

Saddam Trial: Elephant Meets Kangaroo.

The U.S. administration's stage managed illegal farce

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The trial of Iraq's legitimate President and others of his government has concluded (with the U.S., puppet 'Prime Minister' Maliki having already declared a guilty verdict) to coincide with America's mid-term elections. Saddam done and dusted as President Bush's ratings plummet, is allegedly, a strategy advised by Pentagon P.R. gurus to boost the little man's popularity. However, if the unthinkable happens, even from the grave, Saddam, who survived successive Presidents and Prime Ministers attempts to cripple his country, will haunt Bush and Blair's tenure for all time. That the trial resumed on the fifth anniversary of the fall of the twin towers was another pathetic stunt, anyway missed by most.

Yet the enormity of the crimes which have been and are being perpetrated in the name of 'we the people', seem less than sufficiently addressed. The execution of residents from the village of Dujail in 1982, after an assassination attempt on Saddam Hussein, if abhorrent, was legal in Iraq law. Presidential immunity is as valid for Saddam Hussein as for President Bush, who has signed execution warrants for a comparable amount of prisoners in the state of Texas. But the elephant in the courtroom, is the 1988 deaths, during the Iran-Iraq war, of the Kurdish villagers at Hallabja. The US and UK, having repeated the mantra of this bloody episode for a decade, strangely have chosen no trial for Hallabja with suggestions, incredibly, even of a posthumous one.

Dead men cannot talk as to who provided chemical weapons to both Iraq and Iran: primarily the U.S. and U.K. and France. On October 3rd., in Managua, Donald Rumsfeld airily voiced opposition to a lengthy trial.* Nothing to do, surely, with the fact that days after Hallabja, Rumsfeld in another incarnation, popped in on Saddam to flog more lethal weapons for the U.S. chemical and other arms industries. To try Iraq's leaders for Hallabja would be to have them inevitably list the companies who provided the chemicals, as did the eleven thousand eight hundred page dossier which Iraq provided the UN weapons inspectors in December 2002, which was effectively stolen by US officials at the UN., returned largely illegible, the majority of pages missing - names of all the suppliers removed. Water would be further muddied by an extensive US War College Report which concluded Iran, not Iraq, attacked Hallabja, just over its border. Either way the same countries supplied the weapons.

The illegal, US stage managed kangaroo court, stemming from an illegal invasion with an appeal limited to a month's hearing, not the strictures of justice, a litany of murdered lawyers, many tons of documents denied to what remained of the defence and twenty thousand pages of documents stolen from the Court office of a surviving defence lawyer, it is, however US and UK standing and a President and Prime Minister, which have suffered a blow set to ring down history. Comparisons may be odious, but compare attorneys who know each day may be their last for defending Saddam Hussein and his government, yet

committed to as near to a semblance of justice in the circumstances, to Prime Minister Anthony Blair, Q.C., who did not even see fit to turn up to the Parliamentary Debate on Iraq (31st., October) forced by Welsh and Scottish National Parties. A Prime Minister – avowed to ‘stay the course’ in Iraq, down to the last blood-drop of the lives of other families’ children – unable, apparently, to face even criticism. Neither has he faced bereaved families who have repeatedly requested to talk to him about the reasons for the invasion.

Whatever about Saddam Hussein’s human rights record, his courage is unquestionable. Arrested, humiliated, imprisoned, shown being medically examined, photographed in his underpants, his sons and fifteen year old grandson shot like fish in a barrel, the sons bodies displayed near naked to the world – all the above explicitly in contravention of the Geneva Convention – his wife and daughters in exile, his dignity is in stark contrast to leaders closer to home. If the many reports alleging he and other senior members of his government were offered the chance of going in to exile and refused, Saddam quoted as saying he was an Iraqi and would die in Iraq, the contrast will be even more stark. For all the iron fist of his rule – which in the carnage wrought by the invasion many Iraqis fervently wish was back – proof that he did not hand down penalties he was unable to face himself.

However, the death sentence imposed, current carnage will likely pale by comparison. On 31st October, The (pan-Arab) Ba’ath Party issued a statement stating that: ‘The life of President Saddam and his comrades is a red line, not to be crossed.’ The illegal execution of a legitimate Arab and Muslim leader and colleagues will inflame not alone the Islamic world, but countless others. No US or UK citizen will be able to assume they are safe anywhere – and the fault will not be of the Crusader President Bush’s cited ‘Islamic fascists’, it will lie squarely at door steps on Capitol Hill and in Whitehall.

However, there may be a chance to avert unthinkable events on all fronts, if a modicum of courage can be found in government in Washington and London. It has just come to light that on 1st September, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared the trial illegal and in contravention of Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – to which both the United States and Iraq are signatories. The President of the Arab Lawyers Association, Sabah Al Mukhtar, says a retrial in a truly independent court would be virtually guaranteed to find the defendants not guilty. Whilst this would open a can of worms for illegal occupiers it would be a lesser evil than the enormity of summary executions of Iraq’s legitimate rulers and the subsequent rivers of blood likely to engulf the region and surely trigger attacks across the globe.

No doubt those Pentagon P.R. gurus can knock up some face saving statement. And with America’s closest ally in the region, Saudi Arabia, declaring the invasion an irredeemable disaster, a thought should also be given to the hundred and fifty thousand hostages on Iraq soil: Bush and Blair’s soldiers. The woeful duo might also do worse than ponder on the words of a man who knew a bit about colonial adventures, Rudyard Kipling. ‘For the sin ye do by two and two, ye must pay for one by one.’

Note

* see the article of Gilles Munier www.uruknet.de 26th October 2006.

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