

Saddam's illegal execution is part of US war plan

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Global Research, January 01, 2007

Solidaire (Belgium) 1 January 2007

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Iraqi hangmen executed Saddam Hussein at the gallows in the early morning of Saturday December 30. Officially, the former Iraqi president was convicted for the execution in 1982 of 148 villagers in Dujail. In fact, Saddam was eliminated by the United States because he didn't want to surrender his country's oil and sovereignty. His execution is one more entry in a long list of US war crimes.

Saddam's trial and execution are in blatant disregard of international humanitarian law. That is the opinion of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and peace organizations the world over. Purportedly, Saddam's trial was an Iraqi affair, but Uncle Sam's fingerprints are all over the place. It were US troops who arrested Saddam. He was detained in Camp Cropper, a US air base. The Special Iraqi Tribunal's statute was written by US lawyers. The US invested more than 100 million dollars in the tribunal and intervened directly in the course of the trial. Conveniently, the conviction came just in time for the US elections in order to influence the electorate in favor of Bush. Saddam's execution is fit for the propaganda offensive that Bush and his ilk have launched in order to neutralize the bad news from Iraq. Bush wants to send more troops to Baghdad, to a war the US have already lost.

Justice and resistance

Saddam was definitely not a lamb. But when will the people stand trial who have used cluster bombs and white phosphorous against the Iraqi people; those who are guilty of the siege of Fallujah and Najaf that bombed and starved these cities' population to death; those who are responsible for the anarchy and chaos the Iraqi people had to endure after the "liberation"? Will the 655,000 Iraqi's who died since the invasion in March 2003 ever be given justice? What about the victims of torture in Abu Ghraib, and of those numerous other US and British war crimes? Tommy Franks, Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush and Tony Blair – will they ever see their day in court?

Whatever criticism one can make about Saddam Hussein's reign, ever more Iraqi's say they had it better under Saddam when compared to the hell and chaos under occupation. Recently, the independent Iraq Centre for Research and Strategic Studies held an opinion poll. Almost 90 percent of the Iraqis opine that Iraq's situation was better before the occupation. At least there used to be stability, some level of economic prosperity and access to health care and education. What's left of that today is nothing but a distant memory.

Saddam's arrest three years ago didn't reduce resistance activity at all. Probably that will not be different after his execution. To the contrary, resistance has been intensifying gradually for some time now. The Pentagon's most recent Iraq report announces that there

were on the average 959 attacks per week in Iraq in the period from August to November 2006, 70 percent of which were directed against the “coalition troops” (the US and their allies). This number is 2.5 times higher than in the April-July 2004 period. With 106 casualties, last December was the deadliest month for US soldiers in Iraq this year. The total number of US soldiers killed in Iraq has reached 2993. It is difficult to see how the execution of Saddam could help save US imperialism from defeat and humiliation.

Saddam’s execution repudiated all over the world

All rules of international law violated. Malcolm Smart, Director of the Middle East and North Africa for Amnesty International:

“Amnesty opposes the death penalty in all circumstances and we deplore the death penalty in this case. It is because we consider that the trial was flawed in serious ways that it is more concerning that the death penalty should be imposed. The independence and impartiality of the court was impugned. There was political interference. Three defence lawyers were murdered. Saddam himself had no access to legal advice for a year.” (BBC World, 30 December)

Human Rights Watch:

“The imposition of the death penalty – an inherently cruel and inhumane punishment – in the wake of an unfair trial is indefensible”. (BBC World, 30 December)

The BRussells Tribunal:

“The Iraqi Higher Criminal Court that passed a death sentence on President Saddam Hussein is grounded on illegality. Occupying powers under international law are expressly prohibited from changing the judicial structures of occupied states. Created by Paul Bremer, the Iraqi Higher Criminal Court was never anything but a US-orchestrated puppet court.”

Political reasons behind the execution

Vrede vzw (a Belgian peace movement):

“It was a fake trial, not at all intended to judge Saddam’s crimes. His execution was a political act. It had to be done quickly, because Saddam Hussein stood symbol for part of the armed resistance. The execution came at a moment that the number of US military killed is nearing the 3,000 mark. More than ever, President Bush needs a ‘success story’ for his disastrous campaign in Iraq .”

StopUSA (a Belgian anti-war movement):

“In November 1532, the Inca king Atahualpa stood trial before the Spanish conquistadores. He was sentenced to death and hanged in August 1533. Among the accusations against him: he would have been ‘cruel for his enemies’. Whatever that may have meant, in any case the execution of Atahualpa has gone down in history not so much because of the man’s

supposed or real cruelty, but because of the grotesque nature of this parody of justice. It won't be different with Saddam's execution."

Robert Fisk (Middle East journalist):

"His execution will go down – correctly – as an American affair and time will add its false but lasting gloss to all this – that the West destroyed an Arab leader who no longer obeyed his orders from Washington, that, for all his wrongdoing Saddam died a "martyr" to the will of the new "Crusaders". (The Independent, 30 December)

The International Action Center (US):

"This punishment has nothing to do with the alleged crimes of the Iraqi leader nor is it part of an historical judgment of his role. It is the act of a conquering power against a nation that is occupied against the will of the vast majority of its people."

Professor Jose Maria Sison (the Philippines):

"Bush depicts the hanging of Saddam as a part of building democracy in Iraq and even in the entire Middle East . But he is clearly lying in view of the so many authoritarian regimes (including monarchic and theocratic ones) in the region with which the US has good relations. The brutal US occupation of Iraq has nothing to do with democracy. What is important to the US is servility to the rule and profit-making of US monopoly interests."

Cebrapaz (Brazilian Center of Solidarity with the Peoples and Struggle for Peace):

"The president of the USA , who ordered this act, enters in history as the greatest enemy of the peace and the greatest terrorist of all time. The world will only know better days, of peace and justice, when imperialism and its war politics are defeated."

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