

Gulf war intended to wipe out Iraq as nation

by Joseph Brewda

As we go to press, news reports are beginning to indicate that the U.S., British, and French military are systematically engaged in mass murder of the Iraqi civilian population and other war crimes.

According to various estimates based on debriefing of refugees from Iraq, possibly 50,000-60,000 Iraqi civilians have been already killed, and 250,000 or more wounded, in the carnage. Although the exact number of dead and wounded cannot be known with precision, it is clear that the civilian casualties are the intended victims of an official, if covert, U.S. policy whose intent is the extinction of Iraq as a nation.

As of Jan. 24, over 12,000 U.S.-led bombing sorties have dropped tens of thousands of bombs on Iraq, in one week. By comparison, the number of sorties flown against Germany throughout all of World War II was 7,000. According to the Jan. 18 statements of Director of Operations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Thomas Kelley, the U.S.-led forces were, within the first two days of the war, dropping a daily bombing equivalent of 1.8 kilotons of TNT. The atomic bomb that hit Hiroshima was equivalent to 1.3 kilotons of TNT.

The U.S. media, lying more than ever now under heavy wartime censorship, claim that there have been few civilian casualties, when they bother to talk about the subject at all. They say that this lack of civilian casualties is because the United States is using "precision bombs," which "surgically" hit their targets. In fact, there are insufficient numbers of "precision bombs" in the allied forces' inventory to account for all the bombs dropped. In any case, a senior Soviet general has put out estimates that 90% of these supposed "precision bombs" have missed their targets, according to a report quoting the Moscow news agency Interfax on Jan. 23.

The Pentagon has already admitted bombing power

plants, oil pipelines, and every industrial site imaginable, in keeping with George Bush's "negotiating letter" to President Saddam Hussein of Jan. 10, which stated that unless Iraq pulled out of Kuwait, "We will destroy your nation," according to CBS-TV reports. In Pentagon Newspeak, insecticide plants are termed chemical warfare facilities, and a Western report that the U.S. had bombed a baby food factory was dismissed with claims that it was in fact a chemical weapons factory.

The total destruction of the civilian economic infrastructure of a state has little short-term effect on the course of any war, as the failure of the Allied "strategic bombing" raids against Germany in World War II proved. If the war were only to last a few weeks, as was originally claimed by administration spokesmen, hitting such targets would have no effect at all.

Mass death

Numerous accounts from such politically diverse sources as the Iranian government, retired German military figures, and the Vatican corroborate each other to the effect that the civilian casualties are high.

In a Jan. 23 interview with the *Cologne Express*, Gen. Manfred Opel (ret.), a member of the German Parliament, charged that U.S. air raids had already caused 300,000 Iraqi casualties. Opel, who based his account on discussions with what he called "reliable military sources in the United States," spoke of 100,000 casualties in Baghdad alone.

The previous day, IRNA, the official Iranian news agency—which certainly has no love for Iraq—reported that the United States was carrying out the continuous carpet bombing of the southern city of Basra and the region around it. The ground shocks caused by the bombardment were so

strong that they could even be felt as far away as the Iranian city of Khorramshahr, some 25 miles away. The fire blasts could be seen as far as 18 miles away.

On Jan. 24, other Iranian sources reported that their interviews with civilian refugees fleeing into Iran from Iraq showed that numerous villages surrounding Basra have been totally wiped out. They estimated that Iraq's total civilian deaths had already reached 50,000.

Similarly, Dieter Schinzel, the vice chairman of the German-Arabian Society, told the *Cologne Express* of Jan. 22 that "tens of thousands" of civilians had already been killed by the bombing. Schinzel based his evaluation on discussions with refugees arriving in Jordan. According to these sources, devastation in the center of Baghdad is relatively low, "but in the suburban areas, there is immense devastation."

"Everything you hear about cruelties of this war," Schinzel declared, "stands in stark contrast to the perfect computer world that is conveyed to us via television—this is creating the false image of war games." Schinzel denounced the picture conveyed on censored television as "premeditated, targeted psychological conditioning of the masses, in order to conceal the cruelties of this war from them."

Both Iraq and the Anglo-Americans, Schinzel added, were covering up the real rate of deaths: "The U.S. would otherwise be faced with a worldwide outcry of rage, and Iraq fears demoralization of its troops." As of this writing, the Iraqi government reports only 47 deaths—an impossibly low figure.

On Jan. 20, Pope John Paul II also denounced "the deplorable bombardments which have been seen as a painful confirmation" of his warnings, and which have done grave damage to the civilian population of Iraq. The "tragic realities" now unfolding in the Gulf, the Pope warned, could "create a new and bigger tension among the peoples."

The Iraqi government, meanwhile, released an official statement on Jan. 23, stating that the U.S.-led bombing sorties "have been directed particularly at civilian targets, civilian factories, food and medical warehouses, religious centers (including mosques and churches), and residential areas where women, children, and the elderly have been the victims."

"These sorties," the statement added, "have covered all Iraqi cities, towns, and even small villages." Because they ordered such strikes, George Bush, British Prime Minister John Major, and French President François Mitterrand must be considered "war criminals and murderers," the statement concluded.

Genocide is official policy

This mass murder has been stated U.S. policy since at least Sept. 16, 1990 when then-Air Force Chief of Staff Michael J. Dugan told the *Washington Post* that the main tactic that would be employed against Iraq would be massive bombing of civilian population centers and cultural sites. While Dugan was retired, effective Jan. 1 after this "indiscre-

tion," the scenario was never denied by the Pentagon.

"The cutting edge would be downtown Baghdad," he said at that time. "This bombing would not be nibbling at the edges. If I want to hurt you, it would be at home, not out in the wood someplace." Until two weeks before, he reported, U.S. target planners had assembled a "conventional list" of targets including, in order of priority, Iraqi air defense, airfields, warplanes, missile sites, and related military sites. "That's a nice list of targets, and I might be able to accept those," Dugan sarcastically noted, but "that's not enough."

He added that he had interviewed various academics to see "what is unique about Iraqi culture that they put very high value on. What is it that psychologically would make an impact on the population?" The intent of this "cultural" targeting is to find "centers of gravity, where air power could make a difference early on."

Among the cultural targets that Dugan was talking about would be the shrines of Kerballa and al Najaf, the two holiest cities in the Shi'ite branch of Islam. On Jan. 21, the London *Guardian* reported that both cities had been hit on the previous evening.

War could go nuclear

Earlier, on Aug. 24, an unidentified Israeli spokesman had gloated to the London *Times* that the U.S. air raid on Iraq would be intended to inflict casualties and damage, like "Hiroshima without the atomic bomb."

However, the use of nuclear bombs by either the Americans or the Israelis is not to be excluded.

Back in September, Secretary of State James Baker was already threatening to use nuclear weapons against Iraq, by stating that U.S. reaction to the Iraqi use of chemical gas would be "severe." Since that time, President Bush has ranted that he would not be fighting this war like Vietnam, "with one hand tied behind his back." Just what does he mean by that? Bush began claiming last fall that Iraq was on the verge of building a nuclear bomb—at a time that U.S. public opinion polls showed that an Iraqi nuclear bomb capability was about the one reason Americans saw as justifying a war. In a speech before Parliament on Jan. 20, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said that Britain would consider using nuclear weapons against Iraq if it could be shown that Iraq had a nuclear bomb.

Even the Pentagon is now admitting, contrary to its earlier euphoric claims, that much of the Iraqi Air Force remains intact, and is housed in underground bunkers, as are most Scud missiles and related capabilities. Iraq's obvious military strategy is to preserve its capabilities to fight a ground war, which Bush et al. had hoped to avoid through terror-bombing. A ground war necessarily entails massive U.S. casualties, with no guarantees of success.

To get out of such a conundrum, the present occupant of the White House might very well decide to use nuclear weapons.