

Betreff: Hans von Sponeck "Four Questions, Four Answers", Brussels 25/9/2002

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Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, liebe Freundinnen und Freunde

am 25 und 26 September 2002 fand in Brüssel ein europ. Kolloquium zum Irak statt, veranstaltet von Friedens- und Solidaritätsorganisationen, sowie Organisationen zur internationalen Zusammenarbeit. Unter den Referenten und Teilnehmern waren auch einige belgische Parlaments- und Europaabgeordnete. Ergebnis der Beratungen sollte ein Schreiben an das Europaparlament sein, mit Vorschlägen für einen europäischen Beitrag zur Lösung des Irakkonflikts.

Die entsprechende Resolution füge ich bei. Zunächst hier der sehr interessante Beitrag Hans v. Sponecks auf dem Kolloquium.

Viele Grüße, Joachim Guilliard

P.S.: Eine sehr interessante Stellungnahme kam auch vom Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg: "Ein Präventivkrieg gegen den Irak wäre ungerechtfertigt und schädlich" siehe: <http://www.uni-kassel.de/fb10/frieden/regionen/Irak/ifsh.html>

IRAQ - Four Questions, Four Answers by Hans C. von Sponeck UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (1998-2000) at the European Colloquium Brussels, 25 September 2002 <http://www.iraq.be/ned/bivv/iraq4questions4answers.htm>

Question No.1: Is there an Imminence of Threat posed by Iraq?

The United States maintains that Iraq poses a threat to its security. This threat, it is argued, is so serious that a pre-emptive military strike is required to protect the US and the wider global community. The UK shares this perception.

The rest of the world, particularly Iraq's neighbours, do not agree with this assessment. In any case articles 39, 42 and 51 of the UN Charter are not applicable. None of the 'evidence' the US and the UK have produced is accepted by the international community as hard core and unquestionable evidence that Iraq is in possession of or trying to produce ABC weapons materials.

Attempts to link acts of terrorism involving the 1993 and 2001 WTC, the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar-Es-salaam, the USS Cole in Aden, the Anthrax cases in the US and collaboration with Al Qaeda to the Government of Iraq have failed.

A study by the UK International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), published on 9 September 2002 constitutes a good compendium of speculation concluding (see p.74) that Iraq "could probably assemble nuclear weapons", "probably resumed biological growth media", "probably retained chemical agent such as mustard gas and precursors", "probably retained a small force of ballistic missiles with ranges up to 650 km, such as the al Hussein missiles."

In its introduction the IISS study re-assures that its purpose is to describe these (WMD) issues "accurately and fairly". Its conclusions (see p.73) unfortunately constitute a political statement which amounts to war-mongering. The document states inter alia: "A war, if it installs a new government in Baghdad willing to comply with Iraq's international

commitments, would eliminate Iraq's WMD threat, but at the risk of limited CBW use (and civilian casualties) during the conflict of overthrow the present regime."

During a July 2002 visit to Iraq, the Government of Iraq gave me the permission to visit two sites of my choice, Al Dora at the outskirts of Baghdad and Al Fallujah III, which western intelligence agencies and main stream US and UK media had identified as sites for which evidence existed that they had been producing biological agents since the departure of UN arms inspectors in December 1998.

The IISS report points out that at Al Dora "work appears to have started. The facility has about 25% of its capacity" (see p.30). For Al Fallujah III it points out that the "plant for processing castor beans has been destroyed. Its current status is unknown" (see p.30).

In a document entitled "A decade of Deception and Defiance" handed out by the US Government on 12 September at the time when US President Bush was delivering his speech at the UN/GA, it is pointed out that Al Dora "has an extensive air handling and filtering system" (see p.8) and for Al Fallujah it states (see p.9) that "(the Government of Iraq) is making an effort to hide activities at (the) Fallujah plant."

The British Government released its long announced 'dossier' on 24 September 2002. More a review of past WMD programmes than an empirical analysis of the current situation in Iraq, the dossier is a document of allegations not of evidence of the seriousness of the current WMD reality in Iraq. For Al Fallujah, the dossier maintains that "the castor oil production facility has been rebuild." Al Dora is cited as a "facility of concern."

My visit to these two sites (accompanied by the ARD German TV) showed conclusively that Al Dora and Al Fallujah III facilities had been destroyed (it should be noted that the IISS report acknowledges this for Al Fallujah III). What is destroyed can not be a threat.

Conclusions: The evidence offered by the US and UK administration as well as the IISS assessment of Iraq's WMD status does not support in any way the contention that an imminent threat emanates from Iraq justifying a military offensive. The US government promoted mass hysteria and the psycho war are internationally unacceptable. In the interest of preventing such a war, the Iraqi Foreign Minister's statement to the UN/GA that the country is free of WMD and the agreement by the Iraqi authorities to re-admit unconditionally UN arms inspectors at this stage should be taken at face value and UNMOVIC's installation in Baghdad be pursued without delay.

Question No.2: What explains the present US Government Iraq policy?

There is no simple explanation. The importance of Iraq's sources of energy, the composition of the Bush II administration and changes in the political landscape of the Middle East, however, are three major factors which are part of such an explanation:

Iraq's sources of energy:

During the 31 July/1 August hearings on Iraq in the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the ranking representative of the Republican Party, Senator Richard Lugar (R-In) stated: "...we are going to run the oil business. We are going to run it well, we are going to make money; and it's going to help pay for the rehabilitation of Iraq because there is money there!"

The Bush II administration:

Key policy makers in the administration of the present US Government had been involved in the Bush I 1991 Gulf War. This may explain why the US Government is taking the Iraq

Liberation Act of the US Congress of October 1998 much more literal than the Clinton administration did. The Act calls for 'regime change' in Iraq. The policy of 'containment within' under President Clinton has become a policy of 'occupation from outside' under President Bush. This policy change combined with a missionary fanaticism to spread their version of 'democracy' and a fatal mix-up of the justified fight against terrorism and a regime change strategy for governments considered as too aggressively anti-American are the main ingredients of the US administration's approach on Iraq.

The political landscape in the Middle East:

The severe deterioration of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the course of the past twelve months has intensified the cohesion among Arab governments. Testimony of significant policy changes within the Arab League became apparent in the final communiqué of the March 2002 Beirut Summit. It concluded with a rejection of a war against the 'brotherly country Iraq'. Since then all Arab governments including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have repeated their opposition to a military confrontation with Iraq. There is strong public resentment, particularly in Saudi Arabia, to what is perceived as double standards in dealing with the two major conflicts in the Middle East, the Palestinian issue and Iraq. It can also no longer be hidden that the US is on notice that agreements to their military presence in the Middle East are no longer to be taken for granted. This in turn has added an element of extreme urgency in introducing changes in the US Iraq policy.

Conclusions: The Iraq policy of the US administration has little to do with the return of UN arms inspectors or with a concern for the suffering of the Iraqi people. It has all to do with a determination to introduce a regime change in Baghdad. With this objective, the US enjoys no international support. President Chirac confirmed this when he stated publicly: "It is not a question of Bush/Blair on one side and Chirac/Schroeder on the other side, it is Bush/Blair on one side and all the others on the other side." Question No.3: What are the implications for the Iraqi population?

First of all it must be pointed out that the suffering and the trauma resulting from the intensified confrontation between Iraq and the US/UK and the prospects of war have been sidelined by politicians and the media in Europe. The massive evidence of the toll these developments and twelve years of economic sanctions have taken among the Iraqi population is well documented by reputable IGOs and INGOs. The impact of this reality will be felt long after economic sanctions have been lifted and the Iraq conflict has ended.

The humanitarian exemption, the oil for food programme has at all times been underfunded, particularly, in the initial three phases when the UN/SC had been decided that the oil for export revenue could not exceed \$2.6 billion per phase. Despite this small amount, the UN/SC insisted that the UNCC had to receive 30% of the oil revenue, funding which was desperately needed by an undernourished population deprived from even basic medicines to protect their health.

The total value of what has been received in Iraq between 16 December 1996, the beginning of the oil for food programme and 10 May 2002 amounts to \$172 per person/year. One indicator of the state of impoverishment of the Iraqi population is that 55% of the population lives below the poverty line. Were the monthly food basket valued at \$25 not given to the population free of charge under the oil for food programme, some 90% of the population would be forced to live under the poverty line.

Another dramatic indicator of the ill being of the population relates to child mortality. UNICEF in its annual State of the Children's report identified Iraq as the country which showed an increase of 160% in the mortality rate of children under five for the period 1990 to 1999. This constitutes the highest recorded increase of all the 188 countries surveyed.

According to the same organisation, female literacy has slipped to 45% in 1995 while in 1987 Iraq had received from UNESCO international recognition that it had achieved a literacy level of 80%. There are other alarming figures published by WHO showing that the number of youth with mental disorders has more than doubled between 1990 and 1998.

While the US Government accuses Iraq of having violated 16 UN resolutions, no mention is made that the main responsibility for the violation of just about all international treaties and conventions from the UN Charter to the International Covenant of economic, social and cultural rights, the Geneva and Hague Conventions and the genocide convention points to the US and British governments (see in this connection a document of UN/ECOSOC dated 21 June 2000 (GE.00-14092) in which Prof. Marc Bossuyt, presently judge in the Belgian Supreme Court and formerly chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission gives evidence to this effect; see also selected papers on "The Impact on International Law of a Decade of Measures Against Iraq" published by Oxford University Press in February 2002).

It must also be stated that the establishment of the two no-fly-zones is based on no UN mandate and constitutes a serious breach of international law and UN resolutions which make specific mention of Iraq's territorial integrity and sovereignty. As the UN designated Official for Security of UN staff in Iraq, I introduced air strike reports which reflected collected and verified information on damage to life and property of civilians as a result of US/UK air incursions and attacks in Iraq. In 1999 my office in Baghdad recorded 132 air strikes with 144 civilian death and over 300 wounded and civilian property destroyed. These air strike reports were, when possible, handed to US and UK officials in New York during various briefing visits. I was told by representatives of those two governments that I was violating my mandate in producing such documents and that in any case all I was doing was to put a UN stamp on Iraqi propaganda. It is a serious matter that the UN Security Council having a mandated oversight responsibility has not been able to stop this serious violation, particularly since US and UK pilots have operated in Iraqi airspace after Operation Desert Fox in December 1998 under 'enlarged rules of engagement'. These allow them to use their firing power with fewer restrictions and consequently with more damage to civilian life and property.

Should a US war against Iraq take place, particularly the high-tech war currently contemplated in Washington, there would be significant civilian casualties and destruction. To prevent this must be a major challenge for European democracies.

Conclusions: The political battle continues to be played on the backs of the Iraqi people. Objectionable treatment of people within Iraq can not provide the justification for a crippling punishment extended by the UN Security Council to the Iraqi people in the form of economic sanctions, blocking of humanitarian supplies, regular air attacks and, possibly military confrontation. Governments who are in possession of the many accounts from reputable international organisations on the state of human condition can no longer remain silent regarding the fact that today the main perpetrators responsible for the suffering of the Iraqi people are the governments of the US and the UK. This does not mean that one should negate the concern over the internal human rights situation. The UN Human Rights Rapporteur must be allowed to continue his dialogue with the Iraqi authorities in this respect.

Question No.4: What could be the demands of the international public conscience against a war on Iraq and for the lifting of economic sanctions?

The European Colloquium (EC) should convey to the European Parliament (EP) that the February 2001 hearings on Iraq have failed to contribute to a credible EU Iraq policy. In

the absence of an objective position on Iraq, The EU had been largely excluded as a contributor to the international Iraq debate. The EC should point out that this could be redressed.

Neither the report of the UK International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) dated 9 September 2002 nor the document handed out by the US Government dated 12 September provides any evidence whatsoever of the imminence of an international threat posed by the Iraqi Government that would justify evoking articles 39, 42 or 51 of the UN Charter. A unilateral military strike by the US against Iraq would in any case be a grave violation of international law. The EP should be reminded of this serious fact.

The EC should advise the EP that in case of such a unilateral attack on Iraq by the US, permission by EU member countries for US forces to use airfields, harbours and other facilities might be consistent with NATO statutes but would constitute a breach of international law. The EP should be requested to convey this to member governments.

The Brussels meeting of the EC should be concluded by expressing full support for the UN/Security Council-led arms inspection process. The EC should emphasize in this context that the Iraq Government should not be hindered in any way to demonstrate its preparedness to unconditionally cooperate with UNMOVIC. The EC should furthermore convey to the UN Secretary General that it considers the protection of the integrity of the team of UN inspectors as a paramount responsibility of the chairman of UNMOVIC. Misuse of UNMOVIC for intelligence operations, as had been the case with UNSCOM, harbours the grave danger of a confrontation between Iraq and the US. It would undoubtedly be used by US authorities as an immediate pretext to respond with a military attack. The EC should convey to the EP that it has a profound responsibility to pass these concerns to member governments and to the UN.

Comprehensive economic sanctions against the people of Iraq are entering their 13th year. The human condition identified already in 1991 after the Gulf War as 'apocalyptic' have significantly worsened since then in both mental and physical terms. The amount of evidence collected by reputable international organisations about child mortality, malnutrition, re-emerging diseases, impoverishment, educational neglect and psychological disorders continues to accumulate (please see in particular recent reports by UNICEF, CARITAS, Save The Children/UK).

What the international community has seen since May 2002 when UN/SC resolution 1409 introduced so-called 'smart sanctions' represents, as predicted by individual members of the current UN Security Council, anything but an improvement. In addition, over \$5 billion worth of humanitarian supplies remain on hold-blocked by US/UK authorities. The oil pricing confrontation created by the US/UK governments to end the 'illegal' surcharge issue has resulted in a major shortfall of funding for the present phase XII of the oil for food programme and seriously endangers the already fragile humanitarian exemption programme.

The EC should make a strong case in its Brussels' communiqué for the lifting of economic sanctions once the UN arms inspectors programme is underway with the full cooperation of the Government of Iraq. The EC should request the EP to strongly support such an approach in the interest of ending the suffering of a people who have done nothing wrong.

National anti-sanction groups in Europe and elsewhere are unrelenting in their efforts to bring about justice and conditions of human dignity for the Iraqi people. The public conscience is alert and at national levels has helped in shaping political decision making. In these critical days of international relations, efforts to make it possible that at times

national initiatives can function in an integrated manner would seem of importance. The ideal would be to create a European response mechanism that can be used to periodically react to morally, ethically and legally unacceptable policies and positions on Iraq maintained by individual members of the United Nations. Such a mechanism would be particularly significant at this moment to protest against economic sanctions and to solicit support against a military attack on Iraq. Protesting would create awareness that such an attack would lead to another human catastrophe and endanger the international solidarity in the fight against terrorism. It would be of immense value in this respect if the EC could agree on an 'action alert focal point'. Such a focal point would function as a basis for the strategic issuance of joint statements and the preparation of integrated actions and lobby work.

As a step in this direction, national associations, whether represented at the Brussels' meeting or not should be encouraged to forward the final communiqué and a copy of the open letter to the EP to all the representative foreign media and other influential bodies on the ground. The EC should forward these two documents to the President of the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General, the Secretary General of the Arab League, the Holy See and the International Court of Justice.

An important first step towards improved cooperation among different national groups working towards the lifting of economic sanctions and averting an unjustified war against Iraq would be the preparation of a master-list of cooperating entities and their coordinates.

COLLOQUE DE LA PLATE-FORME EUROPEENNE DE SOLIDARITE AVEC L'IRAK

Bruxelles, les 25 et 26 septembre 2002-09-27

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

The delegates representing the associations of peace, solidarity and co-operation with Iraq gathered in Brussels on the 25th and 26th of September 2002, have adopted the following resolutions:

1. As a top priority, they consider that an end must be immediately put to the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the embargo imposed on them since 12 years. This has resulted in the destruction of the health, education, culture and the economic infrastructure of a nation that is one of the cradles of civilisation. Adding the anguish of a new war to that suffering, a war whose main victims will be the civil population, is intolerable. It is particularly true for a whole generation of youth, sacrificed since 12 years. If we do not put an end to this grave situation, fundamentalism and extremism will increase.
2. The Delegates have stressed that nothing justifies a military intervention in Iraq. Reports from various sources, including the British Government, recognise that Iraq does not constitute any military threat to the international community. Additionally, there is no proof of Iraq's participation or support of organisations of terrorism like Al Qaida.
3. A military intervention is unjustified especially when the Iraqi government has accepted the unconditional return of the United Nations inspectors. The intensifying pressure for a military solution reveals the real objectives of those who are presently hindering the return of the UNMOVIC inspectors. The delegates deem urgent the arrival of the UN inspectors in Iraq and support the Secretary General of the United Nations in his will to facilitate the return of the inspectors as soon as possible. They request the UN Secretary General to use all the means necessary to guarantee the integrity of this mission and its balanced representation of the European Community. They oppose to

the politics of double standards admitting the state of Israel to ignore, without any form of sanctions, the majority of U.N.-resolutions regarding its criminal politics of aggression against the Palestinian Authority and people. They ask France, Russia and China to use their voting right in the Security Council to oppose pushing the United Nations into legitimising a new war.

4. The Delegates urge the European Parliament to discuss yet again the Iraqi question and to reconsider the resolution, which it has recently adopted. The procedures used for the adoption of this resolution, as well as the inaccuracy of many of its elements are to the discredit of the European Parliament. They deem it necessary and urgent that members of the European Parliament and experts, should go to Iraq to verify the correctness of the resolution on the spot.
5. The Delegates call on the Arab League and its member countries to firmly oppose a new war against Iraq, that is one of the major elements in the global strategy of the USA to get in control of the world's supplies of petrol, that would have severe destabilising effects on the world community, and to refuse the use of their territory for this aim. This is particularly true for those countries, which have started to host military bases like Qatar and Djibouti and which are already engaged in military built-up.
6. The delegates also deem it indispensable to set up an international standing committee composed of well known personalities from the civil society, charged with following up the work of the UN arms inspection mission in situ, and to see to it that it won't deviate from its objectives and be used as a pretext to justify a military aggression or to further postpone the lifting of the embargo. This standing committee will be composed of personalities who will in turn go to Baghdad on rotation basis until the end of the inspection mission and who will alert international public opinion of the process and of any problem which may occur if the arms inspectors would abuse their mandate. We call upon qualified persons ready to accept this role, if requested.
7. The delegates expect an urgent initiative of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, demanding the member states of the European Union to refuse any participation in a unilateral military intervention against Iraq as well as in the use of their territory or their air space for military action against Iraq. Any participation of any country of the Union in these operations should be considered a violation of the International Law. They expect the same attitude of non-member states of the European Union, especially those who want to join the E.U. They demand the European Union to oppose clearly to the concept of "preventive strike".
8. Within the framework of their action programme, the delegates have decided to organise a following European conference in Rome, between the 10th and 15th November 2002. They agreed on the following action programme: Brussels, 26th September 2002.