congressman Hamilton: "Now, this record is not a record of unambiguous clarity with respect to American positions. It is a record that confused me, confused this subcommittee, confused much of the Washington press. And it is not unreasonable for me to think that it might have confused Saddam Hussein as well... Did you ever tell Saddam Hussein, Mr. President, if you go across that line into Kuwait, we are going to fight?"

Glaspie: "No, I did not. Absolutely not."

Hamilton: "Yet you think he believed that?"

Glaspie: "I certainly do. I told him that we would defend our vital interests."

Hamilton: "... No American ambassador is going to say to a foreign leader that we are not going to defend our vital interests. The question is what is the vital interest. There must be no doubt."

April 14-16, 1993: George Bush visits Kuwait. Kuwaiti police arrest 14 Iraqis and Kuwaitis on allegations of plotting to assassinate Bush. 13 of them are sentenced to prison or death on June 4, 1994. (2)

June 26, 1993: The U.S. launches a missile attack on Baghdad, claiming that Iraq had sponsored a plot to kill George Bush. (2)

1994: Iraqi military buildup near Kuwait. US troops deploy in Kuwait. (4)

1998: After 8 years of cooperation with U.N. inspectors (mostly U.S. and British military / intelligence officers) Iraq ends its cooperation, stating that the U.S. intends to maintain inspections and sanctions indefinitely. The UN reports that at least 1.6 million Iraqi civilians have died since the end of the Gulf "War" as a direct result of the "sanctions." On several occasions the U.S. is about to attack Iraq again, but is stopped just in time through intervention by the U.N. Secretary-General.

Aug 20, 1998: The U.S. bombs a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, one of the poorest countries in Africa. Secret evidence of it being a chemical weapons plant is cited as the only excuse. Sudan invites international observers to verify that the plant did not produce

chemical weapons. The plant was the most important health facility in Sudan, producing 50% of the total pharmaceuticals available and 90% of the antibiotics used against malaria. The site was not at all secretive and everyone had to have known that it produced medicines for the entire region.

The U.S. actions in the Middle East have nothing to do with "defending democracy" "stopping naked aggression" or "destroying weapons of mass destruction." The fact is that U.S. policy is to undermine democracy, murder, lie, cheat and steal for the resources that our "vital national interests" (giant corporate interests) require. As the biggest arms dealer in the World who spends nearly as much on military programs as the rest of the world combined, the U.S. has a policy of militarism to defend an unsustainable economic empire. By dealing weapons and even giving them away to cooperative dictators, our leaders have learned to sub-contract repression, also known as Neo-Colonialism.

Ironically, our military designed and built new tactical nuclear weapons specifically designed to assassinate Saddam Hussein for the crime of having weapons of mass destruction and having used them in the past. The United States has thousands of nuclear warheads and dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. Our leaders were also ironically hypocritical when they signed the Chemical weapons convention, adding certain conditions. Inspectors can be required to get criminal search warrants from U.S. judges, and the President is given the authority to block inspections because of "national security interests." Meanwhile, Iraq is expected to cooperate with American inspectors completely and indefinitely without any conditions or exceptions. It turns out that many inspectors were doing far more than their UN mandate. According to a variety of articles including the New York Times on 1/7/99, "United States officials said today that American spies had worked undercover on teams of United Nations arms inspectors."

The Gulf War was a massacre. We will never know how many Iraqi soldiers were buried alive with earthmovers by U.S. soldiers, including Timothy McVeigh. We can hardly appreciate what anger and "terrorism" are likely to result from these U.S. policies that continue to kill an Iraqi child every 10 minutes. Saddam was a repressive dictator, as Amnesty International documented throughout the years that U.S. presidents were praising and arming him, despite his use of WMD. Saddam Hussein was a despot, but for most of his rule he provided universal health care and a high standard of living for his people. Under UN sanctions, it was impossible to even meet their needs for food, medicine, and clean water. As long as Kuwait extracts large "war reparations" from the Iraqi economy, the U.N. charges "administrative fees," and the U.S. government is only loaning Iraq the money it is using to pay for no-bid contracts for companies close to the Bush administration to repair Iraq's infrastructure that the US military destroyed over the past decade, Iraq's land, people, and economy will function to benefit outsiders.

Inequality is only growing in Iraq and the United States. Bush, Bin Laden, and Hussein all earned their millions through oil empires. "Our" government helped put Saddam Hussein in power. Ironically, the corrupt policies and atrocities of the past are used to

justify further aggression and more repression at home and abroad. We must recognize that national borders are imaginary constructs and that we are all human beings. Then we can undermine the system of millionaire elites who constantly seek to perpetuate exploitation and confusion while maintaining their privilege at all costs.

Obviously there have been many significant events in the Iraq region since 1998. You could easily add many more little-known facts that have come out since then and quickly been mostly forgotten. I hope this timeline provides enough background to understand the major roots of current fighting in the Middle East, and to see why many Iraqis will probably violently resist control by the US, UN or any other foreign influence.

"Genocide for Oil" references...

(Some of these sources are available on Microsoft Bookshelf 1995. Compare the information available there with what Microsoft is publishing in its 1999 and 2000 Encarta Encyclopedia, and you'll realize that Microsoft is deleting huge sections of US history. Effectively, Encarta's coverage of the Gulf War is nothing more than US government propaganda because of its incredible lies of omission.)

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