
Interview: Jürgen Hübschen

How Iraq Must, and Can, Become A Sovereign Nation Once Again

Born in 1945, Colonel Hübschen (ret.) was an active duty officer for almost 40 years, including one year of training in the United States and 10 years of daily cooperation with American fellow officers. Following a general-staff education, he became a colonel of the Germany army, and, an expert on the Middle East. Hübschen served as military attaché at the German embassy in Baghdad for three years, has travelled extensively in the region, and maintains contact with individuals and aid organizations in Iraq. He has been featured in television, radio, and press interviews, and written two published books: The Iraq-Kuwait War: Chronology of a Programmed Catastrophe; and War in the Mideast: The Way to a New World Order? A new book, Pax Americana: The Way to the Future of the Middle East Region?, is in progress.

Colonel Hübschen has also gone through security training in the German army. He served on an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission for five years, two of which as mission leader. He has published many articles on security policy. After leaving the German army, he founded the firm, Peace Keeping and Security Policy Consulting.

He was interviewed in Germany on July 21, by Michael Liebig and Muriel Mirak-Weissbach. The interview was translated from German.

EIR: Mr. Hübschen, what is your evaluation of the situation in Iraq after June 28 [the date of the official “transfer of power” to an Iraqi “interim government”]?

Hübschen: If we compare the situation in Iraq today, the 21st of July, with that before the 28th of June, then there is no difference.

EIR: Germany and France certainly did criticize the American position before the war, and rightly so. Fifteen months after the official end of the war, and following the formal transfer of power on June 28, the question is, what, in your view, should the Europeans, especially France and Germany, do now?

Hübschen: They should make a concrete proposal, as to how—in their view—the postwar order in Iraq should be shaped. Because what is occurring at the moment, is actually only a change of labels or a juggling of names. A Paul Bremer as head of the U.S. civilian authority has left and a John Negroponte has arrived, as the head of an embassy with 3,000

people. This is not exactly a convincing new beginning. Therefore, Germany and France, which correctly rejected this war, should adopt the following fundamental stance: The war was a mistake, but we do not want to shout it from the rooftops every day again. We do not want a failure of the U.S. in Iraq, either; and not only because of the consequences for the region. We are ready to cooperate actively on a solution for Iraq—but only if it is really a common solution. . . .

From my experience, I believe that Germany is interested in having this constant flashpoint in the Mideast region removed. Germany knows that this is possible only in the combination of various steps. Iraq cannot be seen in isolation. If the Road Map for the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not implemented, then nothing will move in the other problem areas of the region. As long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains unsolved, there is no real, durable solution for the rest of the region. This, however, does not mean that one should not be concerned with the “rest” of the region. Germany has traditionally good relations with Arab countries, especially Iraq.

For this reason, I think that the German position should look as follows: A stable government in Iraq is required, as soon as possible; which, however, must come into power democratically, and not simply be put in power from outside. Then, all countries interested in a sovereign and stable Iraq should participate in reconstruction. In this, Germany sees a central role for the UN, on the one hand, and the EU, on the other.

Germany sees that in the current situation in Iraq, a withdrawal of the mainly American “multinational armed forces,” is not realistic. Such a withdrawal would not be meaningful, since it would create a security vacuum which Iraq, due to non-existent or inadequately trained security forces of its own, could not fill.

EIR: Do you mean that Germany should move out of its present passivity? That it should become active, and present positive proposals?

Hübschen: Above all, I believe that the conscious or unconscious attempt by Germany to buy its way out of its duty to Iraqi reconstruction, through a very strong engagement in Afghanistan, will not work. Germany has to be clear on the point that he who does not act today, will be able tomorrow



Interim Prime Minister Allawi (left) and President al-Yawar (right) “taking over” from CPA proconsul Bremer (center) on June 28. Colonel Hübschen stresses that so far, no transfer or change has taken place; the Iraqi government and U.S. embassy have yet to be separated physically, or in their tasks; and all of Bremer’s actions and decrees must go up for Iraqi review, change or abolition.

only to react.

And, finally, Iraq is an economic issue. One must not forget that German industry had achieved a tremendous amount in Iraq before the second [1991] Gulf war. There are many, many factories that were built by the Germans. In Baghdad, there are entire streets—for example, Haifa Street—which were constructed by German companies. The Basra airport was built by the German firm STRABAG. In the last phase of construction (Spring 1988), German engineers continued to work under Iranian artillery fire. This is something that the Iraqis, including official offices, acknowledged with great respect. On the whole, the Germans, and “Made in Germany,” have a first-class good reputation in Iraq and in the whole region. So, when I see that we here in Germany, have 4-5 million unemployed, then even from an economic standpoint, I cannot ignore Iraq and leave it to others to decide.

EIR: If we understand you correctly, you are saying that, on the one hand, passivity towards Iraq is impossible. On the other hand, Germany cannot function as an appendage of a de facto neocolonial enterprise. What would the main parameters of a German Iraq policy be then?

Hübschen: The basic precondition is that Germany have Iraq as a real partner. It cannot be that someone else is the partner in Iraq. (In Iraq, at the moment, there is the saying: “If you have something really important, then it is no use to

discuss it with someone with brown eyes, you have to go to the ones with blue eyes.”) Against this background, it has to be first clarified to what extent, and in what fields, the current interim Iraqi government is really sovereign and empowered to act. When one considers only the simple fact that this interim government, whose personal composition was mainly decided by the U.S. and not, as planned, by the UN, is located in the same building complex as the utterly oversized U.S. embassy, then one has the suspicion that on the Iraqi side a puppet government is acting, which represents only the interests of those who, after all, wanted the Iraq war.

The most important thing is that a truly sovereign Iraqi government come into being. Someone has to, so to speak, protect this Iraqi government, and this, from a German viewpoint, can be only the UN. I would prefer that Foreign Minister Fischer not travel around the world to lobby for a permanent seat for Germany in the UN Security Council, which, in my view, is totally superfluous. Instead, he should travel through the Near and Middle East region. He should go to Baghdad and say: “So, here we are, the Germans are here. We have said that we wanted to make our contribution to reconstruction. How do you envision that?”

EIR: Should he in this context speak only for Germany, or also for a European perspective for Iraq’s reconstruction?

Hübschen: What the new Europe of the 25 countries really wants, is, I believe, not yet so easy to define. The smaller states which have entered the European Union, did so mainly out of economic considerations. A common political position, for me, is not yet recognizable, but it is urgently needed.

As far as Iraq is concerned, in my view, Europe should develop an approach for the whole Near and Middle East region. Here, I see a link with the positive vision for the entire Southwest Asian region as presented by Mr. LaRouche. He is, naturally, completely right, when he says one has to see Southwest Asia as a whole. I cannot see Iraq without Iran; Iran without Turkey; Turkey without the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union. But I also cannot consider the region as a whole without taking into consideration India and Pakistan. And I also naturally have to include Russia, which will re-emerge on the world stage as a great power, and which, due to its nuclear capabilities, stands in a very special geostrategic relation to the United States. And, last but not least, China, which is trying with all its might to reach the same eye level as the U.S.A.

EIR: What does such a grand design mean for Iraq?

Hübschen: First of all, the country has to be one, undivided Iraq, in its present borders. This infamous disintegration into three parts—a Kurdish, a Sunni, and a Shi’ite part—must not be. Iraq must receive a politically stable system; which, in my view, does not necessarily have to be a democracy in a strictly Western sense. I believe it is a mistake always to equate democracy mechanically with human rights. What is decisive,

is that the people of Iraq may freely elect their own state system. The Bedouins have been living for hundreds or thousands of years in their tribes, and certainly with human rights under a very strong chieftain, but he is no despot—as Saddam Hussein was. Iraq needs a constitution, which gives the same rights to all people, as was in fact the case with the old constitution of the country. Here one has to stress, that the Kurds had a better position in Iraq, according to the constitution, than in any other country of the region. The difference with the Saddam Hussein period has to be that the constitution not remain in many cases merely theoretical, but that it should be implemented in reality. And this is a task where the Germans and the Europeans could help.

EIR: You have said, there should be a division of labor in economic, political and security matters, between the United States and Europe, under the aegis of the UN. Do you see a division of labor within the European Union?

Hübschen: Let me begin with the last point. And here, one has to see who did what, in Iraq, in the past? Here, the Poles strike me first. For example, in 1979, the Poles worked together with the Iraqis on a large-scale development plan for the country. There was a Polish-Iraqi working group which was to study what a future Iraq should look like. There were many Poles active in Iraq until 1991. One has to look and see in what areas they were active, in which they could again become active now. This applies similarly to the Germans too, who did a lot in the area of electricity supply, industry, and infrastructure. Then the British: They were water specialists in Iraq. They have done a lot for water supplies and water purification.

However, with the British we have the problem with their military participation in the war and their current clear engagement in the multinational forces, whereby it has to be said, that strangely enough, the label of occupiers is stuck on the Americans much more than on the British.

EIR: Do you then see the possibility that single nations, as a result of their prior presence and special capabilities, might take up special responsibility in the reconstruction of Iraq?

Hübschen: Yes. In this transition period, it is simply rational to take those who originally built the industry and infrastructure and who dispose of the competence over the technical know-how. Before the war, it was the Poles who played an important role in the electricity supply of Baghdad—so one should let them enter this field first. They know the technology, which is often at a level that other Europeans no longer master. To export only unmediated, brand new technologies into Iraq would not work.

EIR: What role could Russia play in Iraq's reconstruction?

Hübschen: Russia has been a traditional partner of Iraq. I don't know if you know that the Iraqi interim government recently declared July 14—as also in Saddam Hussein's

time—to be its national holiday again. The 14th of July is the day when in 1958, the monarchy was overthrown with a military coup by General Qassim. With Qassim, until 1963, the Communist Party became a dominant force in Iraq; then the Ba'ath Party came to power. Under Qassim, Russia became Iraq's closest partner and ally.

By the way, Qassim in 1961 was to occupy Kuwait, on the desire and instructions of the Soviet Russians. This did not happen, because the British very quickly gave a clear signal of their position, by sending marine infantry to Kuwait. Qassim realized there was nothing he could do, and withdrew his tank units which had already entered southern Iraq. If the Americans had sent a similar signal in early Summer of 1990—instead of having their ambassador April Glaspie in Baghdad, and Undersecretary of State John Kelly to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Congress, state that Iraq's problem with Kuwait was “an inner-Arab affair”; that is, to stress that “the U.S. in the event of an Iraqi attack on Kuwait, would not be bound by treaty to intervene”—then Saddam Hussein would also have refrained from an attack on Kuwait. But such a signal on the side of the Americans, would have meant that the U.S.A did not want the second Gulf War.

When the Ba'ath Party and Saddam Hussein (as number two man) came to power in 1968, the close relations with Russia were further fostered. The Russians invested amazing sums in Iraq, and they have huge credit claims on Iraq. This means that Russia has not only a political but also a strong economic interest in having Iraq get back on its feet. In light of this background, one could in any case integrate Russia into Iraq's reconstruction and post-war order, particularly as it was heavily engaged in the oil industry.

Where the Russians should not be involved, is the security sector. The Iraqi army was structured according to the Soviet model, and that is not something one wants to copy. Chancellor Schröder, who is said to have a very good relationship with President Putin, could play a constructive role in agreements with Russia regarding the international division of labor in Iraq's reconstruction.

EIR: How do you see the German-American and EU-American relations, in relations to Iraq and Southwest Asia?

Hübschen: The neo-conservative policy in Washington naturally made many insecure, in Europe and worldwide. An example, even if this is marginal: The student exchange program between Germany and the United States has been reduced by more than a third. In an area which really has very little to do with grand world politics, an adverse mood has set in. Superficial persons—unfortunately, they are the majority—associate America with preventive wars, with torture, with lies. Thereby, a great injustice is done to America and the people there.

I consider U.S.-European relations at the moment to be very strained. It is, therefore, all the more important for clear signals to come out of the political scene—but they are not

coming. I believe that we in Europe are in a holding pattern. We are waiting for the American elections in November, in order to see if a government change will take place.

Each side has to approach the other. The European Union must send a clear signal: There is a future for this region and the whole world only with the U.S.A. And the Americans must say just as clearly, that this famous “new world order,” or whatever they call it, is possible only in the context of honest cooperation with Europe. The talk of a “Pax Americana” is unbelievably damaging, because people who have a sense of history, are immediately reminded of the Pax Romana. And we know where that ended.

EIR: The positions of John Kerry and President George W. Bush are well known. You also know the positions of Mr. LaRouche regarding Southwest Asia and also regarding European-American relations. What expectations do you have for the coming months?

Hübschen: From Mr. Kerry as from Mr. LaRouche, I expect that they will take a clear position regarding the new, and in my view illegal, security strategy of the present U.S. Administration. Will this pre-emptive war strategy be approved or not? Mr. LaRouche has clearly stated that he considers this the wrong way.

Secondly, I expect not only that the UN should be spoken about as the highest authority created by the world community, but that it be that in practice. I expect the Americans to grant the UN the role that it actually deserves.

Thirdly, I expect, regarding Iraq, that policy will become honest, that one will really say what one actually wants. There are legitimate rights for a world power, like the U.S.A. They will be respected, I am convinced of that. If, however, they are not put on the table openly, but rather, one always has the impression something else is going on, then the whole thing is bad.

The fourth is, that Mr. Kerry as well as Mr. LaRouche define a clear position regarding the solution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Mr. LaRouche has done this. Progress must be made with the Road Map. When unacceptable things happen in Israel, the U.S.A. must finally call a spade a spade. And I expect America to make clear to the world that justified criticism of an Israeli government has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. Just as justified criticism of a German or an American government has nothing to do with anti-German or anti-American sentiments.

These are actually the essential questions for me. Mr. LaRouche’s idea of how to stabilize Southwest Asia, I find very inspiring; however, I do not share his negative judgment on the European Union.

EIR: Can you elaborate on what steps would be necessary, in order to make Iraq really sovereign again?

Hübschen: I already said, there must be a clear separation between the interim government and the American embassy. In the Vienna treaties and in other documents, it is clearly

defined what tasks embassies have—and this task and this jurisdiction must also be valid for the American embassy in Baghdad. It is necessary also for the Iraqi interim government to separate itself also physically from the American embassy. I consider it damaging for both (and this applies to the British embassy too), that they reside in the old presidential palace of Saddam Hussein. These grounds are a symbol of the old, unjust system. They should make a museum out of it. It is not the place where people should be, who are supposed to create a better future for Iraq.

As far as the political balance of power in Iraq is concerned, we have a situation at the moment where the so-called embassy is somewhat higher placed than the interim government. This should be reversed; but even eye level is not the right level. The interim government must be a bit higher and the American embassy has to be a bit lower.

Then, they should sit down and—*sine ire et studio*—review the past 18 months: What measures did the American civil administration [Coalition Provisional Authority, CPA] order in 15 months? What can endure from that? That is something the Iraqis have to decide. What has to be withdrawn or lifted? If we say that Iraq is to be sovereign again in the economic realm—something that is agreed upon internationally, including by the Americans—then all the regulations and decisions made in the last 15 months which contradict economic sovereignty, have to be revoked. For example, the no-bid contracts which were concluded with American firms, simply on order of the CPA. The whole privatization campaign must of course be examined and reviewed. The American civil administration simply privatized and sold Iraqi state property, including real estate. That has to be revoked. I cannot, for example, say that the oil industry and the revenues from it belong to the Iraqis, if 80% of the contracts have been concluded such that the money goes somewhere else. This is not acceptable.

Another area of concern is: What is to happen to the 130,000-140,000 U.S. soldiers? For me, as a former soldier, it is, every day anew, a horrible experience when I think of what the simple American soldiers have to put up with there. What has come to light about Abu Ghraib is, God knows, not applicable to the whole U.S. army. The U.S. soldiers are in a deployment whose end they do not know. They are increasingly in doubt, as to whether the war was justified at all. The American troops could deal with their situation better, I think, if the U.S. government could pull itself together and say: “The war was a mistake.” The Americans are so inclined, that they could say, “It was a mistake, but now let’s build the future.” But they don’t have the courage to say this yet.

Back to the question of the U.S. troops in Iraq. First, these 140,000 men can certainly not stay in their fortresses which they have set up everywhere. Secondly, it must be established, who has the authority over the U.S. forces? At the moment, it is the case that the embassy has the command authority. This is naturally unacceptable. Thirdly, they have to try to eliminate the causes of the resistance. And one source of the



Polish troops (left, in southern Iraq) were actively involved in construction projects in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq from 1979 until the early 1990s. Hübschen says their experience, and that of other Europeans, can be used now, including in electricity-grid construction and repair, now exclusively done by American contractor firms and security units (right). American forces should be gotten out of reconstruction, and to their bases and the country's borders.

resistance is the fact that the multinational troops are formally no longer occupiers, but in reality they are. They cannot formally be stationing troops, because for that, there would have to be a stationing agreement.

A stationing agreement must be negotiated with the Iraqi government, which defines the status and the tasks of this multinational force. From my standpoint, it would be a good idea for the American armed forces to take over the control of the borders. That way, they would be taken out of the daily affairs, they would no longer be so visible, and they would be more securely protected from bomb attacks. And there is a lack of troops on the borders. No one knows what really occurs on the Syrian and Iranian borders. The borders are hardly, or not at all controlled. This would be, in my view, the right task for the Americans. At the same time, the security responsibilities they had before, could be taken over, step by step, by the Iraqis.

Now, regarding the stationing agreement with the Iraqis. There, it must be stated clearly how many Americans should stay in Iraq and for how long. And this stationing agreement must be clearly limited in duration. I think it should not be for more than one year, until the middle of next year. Then it could be extended, if needed, with simultaneous reduction of the U.S. military presence. That would be the sovereign decision of the two partners.

EIR: And what is your view of the non-U.S. troops in the multinational force?

Hübschen: The British have a special position. Blair has coupled his destiny in every way with Bush's; I cannot at the moment identify any independent British policy. For the British soldiers, therefore, the same goes as for the American troops: they have to take over a task which is separate from reconstruction, and they have to leave the security tasks they have had until now, and be replaced by Iraqis. As far as the

other states are concerned, which have troops in Iraq, I am convinced: If they were sure that, in the event of their withdrawal, their relations with America would not be extremely damaged, they would all leave the country, today rather than tomorrow. And this will naturally come. Many countries have already withdrawn. We know that others are concretely considering to do this. . . . The Philippines is also a sovereign country, which can decide what it wants.

The Iraqi resistance is certainly not stupid. Think of the kidnappings. The message is simple: "Withdraw your troops and your hostages will be freed." Or, those who have no troops in the country, need not fear kidnappings. This is aimed, of course, *also* at the populations of the countries which have sent troops to Iraq. There is not one single country, where the majority of the people wanted their soldiers to be sent to Iraq. It was always the governments who decided. often against their own populations. . . .

EIR: How do you see the development of Iraqi armed forces? What course would you propose?

Hübschen: First, one has to define what the legitimate interests of Iraq's national security are. One has to suppose now that in Iraq the "good" are in power and one has to grant for the "good" the same security needs as for oneself; namely, defense forces in order to protect the country. Thereby, Iraq requires an air force, an army, and a navy. It is completely illusory to believe that the Iraqi air force could consist of only helicopters; whereas its neighbors all have fully deployable air forces. One has only to establish the dimensions, so that there be no aggressive capabilities, but rather exclusively a capability for adequate defense.

Here, what is decisive is how this army is built, structured, and organized. One element here is the exchange program for Iraqi officers, and this concerns Germany as well. In 1988, after the Iran-Iraq War, I already said, that if we want a posi-

tive change in Iraq's armed forces, then bring Iraqi officers to Germany. Send them to the officers' schools and military leadership academies. You will see that after two years in a completely different environment, they will come back as different people. That was not done at the time; other European states did not offer it, and America did not do it. We got the bill for this in 1990. Instead, the Iraqi officers went to the Frunze Academy in Moscow, or to other military institutions of the then-East bloc. Many were in the G.D.R. [former Communist East Germany].

To develop a concept for the Iraqi armed forces, one has to start from the size of the population—25 million people. One has to consider the size and geographical location of the country: It has a border with Iran alone which is more than 1,000 kilometers long. So, I think one would have to grant a force of 150,000-200,000 soldiers in Iraq, also considering comparisons with neighboring countries. Last but not least, the equality of Iraq with its neighbors is very important, considering the Arab mentality.

In this connection, another important point: Iraq's international borders have to be precisely established. We have not even talked about this yet. At the end of the Iran-Iraq War, in August 1988, there was a ceasefire agreement (once again, no peace treaty!) and a United Nations resolution, which said that the border had to be precisely defined. This holds not only for the border with Iran, but also with Turkey, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. The most critical is, of course, the border in Shatt-al-Arab and in Chor Abdullah with the two offshore Kuwait islands of Warba and Bubiyan. If an Iraqi government does not succeed in securing for Iraq, access to the Persian Gulf, then therein lie the seeds for the next war. So, one has also to influence the Kuwaitis, by saying: "Watch out. You have a secure coastline, your supply from the sea is secured. Iraq doesn't have this. Let us find a solution for Chor Abdullah so that Iraq actually has a secure access to the Persian-Arabian Gulf." And the same goes for Iran, too, where a clean solution to the border at Shatt-al-Arab has to be found, whether in the valley line of the river or on the Iranian, or on the Iraqi side.

Regarding the armed forces, one further word: In addition to its external security, Iraq requires a reasonable police force for internal security. For paramilitary tasks, the French Gendarmerie or the Italian Carabinieri could serve as a model.

EIR: Today there is a meeting in Cairo of the foreign ministers of Iraq's neighbors. LaRouche, in his doctrine for Southwest Asia [EIR, April 30, 2004], stressed the importance of four countries in the region, for contributing to regional security: Turkey, Syria, Iran and Egypt. Now, King Abdallah II of Jordan has offered to send troops to Iraq. The Iraqi interim government declined and for good reason, because that would only create new problems. What could these neighboring states contribute to regional security?

Hübschen: From my point of view, sending troops in from these countries would be completely wrong. Here we have

again the typical Western way of thinking, which wrongly assumes that the Iraqis should think: "We would accept them, because these soldiers are Arabs, or at least Muslims." This is a total misunderstanding of the Arab mentality. An Arab state which needs other Arab troops for its defense, would be completely robbed of its dignity. In addition, in the Arab world, each thinks the other wants to take him over.

Aside from that, Arab troops, as far as their capabilities are concerned, would not be suitable to build up Iraq's armed forces, or to guarantee security in the country. We see, in fact, what's happening at the moment in Saudi Arabia, where al-Qaeda groups that are apparently active there, are being countered, only under external pressure. So, Arab troops—we had better forget that quickly. However, Iraq does need a lot of money, and this is an area where the countries of the Arabian peninsula could do a lot for Iraq.

Egypt has always claimed a special role for itself. At times, after the peace with Israel, this role was put in question; but in the meantime, Egypt has regained its reputation in the Islamic world and the Arab League. I think one can still say, Egypt is the *primus inter pares*. Egypt could function as a political link to the Americans, as well as to the European Union. Politically, Egypt could see to it that Iraq were actually sovereign again and not remain a puppet of America. In addition, naturally, comes Egypt's engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which, taking everything into account, also helps Iraq.

One should never forget the significance of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The solution to this question would be a positive signal for the entire region. The "Greater Middle East Initiative" is a typically Western idea: with best intentions and, from the outset, still-born. The problems of these countries must be solved from within.

EIR: Now, to the question of the Iraqi resistance. In this connection, much has been said about an amnesty. Would an amnesty, in your view, be the right thing, for those who have not committed serious crimes? And: what should happen to those patriotic Iraqi officers and soldiers who were demobilized by Paul Bremer, and have been unemployed ever since?

Hübschen: Here we are talking about de-Ba'athification, comparable to the de-Nazification in Germany after World War II. Here a fundamental mistake was made. Ahmed Chalabi was designated to lead this "De-Ba'athification Commission," but he was only pursuing his own interests. There was Bremer's fundamentally wrong decision to dismantle the state apparatus. The civil servants were fired, no matter where they were active. The same was the case for the army, the police, and the security forces on the borders.

Compare this with what we did regarding the G.D.R. For example, we checked in the G.D.R. army—the NVA—which was really responsible for the fact that the unjust system of the G.D.R. lasted so long. We came to the conclusion that the mass of generals, down to perhaps the rank of colonels, should

“Southwest Asia Map”: The Partners for a Regional Security Arrangement



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no longer take over leadership functions for the future. However, in the officers corps, below this rank, there were many who were qualified for tasks in the armed forces.

In the Iraqi officers corps, there are enough people who are qualified and respectable. I believe today, one could succeed in regenerating entire units of the former Iraqi army. The soldiers are all still there, and have no jobs; they were simply sent home. This goes also for the civil service, the doctors, and the engineers. Merely because of their party membership, people were thrown out onto the street; people whom Iraq urgently needs in order to get back on its feet.

In my view, a general amnesty for members of the Ba’ath Party must be declared. This applies to people who entered the Ba’ath Party in order to have a job and send their children to school. Those who did that, without showing further engagement, and without participating in any crime: They cannot be victims of collective punishment.

EIR: What about Saddam Hussein, Tariq Aziz, and other leading figures? How could a trial be organized, that would be honest and lawful?

Hübschen: It begins with the fact that the charges were selected. It was said: We’ll exclude the war with Iran, will not consider it, because it was an international conflict, which

therefore lies outside the jurisdiction of the Iraqi special tribunal. Behind this lurks the easily identified trick: The war against Iran took place at a time when Saddam Hussein was a close ally of the United States. At the time, other Western states had also various deals with Iraq. So, one would like, if possible, to exclude a certain period from the juridical reappraisal. But it will not work. Saddam Hussein may be called all sorts of names: “the butcher of Baghdad,” or “the new Hitler,” or whatever. He was perhaps everything, but he was not an idiot, since an idiot could not stay in power so long—no matter in what country on Earth.

Saddam Hussein will have excellent legal advisors, who may come from European countries and who may have held high political positions. They say: It is not a question of saying Saddam

Hussein is right; but it is a matter of delivering justice. In this context, a lawyer could make a career. Just because one is the daughter of Qaddafi, or France’s former Foreign Minister Dumas, one is not necessarily partisan. In this trial, 35 years of Iraqi history will be critically appraised, because these 35 years were decisively shaped by Saddam Hussein. First, as the number-two man—who, however, was already pulling the strings from behind the scenes—then, as Iraqi President. Saddam Hussein knows not only what is painful for him, but also for all those who present themselves as the “good guys.”

The period which began some time at the beginning of the 1980s, until 1990—til the invasion of Kuwait—is enough; it will be the theme of discussion. The concrete events prior to Aug. 2, 1990 belong to this period. It will all be put on the table. And then our system will have to prove itself: Do we have the stature to admit in court, certain mistakes? The trial must take place, no question. But one has to be prepared that the trial will not be limited to a settling of accounts with the Saddam Hussein regime.

I am not enough of an international law expert, but I do know that heads of state and government members have certain rights. Tariq Aziz, who was Iraqi foreign minister for many years and also deputy prime minister, a cosmopolitan, has already raised the question, during his first appearance at

the special tribunal, whether there are any concrete charges against him as Tariq Aziz, or whether the charges only deal with events that related to him as foreign minister and prime minister for a time. I don't think that the trial has excited great interest in the Iraqi population, since the Iraqis have other concerns: the daily struggle to survive.

So we should not make the mistake of justifying the war, which was in violation of international law, by making clear in a trial how important it was to drive this dictator from power. Right now, everything is reduced to this. It is certainly true that it is good that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power. But that the war was unjustified, is doubtless also true.

EIR: Such a trial should be conducted according to international law and justice. How is it, then, that the tribunal was set up by the occupying powers, and Chalabi's group?

Hübschen: Yes, he's the nephew of Ahmed Chalabi. A politically active Iraqi doctor, a gynecologist, who lived in Iraq the whole time, recently said in an interview: "We actually thought that the interim government would be made up of people who had lived in this country under the unjust regime and experienced it. That was unfortunately not the case." When one considers where the people in the interim government come from, and how many passports they have, then this naturally doesn't enhance their credibility.

Despite everything, I believe we have to live with this government for now. One may try to replace single individuals. To begin with, Prime Minister Allawi would be problematic; although, considering his past, there would be many reasons to do so. But after this interim government, there must be democratic elections, at the latest in January 2005.

As far as this specific tribunal is concerned, I agree with you completely. It should be made up of people whose integrity is beyond question. And in Iraq there are enough such people.

EIR: How do you see the religious question in Iraq? Especially the relationship of the Shi'a to Iran? At present, Shi'ite scholars and clergy are being pushed into a corner, and there is an attempt to isolate them politically, even by the interim government.

Hübschen: I said at the beginning of our discussion that Europe must intervene in Iraq. When one offers help to a partner, then one has the right to say: "I would like to do this only under certain conditions." One point is, certainly, that it would be helpful for the interim government not to be limited to formal functions, in shaping the post-war order. It should rather make clear to the population: "We are also talking to those who, at the moment, have no formal political functions." Included here is certainly a man like [Grand] Ayatollah [Ali Hussein] al-Sistani. The influence of the Iranian Shi'ites is difficult to estimate; but in any case, the Iraqi Shi'ites are first and foremost Iraqis, and then only, members of this or that Islamic trend. The Kurdish leaders, too, should again and again appear demonstratively with the head of government,

since the Kurds are already saying, again: "The President is an Arab and his Vice President is also an Arab."

The Shi'ites, but also others—allow me, someone who was a soldier for 40 years, to use this formulation—they have gone underground. They don't want to be damaged, were the interim government to fail. There are many who are calculating their chances in the January 2005 elections. There are also many of them, who were in the Iraqi Governing Council, who have gone back to their homes abroad, where they lived before the war. For example, the former Iraqi Foreign Minister Pachachi, who was considered a Presidential candidate, has disappeared from the scene. Others have gone to Holland, England, or America, where they still have a little home. They are waiting for the actual creation of a government next year, so to speak, "watching the operation from the sidelines." There has also been a lot of contradictory information spread about the radical Shi'ite leader Moqtadar al-Sadr, but there is no doubt that he has political ambitions in the future Iraq.

I think that the power question in Iraq is not at all decided. All the more important that America and Europe not let the months ahead of us pass by uselessly. Otherwise, conditions could be established that are not in the interest of the Iraqi people or of the Western community of nations. When the death penalty is reinstated, unnecessarily; when it's said that emergency laws will be promulgated; then these are signals whereby the normal Iraqi, who is very political—more political than people in Germany—says: "This is all going in a well-known direction. In a few years, everything will be just as we already had it."

But the average Iraqi now has no longer any time and strength to consider this. I am in regular contact with people there. These people live their daily life in Iraq, though the situation in Baghdad is certainly not to be summarily generalized to the rest of the country. In summary, what holds for the "average Iraqi" today is: We have enough to do just to organize our daily lives. How can I get my ventilator to work?—Most people have no air conditioners. How can I ensure that my refrigerator keeps going? How can I ensure that my children can go to school without being endangered? How can I make sure that water comes out of the faucet and (as in Saddam Hussein's day) can be drunk without being boiled? How can I manage to have the telephone work, because it is so important for Arabs to stay in contact with their extended families and tribes? And, finally, how can I manage to have enough money to make ends meet? For that, I need a job, which about 60% of the Iraqis do not have. And, last but not least, when will the security situation finally be stabilized, so that a halfway normal life is possible?

Here, to create a real change for the better, that is the task that we cannot postpone to January or perhaps April 2005, in the event that in January it were clear that the security situation were not stable enough to hold elections as planned. Now is the time to act, and that is what the Europeans—and not only they—must grasp.