Economic sanctions as warfare

A study about the economic sanctions on Iraq

1990-2003

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Abstract

I have conducted a survey of the economic sanctions on Iraq 1990-2003 and focused on how the sanctions were implemented and how economic sanctions work in practice. In particular, I have researched the objectives the United Nations had for implementing economic punishment on Iraq, how they came into use and the outcome of it in brief.

As for the million-dollar question: Were the economic sanctions on Iraq efficient and did they “work”? My opinion stands clear that economic sanctions can work in the future. The sanction policy faced major problems in Iraq, but it also disarmed the Iraqi dictator and gave more autonomous power for the Kurds in the north. They did not “work” as the world community had expected, but no one knows what the outcome would have been if the United Nations had not reacted with such determination as they did in this matter. It is easy to be wise after the event, and it is my personal wish that economic sanctions can be used in the future, as an alternative to open war, but with a lower cost in terms of civilian lives.

I would like to thank all the kind people who have helped me finishing this work. First of all, all the people who I have interviewed during my research, like Nedim Dagdeviren, for his kind help at the Kurdish Library in Stockholm, or the professional advice from professor Peter Wallensteen. I have also received fruitful help from different organizations like the United Nations Development Programme, the Swedish United Nation-Association, the United Nations’ office in New York and especially the librarian of Dag Hammarskjöld’s Library in Uppsala Gunnel Thorén. Siemon Wezeman at SIPRI also contributed a lot to this essay with his interesting information about weapon trade and embargos.

I would also like to thank Tara Tawfique for her kindness to interpret all the texts in Arabic and Kurdish into English for me.

Last, but not least, I also want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Peter Hedberg at the Department of Economic History at Uppsala University for his assistance.

Keywords: Economic Sanctions, United Nations, Iraq, International conflicts, Kurds, the Middle-East.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Opening Introduction

The situation in Iraq and the surrounding region, is perhaps the most highly debated and current issue of today. Since 1990, Iraq has been a hot spot on both the United Nations’ and the United States’ agenda and thus formed both their foreign policy. The United Nations have been the leading organization behind the economic sanctions on Iraq but the United States of America have been a driving force in the background and urged the world opinion to recognize the problem with the dictatorship in Iraq. The opinions vary a lot whether the economic sanctions were efficient and/or whom to blame if the case is that the sanctions were not efficient enough.

I am very interested in this region particularly and I find the question about the efficiency of sanctions in general very interesting. The fact that Iraq has one of the largest oil resources in the world, but still has a population in poverty, makes one think. I do believe that this is a “perfect” example of how governmental misruling and tyranny are the most important answers to why poverty exists today. The debate about the development of democracy and fighting dictatorships in the most appropriate way, concerns me a lot and I think these issues are very important to address, especially now, in this world of new conflicts and new threats that we are actually facing.
1.3 Background

On the 6 August 1990, the United Nations voted in favor of applying economic sanctions on Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, under the terms of the United Nation’s Security Council Resolution 661. The background is that on 2 August, the same year, Iraq invaded Kuwait, took control over the country and then established a (short-lived) Provisional Free Government. Prior, Iraq had implied that it would take military action against countries which continued to flout their oil production quotas. It had also accused Kuwait of violating the Iraqi border in order to steal Iraqi oil resources worth US $2,400 million, and suggested that all debts to Kuwait should be waived. However, according to the United Nations and other, also reliable, sources, there was no evidence at all to support Iraq’s claim. According to them, the invasion appeared more likely to have been motivated by Iraq’s financial difficulties in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war (lasting from 1980 to 1988).¹

The Iran-Iraq war, or Saddām’s Qādisiyyah² as it is called in Iraq, was the longest conventional warfare of the 20th century and led only to a stalemate for both combatants when the United Nations mandated cease-fire. The costs of the war were estimated to be 1 million casualties from the Iranian and the Iraqi forces and civilians, plus 100, 000 Kurds.³ US intelligence sources also estimated that at least 30,000 Iranians and Kurds have died as a result of Iraq’s use of chemical weapons, later to be referred as weapons of mass destruction (WMD).⁴ The total economical cost of the Iran-Iraqi war is estimated to US $1.19 Trillion.⁵ With this as a background, Saddam’s Iraq was living on the edge of bankruptcy and therefore wanted to annex Kuwait’s rich oil fields.

The immediate response, on 2 August 1990, from the United Nation’s Security Council to the invasion of Kuwait was to adopt unanimously (Yemen did not

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¹ European Regional Survey of the World 2006, p. 480

² The first ‘Qādisiyyah’ was fought by Umar ibn al-Khattāb, one of the five successors of the Prophet Mohammed, against Persia (modern day Iran) and the Sassanids. Al-Qādisiyyah was also a historical town, near the battle-site and an important location on a Mesopotamian trade-route. Authors note: Saddam used the name ‘Qādisiyyah’ to justify the war and to gain the morale into his soldiers (source: Husayn, T. (1986) al-Shaykhan (The sheiks). p. 17)


participate in the vote\textsuperscript{6}) a resolution (No. 660) which condemned the Iraqi invasion and demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. \textsuperscript{7} Four days later, the economic sanctions on Iraq were instated, affecting all commodities with the exception of medical and food supplies “in humanitarian circumstances”. \textsuperscript{8}

After the first Gulf war, which lasted from 2 August 1990 until 28 February 1991, economic sanctions were still kept in place following the war, pending a weapon of mass destruction inspection regime with which Iraq never fully cooperated. Later, Iraq received a break up from economic sanctions, and was allowed to import certain products under the United Nation’s Oil for Food- program. The sanctions, which were heavily debated, faced an ending with the last war with Iraq 2003, when the country was invaded by the United States- led forces and then occupied and freed from Saddam Hussein’s rule and oppression. \textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{6} United Nations Security Council (1990) S/PV.2932 Security Council, Procès verbaux, meeting number 2932 (Meeting record from the ascertainment of resolution number 660).

\textsuperscript{7} European Regional Survey of the World 2006, p. 480

\textsuperscript{8} United Nations Security Council (1990) S/PV.2933 Security Council, Procès verbaux, meeting number 2933 (Meeting record from the ascertainment of resolution number 661).

\textsuperscript{9} European Regional Survey of the World 2006, p. 481, 483, 484
1.4 Objective & Scope

The objective of this paper is to examine and critically review the economic sanctions on Iraq, how sanctions are being used in practice and how they were implemented onto Iraq as an international punishment. It is very important to understand the background to the sanctions and I will present data of why they were implemented in the first place. There is also a socioeconomic aspect on this subject and I want to describe the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi population during this time.

During my research it became a purpose of its own to understand, criticize and evaluate the sources for this subject. Due to the complexity of the source material in this matter, it is important to stress this in the objective & scope section.

The key questions this survey will attempt to address are:

1. What was the purpose with the economic sanctions on Iraq?
2. How were the economic sanctions applied?
3. What were the consequences in brief?
1. 5 Method & Structure

In this paper, I will firstly present reviews and comments on various statistics, mainly from the United Nations, WHO\textsuperscript{10}, WHO-EMRO\textsuperscript{11}, Kurdish sources, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Overseas Development Institute and the United States Foreign Agricultural Service Department. With the help of the resolved resolutions from the United Nation’s Security Council, I aim to find the decisions taken by the United Nations and I will present them so that the reader gets an overview of how the implementation of the sanctions actually worked. The reader will find profitable information about how the economic sanctions were implemented after the resolution 661 (1990) and how they were decided to still be in place after the war and how the United Nations was working with them during these, as I see it, three major periods. The first period was 1990-1991; the period prior the First Gulf War and the sanctions implementation. The second one is 1991-1995 because of the time directly in the aftermath of the First Gulf War with the adoption of resolution 687 until the beginning of the Oil-for-Food Programme. The third and last one began with the creation of the Oil-for-Food Programme 1995 and ended with the Second Gulf War 2003. The reason behind these periods follows with the adoption of the current resolutions, taken by the United Nations Security Council. I also see them as a natural basis of division due to that the first period differ from the second one according to the purpose of the sanctions, and the third and last differ in efficiency and how hard the sanctions struck onto the country.

I find it important for the reader to understand some of the background information about sanctions, both historically and effectively. There are also different kinds of sanctions. This is an issue I want to begin my essay with, and I believe it can be a well functioning introduction for the basic data that I will present. As the essay also will function as a review on the sanction policy of United Nations, I want to present some of the most important details of the United Nations agenda.

Due to the fact that sanctions mostly struck on trade I have found it relevant for my report to address export (I will concentrate on oil export, because it is the biggest sector of the Iraqi economy) and import. I will concentrate on this data, which I mostly

\textsuperscript{10} The World Health Organization
\textsuperscript{11} World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
received from the United Nations Trade Department and the International Monetary Fond, to indicate how the sanctions functioned in reality and how they struck. For health aspects of how the sanctions struck, I have concentrated mainly on showing indications about the plunging of life expectancy rate (since the biggest difference occurred here) and about how high the child (under fives) mortality rate was (due to that this was the main topic of the debate following the economic sanctions).

There are also major discussions about the impacts of the economic sanctions on Iraq that are important to consider. This is why I have not integrated the source criticism part into the 'introduction' chapter, but to have it instead in a chapter of its own to indicate that this is so extraordinary important for this subject that I have chosen to work with. Another reason behind this was that the evaluation became an assignment of its own to be able to understand and deal with.
1. 6 Delimitation

I will concentrate on their implementation and how they are being used in real praxis. I will also give examples of some of the privations that can be caused by an economic sanction or embargo. I will not due to the lack of well functioning statistical material, present the economic consequences as an indication of whether the economic sanctions were right or wrong. It is up to the reader himself/herself to critically judge in this very difficult matter, although they are very welcome to use my conclusions and information as they do so.

Although I find the humanitarian part very important to report about, there have been many difficulties to construct a well describable picture of the whole situation between 1990-2003 for the native Iraqis. I will, notwithstanding, with the help of statistical information from World Health Organization and more, show indications of how the sanctions struck onto the locals, and I will describe the regional differences (the humanitarian situation for the Kurds etcetera), due to finding this information very profitable for my work and interesting for my readers to take part of.

It will not be my aim for this essay and I have been advised to erase this issue as a key question due to lack of sources and problems to correctly evaluate those I already have.

The periods I have chosen to work with are mainly three different kinds of times and they are depending on the current situation in Iraq at that moment. It was natural to start the first one 1990, with the beginning of the First Gulf War and resolution 660/661 and end it with the decision to maintain the sanctions on Iraq even after the war. From that day to the beginning of the Oil-for-Food Programme is the second one and the third one is from that year (1995) until the beginning of the Second Gulf War 2003. As background information I have chosen to concentrate on Iraq’s modern history and especially the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) because of the important relevance it has to my subject.
2. 0 Evaluation of the sources

At the beginning of this chapter, I want to cite the professor in nursery at the University of Columbia, Mr. Richard M. Garfield.

“There is much to learn from the problems in data collection, interpretation, and reporting which have occurred in Iraq. These problems limited the utility of researcher efforts and create unnecessary confusion regarding the reliability of data sources.” 12

I believe that this splendid conclusion sums up everything regarding source material of the economic sanctions on Iraq and their implants on the humanitarian and economical situation. It also clarifies a lot about these discussions whether to blame the USA, the United Nations or Saddam Hussein for the nearly apocalyptic humanitarian situation that many sources actually have mentioned. This debate could last forever and it will not lead to anything constructive.

It is a huge problem with sources about the economic sanctions on Iraq and the interpretation of them as Mr. Garfield says. Firstly, the most obvious obstacle of all is to find reliable statistics and data that indicate what you want to present. To be true, even the most impartial source of all was one of the warring parties within this conflict, the United Nations, and their data would be considered by most scholars as impartial and trustworthy. And this was the obstacle I first ran into due to it was the immense plunge of life expectancy during the period 1990-2003 that made me curious about this topic. The information came directly from the World Health Organization. 13 This organization could therefore be partial in the conflict because they are a part of the United Nations. On the contrary however, the World Health Organization was sitting in the lap of Saddam Hussein during the middle 1990s, according to Mr. Johan von Schreeb, surgeon and scientist at the International Health Section in Stockholm. According to him, the information that I had collected from World Health Organization, especially their numbers and diagrams before 2003,

12 Garfield, p. 34
must be put under seriously doubt. This is because of they built their statistics upon information given from the Iraqi central Government in Baghdad. This view is also being supported by Mr. Garfield in his report *Morbidity and Mortality among Iraqi Children from 1990 to 1998: Assessing the Impact of Economic Sanctions*, which was commissioned by the Overseas Development Institute 1999.

It cannot be stressed too heavily, that the numbers that will be given can be uncertain and maybe even untrue. I will try to avoid the fraud numbers as far as I am able, but for instance, the medical journal *The Lancet* presented 1995 figures of more than 500,000 preventable child deaths caused by the economic sanctions. However, this was built on a survey on child mortality in an area outside of Baghdad. It was a poor urban area of much higher figures than the rest of Iraq had. Later on, a second article in *The Lancet* revised the figures downwards. Being thrown into this minefield of fraud numbers and dual information, although still forced to present something, I decided to use the information supported by most scholars and sources.

Secondly, as I mentioned before, according to the World Trade Organization, WTO, Iraq has, nowadays, no central national statistical bureau. This is notably, due to the fact that, for instance, the Islamic Republic of Iran has one central statistical bureau of its own. And so do other fairly comparable states. This is strange and it also constitutes an obstacle for me in my research. The closest I got to a national statistical office was the statistics I received from the Central Bank of Baghdad. However, this information was hard to interpret and both I and my supervisor were doubtful about the credibility of this source.

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14 Interview, Johan von Schreeb, surgeon and scientist at the International Health Section, the Medical University ‘Karolina Institutet’, Stockholm. 2006-04-07

15 Garfield, p. 3

16 http://www.smartsanctions.se/literature/iraqreport_050210.pdf, p. 18. 2006-04-08

17 They did have one under the government of Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party.


19 http://www.cbiraq.org/, 2006-04-07
2.1 Sources on trade

In my search for reliable statistics that could indicate changes in trade, I came in contact with the United States Foreign Agricultural Service Department, FAS. They have this vast documentation measuring world trade and they have a very well arranged specification about it. However, it cannot be said that the United States are impartial, although one of their separated departments or branches might be. Nevertheless, I do want my readers to be aware of where I have collected this information.

2.2 Sources on sanctions

The next group of sources that I had been given and needed to interpret and evaluate were the resolutions and the meeting records from the Security Council of the United Nations. Although the United Nations was, as I mentioned above, one of the warring parties in the conflict, it must be stressed that especially the meeting records are of high credibility due to that they only show the reader how the different countries expressed their opinion and standpoints through their emissaries. However, the opinions and agreements that are being decided within the Security Council have often already been reached and settled in advance. 20

I do not know whether the resolutions and the meeting records can actually tell us something more thoroughly about the whole situation 1990-2003, but it gives the reader a broad overview how this was actually governed and the meeting records gives us all a good understanding of how each country discussed and reasoned within this matter.

In addition to the antecedent source, I have used documents saved and compiled by the University of Cambridge. These are mostly letters to the United Nations from separate member countries, or executive orders from the United States of America or United Kingdom measuring the Kuwait Crisis. 21

I have also tried to reach relevant statistics and numbers from Kurdish sources and scholars, but this seems to be a hopeless mission. The person who was responsible

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20 I received this information from Gunnel Thorén, the librarian at Daghammarskjöld Library when we discussed the best way to interpret resolutions, press releases and meeting records from the United Nations Security Council.

21 Bethlehem, p. 224-320
for most of the statistical estimates and calculations in Kurdistan, Mr. Ebdulla Xefur, was according to Mr. Dagdevirem, the librarian in the Kurdish Library in Stockholm, not trustworthy. Mr. Xefurs book, ‘*Amarî Kurdistan*’ (i.e. ‘*Kurdistan in statistics*’ in English) was filled with interesting statistical information, but no references to the sources whatsoever. This gives the reader two difficulties; how did he get this information and what source of evidence can he use to prove his information? This is why it was unthinkable for me as an economic history student to even bring this source into consideration of use.

The regional economic survey over the northern part of Iraq, by Mr. Khasro Pirbal, ‘*Kurdistan – A regional profile. A study of the economy of Iraqi Kurdistan*’, was however a more profitable piece of information about regional differences within Iraq. Although, I think that anyone who considers to studying information given by any of these Middle-East countries must be aware of the fact that the data can be a fraud. The Kurdish Regional Government had its own interest of showing the world economical improvements and all these surveys tend to have a nationalistic undertone. Also, there are still, although recently much have been resolved, factions and foes among the Kurdish population. PUK, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan have their interests and KDP, the Kurdish Democratic Party, have theirs. However, this report is interesting, because the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan is the organization behind this report but nevertheless using information from the Kurdish Democratic Party.

I have also checked some of this reports numbers, and it is coincident with the information I have received from reports from the United Nations Office of the Iraq programme Oil-for-Food. 22

The Kurdish Democratic Party had by tradition been friendlier towards Saddam and Barzani, the party leader, has never hesitated making alliances with Saddam Hussein. This could of course lead to sources coined by the Kurdish Democratic Party tend to give a more positive image of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. 23

Also, due to that the different parties have their bases in different cities the information from both sources could differ as well.

Nevertheless, I do want to use the Kurdish perspective because more research has to be done about the regional differences of the sanctions on Iraq.

23 [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/iraq_kurdishreconstruction.pdf], p. 3. 2006-04-08
2.3 Sources in use for diverging agendas

All these fraud numbers circulating about this subject is indeed worrying and constitutes grand problems for researchers. It is also an even greater problem when the old and outdated numbers actually still is being used by some scholars.²⁴

There are so many factions, not just the United Nations (or the United States of America) and Iraq, as many tends to believe. There are several parties that are partial within this matter and it almost seems like everybody have their own opinion. As I have written above, I have many sources that deal with the situation, and then often directing it onto the humanitarian situation, in Iraq during 1990-2003. It cannot be too clearly stressed that these sources should not be considered as credible at all. As I mention in the marginal, the essays by Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn are stooped on numbers from old outdated reports.

The most common thing to run into when dealing with the economic sanctions on Iraq, is criticism coined by former United Nations Humanitarian Coordinators; Denis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck.

However, Mr. Halliday is a famous advocator of the social agenda of the Ba’ath Party of Iraq²⁵, arguing that they stood for huge investments in the well being of the Iraqi people during the end of the 1970s. He also accuses Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for the first Gulf War because they, as he puts it, ‘flooded the world market with cheap oil and, at the same time, demanding Iraqi repayment’.²⁶

Nothing of this is true. For instance, when the period of the ‘social investments’ that Mr. Halliday talks about occurred, the Kurds suffered perhaps the most in Iraq. It was a time of horrible suffering for the population of Kurdistan between 1976 and 1978. They were oppressed by both parties during the early years of the Iran-Iraq war, and then became a killing ground for Iraqi troops during the fighting in the North of Iraq 1983 – followed by systematic genocide all through the 80s. To argue that a ruler, who has these deeds on his record, stands for the well being of his people, is an insult to the people who have been suffering.²⁷

Hans von Sponeck was one of the advocators against the ‘no-fly-zones’. This also shows that he is not trustworthy due to he puts the Iraqi national integrity before the

²⁴ For instance, books like ‘Iraq under siege’ with essays by exempli gratia Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn, still in 2003 uses numbers from this Lancet report.
²⁵ Saddam Hussein’s Socialist Arab- nationalistic Party.
security of oppressed people. The ‘no-fly-zones’ were established in support of Security Council resolution 688, which called for an end of the Iraqi repression of Kurds and the Shiite population. This is also evidence of that he was wrong in terms of the invention of the United Nations had no mandate. Mr. von Sponeck however, referring to that there was three countries that opposed the resolution at the time it was adopted, namely the dictatorships of Yemen, Cuba and Zimbabwe.

These are my arguments of why I have not used the information given by the former United Nations Humanitarian Coordinators and why I find them unreliable.

One of the most cited books in this topic is perhaps ‘The children are dying’ by Ramsey Clark, the former Attorney General for the United States of America. However, Mr. Clark is, beyond all doubt, not worthy to use as a credible source. In his book, he only relies on information given directly from the Government of Iraq and their mission estimates. When looking at the source references to his tables, one sees that most of the information has been produced by, for instance, the Department of Health Statistics in Baghdad and Mosul Saddam Hospital. Even when relying on information from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, he refers to numbers arriving as early as 1993, a time when this organization was not reliable and has admitted that they relied to much of numbers coined by the Iraqi regime. As I mentioned above, this is also being supported by Mr. von Scheer and Professor Garfield. And furthermore, Ramsey Clark is also known for being Saddam Hussein’s own lawyer right now at service in the court of Baghdad at the trial of the former dictator.

The reason why I wanted to integrate this literature and source discussion here in this essay is that there is a lot of wrong numbers and information circulating and it is important to be considerable. This is also the reason why I decided to have a separate chapter dedicated only to this matter.


29 http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4113256,00.html, 2006-04-08
30 http://www.fao.org/, 2006-04-08, Clark, p. 63-71
31 Interview, Johan von Schreeb, surgeon and scientist at the International Health Section, the Medical University ‘Karolina Institutet’, Stockholm. 2006-04-07, Garfield, p. 3
32 http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/11388BFC-9290-4141-B0E1-BEA75A1B20F8.htm, 2006-04-08
This is a hard topic to address, and I am glad that my intention is not to come up with evidence whether the economic sanctions were a success or not or whom to blame for certain failures etcetera. My intention with this chapter was therefore more of a guideline for my reader and a help to his further reading of my essay.

There is, as Mr. Garfield says, still much to learn about the collection of information and facts, but perhaps the example of Iraq could teach us a valuable lesson.
3.0 Sanctions as warfare

Sanctions are the popular term for a menu of possible diplomatic, communications, and economic measures used by governments, intergovernmental bodies, and non-governmental entities to force changes in policy and behavior. Sanctions cover a wide variety of measures from suspensions on diplomatic contacts to trade embargoes. Consumer boycotts and disinvestment programmes are related measures. Sanctions can also be limited and targeted, such as being linked to one specific sector in the economy like restrictions on air travel, or they can be comprehensive, as in the case of trade embargoes. Sanctions can be unilateral (involving a single government) or multilateral (involving more than one). The term ‘sanctions’ is most frequently associated with economic measures that are intended to inflict economic damage and thereby force a government or other entity to change its behavior (or call for local uproars and regime change, A/N). 33

Sanctions have been used since time immemorial and the first example known for researchers is ‘The Megarian decree’ in Ancient Greece. It was a decree derived from the Athenians to a close ally of Sparta, the city of Megara, situated in the near west of Athens itself. The Megarian decree consisted of a set of economic sanctions levied upon Megara by the Athenian Empire. The decree banned Megarians from harbors and marketplaces throughout the Athenian Empire, therefore putting a damper on the Megarian economy. Some scholars say that a trespass of the decree by some Megarians was the proximate cause for the Peloponnesian War between the Athenian Empire and the Peloponnesian League, which was led by Sparta, from 431 BC until Athens’ surrender to Sparta 404 BC. 34

In modern times, that is the 19th century until present, economic sanctions and trade embargoes have been used frequently. The Long Embargo, which carried out December 22 1807 and ended March 1 1809, was a non-exportation law and an event during the Napoleonic Wars. The Embargo prohibited ships and goods from leaving the United States’ ports and it was designed to force France and Great Britain to treat American commodities with greater respect. 35

34 Henderson, p. 56-60
As we have already seen, economic sanctions and embargoes have most of the time preceded or accompanied war. However, during the beginning of the last century after the horrors of the World War I, the President of United States of America Woodrow Wilson called for new methods were economic sanctions would have the functionality of being an alternative to war. Sanctions were incorporated as a tool of enforcement in each of the two collective security systems established in the world. Firstly, the League of Nations, which was the present fragile peace-keeping organization prior the United Nations between the two world wars and then the United Nations since World War II.  

As Professor Wallensteen is writing in the background of the executive summary of the book ‘Making targeted sanctions effective’; there has to be a middle course “between words and wars” with efficient actions against totalitarian regimes. Economic sanctions and trade embargoes are, without doubt, a highly contentious method to force dictatorships to listen and pay attention, and the method suffering in many important camps in the world a lack of international support.

As this essay is written, we have eight active sanctions committees concerning specific countries. Among them, seven of these committees are dealing with African countries such as Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. 

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37 Wallensteen, p. 1 in the executive summary at the beginning of the book
3. 1 Different types of sanctions and embargoes

The use of economic sanctions is, as I have mentioned above, one of the measures that the United Nations Security Council can use as an instrument for establishing peace in a war affected zone in the world. However, there are a various numbers of different types of sanctions that can be implemented.

3. 1. 1 Diplomatic sanctions

In a case of a disagreement between two nations, the first thing a country can do is to call for the other nation’s ambassador and let him/her clarify his/her nation’s standpoint in the current issue. This is a diplomatic action for showing disapproval of the country’s behavior. In a way, diplomatic actions can be considered some sort of sanction. Diplomatic sanctions also include the reduction or removal of diplomatic ties, such as embassies in the country that is being targeted. 39

3. 1. 2 Arms embargoes

Arms embargoes aim to deny the targeted country of access to weapons and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Countries that have an uncertain agenda (such as denying its citizens freedom of speech etcetera) and are threatening international peace, economy and security with lethal weapons can be exposed to an arms embargo. An embargo concerning weaponry can be aimed at groups or individuals, but more frequently occurring towards actors that hold state power. 40

Several problems emerge when dealing with arms embargoes and the definition of what is having a military function can differ. There have been international protests mentioning that arms embargoes sometimes include medical facilities such as drugs and equipment. According to Mr. Siemon Wezeman, a researcher about arms transfers at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, it is a must that everything that can be used as military equipment is banned, or else the aim with the arms embargo may not be fulfilled. For instance, in Croatia when the United Nations

39 http://www.ud.se/, 2006-04-25
40 Wallensteen, p. 104
gave away helicopters for medical service usage, the same choppers carried machineguns a week later.  

When this was written, there were ten mandatory United Nations embargoes still in use. The sanctions on Iraq are still active but now only affect weapon sales. However, there are more international organizations that are deciding and stating collectively about the use of arms embargoes, such as the European Union, the Commonwealth and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The mandatory United Nations embargo against Iraq was modified on 8 June 2004 to allow the delivery of arms and related materiel to the new Iraqi Government (police equipment etcetera) and to the United States of America- led Force operating in Iraq.

### 3. 1. 3 Financial sanctions

Financial sanctions, not to be confused with trade sanctions, aim at reduce the resources (e.g. assets in foreign banks and other economic resources outside the targeted actor’s nation) available to particular actors or groups of actors.

As an example, the same day that the Iraqi forces entered Kuwait, the President of the United States signed an executive order blocking Iraqi government property and prohibited transactions from United States of America to Iraq. The President ordered that ‘*all property and interests in property of the Government of Iraq, its agencies, instrumentalities and controlled entities … are hereby blocked.*

As a prior to the second Iraqi war, ‘*Operation Iraqi Freedom*’, the United States Treasury Department took possession of the Iraqi government assets that had been frozen through the adoption of resolution 661 from the United Nations Security Council in 1990. This was a sign to the Saddam regime that the financial sanctions would not be lifted until he resigned as the leader of Iraq. Personal assets of the Hussein family, and other high-ranked Iraqis are hard to trace because of the huge

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41 Interview, Siemon Wezeman, researcher about arms transfers at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2006-04-10
42 The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent states, nearly all of which were once British territories (http://www.direct.gov.uk/).
44 Wallensteen, p. 110
45 Bethlehem, p. 224
sums involved. According to a senior official at the Treasury Department of the United States of America it was approximately $6 billion spread worldwide.  

What is positive about financial sanctions that are being targeted is that they will only, hopefully, affect the resources placed abroad by the individuals of the targeted regime and therefore spare the rest of the population from similar exposure.  

3. 1. 4 Travel bans

For many international leaders and rulers, image and legitimacy abroad is a lifeline. Through making visits or receiving visitors the regime can prove its international accepted sovereignty. International travel is also necessary for financial dealings in which such actors may be involved. The aim with travel bans is to make it harder for these leaders and rulers to gain their legitimacy and to preventing them from paying visits to other countries. Travel bans can have a dual functionality. Firstly, it can work as bans on the ability to enter a specific country (i.e. visa bans). Secondly, it can also work as general bans on certain individuals that prevent them from transiting or entering any country. 

3. 1. 5 Trade sanctions

Trade sanctions can vary from imposing import duties on goods from, or blocking the export of certain goods to the target country, to a full naval blockade of its ports. The latter was used during the prior to the first Persian Gulf War 1990. With the resolution 661 adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations, a full-scale trade embargo was imposed on Iraq. 

In a letter from Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General, 20 August 1990, the Permanent Representative of the country complained about that the Iraqi tanker ‘Al-Karamah’ was ‘subjected to harassment by British and United States military aircraft while proceeding to the Arabian Gulf’. This was the first trade blockade that was made from the United Nation – led coalition 1990 but there were more to come. 

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47 Wallensteen, p. 110
48 Wallensteen, p. 114-115
49 Hazelton, p. 147
50 Bethlehem, p. 267
Many African dictatorships are sponsoring their arms and related material with illicit diamond trade, and therefore is trade sanctions that include diamonds a clever choice in the struggle towards a more peaceful Africa. 51

The Oil-for-Food programme, which began in the late 1996, continued the restriction with Iraq’s oil trade and the programme permitted Iraq to sell up to $2 billion worth of oil in a 180-day period. This was a sort of trade sanction. 52 To avoid ambiguity of all these terms I want to stress that there are one other sort of trade sanction that is distinguished from the one I have addressed here, namely those sanctions that are used as trade penalties in form as import tariffs or other administrative hurdles as a lack of free trade.

The determining resolutions over oil-sales restriction, Security Council resolution number 706 and 712, was never acknowledged by Saddam Hussein because he argued that the restrictions violated the country’s sovereignty. 53

3. 1. 6 Comprehensive vs. Targeted sanctions

There are two important types of implementation methods and it is with greatest importance to address their differences. World leaders often decide that the most obvious alternatives to economic sanctions are unsatisfactory, military action would be too massive and diplomatic protest too meager. Therefore, the economic sanctions would catch up something in between these both outcomes. The obvious problem then is that one camp will protest about the sanctions being to harsh onto the population and the other half will call for military measures due to nothing is being done immediately with economic sanctions. This gives advocators of this type of solution double trouble.

As the United Nations stresses, there have been a number of States and humanitarian organizations that have expressed concerns at the possible adverse impact of sanctions on the most vulnerable segments of the population, such as women and children. In response to these concerns, relevant Security Council decisions have reflected a more refined approach to the design, application and implementation of mandatory sanctions. 54

53 Hazelton, p. 147
In general, this means that a discussion was put on the table considering how to make the sanctions more efficient. For instance, the Stockholm Process was initiated and several other organizations and researchers started to discuss this matter.

The economic sanctions on Iraq were comprehensive. This means that they affected Iraq’s entire economy. With the executive order 12724, the present President of the United States ordered that both importation and exportation trade with Iraq or to any entity operated from Iraq should be prohibited. All financing contract, transactions to and from Iraq were also proclaimed illicit. This, combined with all the blockades, boycotts, travel bans, frozen bank accounts etcetera, constituted the comprehensive sanctions, which struck on all sectors on the Iraqi economy.

Targeted sanctions however, is said to concentrate on one or a group of sectors in the economy alone. As the advocators of targeted sanctions put it, ‘targeted sanctions are directed against significant national decision-makers and resources that are essential for their rule’. Targeted sanctions are, in theory, designed to minimize humanitarian suffering as far as it goes.

As Mr. Hazelton puts it in his book ‘Iraq since the Gulf war – prospects for democracy’ the (comprehensive) sanctions did more to the Iraqi people than to Saddam Hussein and his regime. And one goal with the targeted sanctions, that were to be discussed during 2000 and early 2001, is to switch this outcome to the opposite.

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55 http://www.smartsanctions.se/literature/iraqreport_050210.pdf, official report about the lessons learned from Iraq by the Stockholm Process, p. 16
56 Bethlehem, p. 226
57 Wallensteen, p. 1, 2, 3 in the executive summary at the beginning of the book
58 Hazelton, p. 152
However, the targeted sanctions, or smart sanctions as they are also called, have also been exposed to criticism. Critics of smart sanctions say the authorities will be less concerned about the measures being genuinely smart, and more concerned with making the sanctions regime more presentable. If the United Nations target to just financial sanctions aiming at freezing the country’s foreign bank accounts, it would really cramp the foreign business activities of the targeted country’s officials, but this might have limited impact on countries such as Iraq that have a tremendous oil wealth. 

The British organization, Campaign against sanctions on Iraq, also believes that smart sanctions fail to deal with the underlying problems inherent in the sanctions that caused these fundamental problems in the Iraqi economy.

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60 I am very concerned with this source because of its biased material and statements. They condemn the United States and hail the ‘social policy’ of the Ba’ath Party in Iraq and build their opinions on Denis Halliday’s descriptions of the situation in Iraq. I beg to the reader to be skeptic on this source.
3. 2 The United Nations and their sanction policy

The United Nations Security Council was divided during the cold war. Due to the balance of power in the world between the two Superpowers and that every resolution that was proposed by the first was rejected by the second, there were sanctions imposed only twice prior to the August 1990 embargo of Iraq. The first imposition was against Rhodesia beginning in 1966, the second an arm embargo against South Africa imposed in 1977. 62

Due to this background, I find it hard to believe that the United Nations was prepared enough for the implementation of the economic sanctions on Iraq and because of the shortage of prior experiences the United Nations was not aware of the risks and problems that might occur during usage.

In the Charter of the United Nations under chapter VII, the Security Council can take enforcement measures to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such measures range from economic and/or other sanctions not involving the use of armed force to international military action. As the Article 41 is saying:

“The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.”

It cannot be stressed enough that the words ‘sanctions’ or ‘embargoes’ are here altered to ‘complete or partial interruption’ just because it was very controversial sanctions when the Charter of the United Nations was set. That is also why the Charter is very clear on that it cannot include any use of armed interference in international conflicts.

On the contrary, if the measures provided for in Article 41 would have been proved inadequate, ‘operations by air, sea or land forces of Members of the United Nations’

will occur (Article 42). However, it is not explicit which kind of operations the Charter is talking about and it is unclear which ones of the Members that have the right to attack and on what mandate. 63

For aught I know, it is due to the factions of our contemporary world that the United Nations great ambitions are getting interrupted and are continually struggling against interests of specific countries (that could, of course, heaps of times clash with the expectations from the United Nations).

Alas, as Jens Petersson, handling officer at the Swedish United Nation-Association, puts it, the United Nations is nothing more than an outcome of what the Members of the Organization wants it to be. If a single, but important, Member does not want an United Nation led condemnation, attack or embargo, then it will not be possible to carry it through. The United Nations is also, quod erat demonstrandum64, very sensible to international pressure and opinion and if the support is fading for a certain action, the resolution that had been taken to decision might as well be reversed. 65

However, the mode in the United Nations is still quite pro for economic sanctions as peace-keeping measures. In response to the negative opinion, the United Nations Security Council established in April 2000 a Working Group on General Issues on Sanctions. Its mission was to improve the usage of economic sanctions and their effectiveness. This includes, for instance, improving cooperation between sanction committees, monitoring bodies and regional organizations as well as, in cooperation with region programme bodies such as ‘The Stockholm Process’, enforce targeted ‘smart’ sanctions, which are very popular in the Security Council today according to the jargon. The result will be that the United Nations, in the future, will work more with targeted measures like arms embargoes, travel bans, financial and diplomatically restrictions etcetera. Sadly, this proposed outcome document which the Working Group on General Issues on Sanctions proposed, have not been valid yet and is still under consideration. 66

63 The Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VII and Articles 41 & 42
64 Which was to be proved (lat.)
65 Interview, Jens Petersson, handling officer at the Swedish United Nation-Association, 2006-04-04
4.0 Why were the sanctions implemented?

The purpose of the sanctions differed from when the sanctions were implemented before the First Gulf War and when they were decided to remain active after the war. The purpose remained the same throughout the period from the adoption of resolution 687 in 1991 until the beginning of the Second Gulf War. Contextually, due to that the reason with this chapter is to address purpose and aim, this section is divided into two main parts, before – and after the First Gulf War.

4.2 The economic sanctions prior the First Gulf War

At 5.10 AM, 2 August 1990, delegates from fourteen countries plus Iraq and Kuwait met in the halls of the Security Council at its 2932nd meeting. Their agenda was to condemn the military attack which Iraq had done to Kuwait just a few hours before. The Kuwaiti Government had issued a statement to the current President of the Security Council:

“Iraq occupied Kuwait at dawn today. The Iraqi forces have penetrated and occupied ministries, and the headquarters of the Government has been shelled. Crossroads have been occupied. A short time ago, Baghdad Radio announced that the aim of the invasion of Kuwait is to stage a coup d’état to overthrow the régime and establish a new régime and a Government friendly to Iraq.”

The intentions of the Iraqi régime were disliked by the Security Council. Therefore, the United Nations adopted the resolution 660 which condemned the invasion on Kuwait and demanded that Iraq ‘withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces to the positions in which they were located on 1 August 1990. When Iraq failed to comply with the aims that were stated in resolution 660, United States of America’s represent in the Security Council, Mr. Pickering, with the support

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67 The Presidency of the Council rotates monthly, according to the English alphabetical listing of its member States (UN information).
68 A coup d’état is the sudden overthrow of a government through unconstitutional means. It concentrates just on the top power figures and it is a fast and sudden strike against the prior government leadership (A/N).
of almost every other member states, presented a draft resolution that firstly
demanded the immediate implementation of the United Nations Security Council
resolution 660. Secondly, due to that solely condemnations and protests had not
worked, the draft resolution proposed new measures that would give more decisive
effects to the condemnations of the invasion and the demand of immediate and
unconditional withdrawal. 70

The new measure was economic sanctions.

On 6 August 1990, with the help of resolution 661, the United Nations and all of its
member states imposed economic sanctions on Iraq. Initially sanctions were viewed
as a short-term penalty to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait at first. 71

4. 1. 2 The economic sanctions in the aftermath of the First Gulf War

Why were the economic sanctions maintained on Iraq after the first Gulf war, which
ended 28 February 1991?

The mother of all resolutions72, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 687,
was adopted on April 3 1991, almost a month following the end of hostilities. In brief,
the resolution demanded that Iraq eliminate all its WMD, research into WMD, and
dismantle any infrastructure associated with those programs in accordance with
Section C, paragraphs 7 – 13 of this resolution. Iraq was called upon to undertake
these measures subject to monitoring and verification by the United Nations. The
resolution stipulates that in accordance with Section F, paragraph 22 of res. 687, the
UN prohibitions against the export of commodities and products originating in Iraq
and the import of goods into Iraq would have no further force or effect once Iraq had
eliminated all its WMD and the means to produce them. 73

According to Professor Wallensteen, a régime change was not an option for the
United States government led by President George WH Bush; although Vice

(Meeting record from the ascertainment of resolution number 661), p. 16-17.

71 Arnove (2003), p. 185 (essay written by Dr. Peter L. Pellett)

72 Hashim and Cordesman (1997), p. 138

President Cheney and the others that often are referred to as the right wing hawks supported a policy that would overthrow Saddam Hussein.\textsuperscript{74}

The Kurds, the Shiites and other opposition groups inside Iraq thought that maybe Saddam Hussein would get his comeuppance now. The Kurds all said that they wanted international action against the régime but it had to include its overthrow. They see international action as a salvation for their plight, albeit at a very high cost. The First Gulf War did not lead to Saddam’s overthrow and the answer to why the United States did not “finish the job” is unclear. There was rebellion in the north by the Kurds and rebellion in the south by the Shiites. The rebel groups thought that the US – led armies would come to their assistance, but they did not enter Iraq to that extent that they came to Baghdad. However, when no American support was forthcoming, Iraqi generals remained loyal and brutally crushed the Kurdish troops. Millions of Kurds fled across the mountains to Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iran. These events led to that the United Nations established no-fly zones in those areas that these rebellions had occurred. Alas, no further help was given to the opposition of Iraq at that time. But the questions remained unanswered and left only an accusation of more Machiavellian kind;

‘Why did America save the Kuwaitis but not us?’, ‘why did not America complete it?’\textsuperscript{75}

It was not until 31 October 1998, United States of America dared to openly promote an end of the reign of Saddam Hussein and the Ba’ath Arab Socialist Party. Then the Iraq Liberation Act was adopted at the 105\textsuperscript{th} Congress meeting. It is a United States Congressional statement of policy calling for regime change in Iraq. The Act found that Iraq had, between 1980 and 1998 (1) committed various and significant violations of International Law, (2) had failed to comply with the obligations to which it had agree following the First Gulf War and (3) further had ignored Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Onto these bases, the Congress unanimously

\textsuperscript{74} Interview, Peter Wallensteen, professor of Peace and Conflict Research at Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Uppsala University. 2006-04-02

\textsuperscript{75} Hazelton, p. 178-179
stated that Iraq was unreliable. It was also now the active support to the Kurdish opposition became established and, more important, openly expressed.\footnote{Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-338) 105\textsuperscript{th} Congress, 31 October 1998 (also available at http://files.findlaw.com/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/iraq/libact103198.pdf)}

However, this policy had been discussed earlier and it was popular among many different political camps in the United States. For instance, on 26 March 1997, Madeleine Albright said in her first major foreign policy address as Secretary of State;

\begin{quote}
'We (the United States of America) do not agree with the nations who argue that if Iraq complies with its obligations concerning weapons of mass destruction, sanctions should be lifted. Our view is that Iraq must prove its peaceful intentions … and the evidence is overwhelming that Saddam Hussein’s intentions will never be peaceful'\footnote{http://www.smartsanctions.se/literature/iraqreport_050210.pdf, p. 12 (2006-04-27)}
\end{quote}

These were signals that the sanction policies would come to an end and their real aim was not only to disarm the Iraqi leader, but to overthrow him and turn Iraq to a new, democratic state.
5.0 How were the economic sanctions implemented?

It was resolution 661 of 6 August 1990 that imposed economic sanctions on Iraq, including a full trade embargo barring all imports from and exports to Iraq, excepting only medical supplies, foodstuffs, and other items of humanitarian need, as determined by the Security Council sanctions committee, which was also established by Resolution 661. They started to work immediately with a ban of economic contact with Iraq and Iraqi commodities. The full trade embargo against Iraq was decided to remain in place under resolution 687 of 3 April 1991. They were also decided to have pending periodic reviews every 60 days (paragraph 21) and every 120 days (paragraph 28) of Iraqi compliance with the obligations imposed under Resolution 687. 78

The first resolution was adopted surprisingly unanimously, only Cuba and Yemen were abstaining from voting and this without almost any discussion whatsoever. The second one however, faced a heavier debate and those who rejected procedure with the economic sanctions meant that it was ‘in contradiction of the Charter’. 79 This is not a surprise being indeed a highly controversial act from the United Nations. It had, almost with unanimous support, attacked a member state and now they forced the country to a total disarms. This had never occurred before and as Mr. Abulhasan, the representative from Kuwait, said ‘this stands in firm contrast with the failure of the League of Nations to deal with the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1936’. 80

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78 United Nations Security Council (1990) S/PV.2932 Security Council, Procès verbaux, meeting number 2932 (Meeting record from the ascertainment of resolution number 660) and United Nations Security Council (1990) S/PV.2933 Security Council, Procès verbaux, meeting number 2933 (Meeting record from the ascertainment of resolution number 661)

79 United Nations Security Council (1991) S/PV.2981 Security Council, Procès verbaux, meeting number 2981 (Meeting record from the ascertainment of resolution number 687)

As I have mentioned above, no-fly-zones were implemented on Iraq’s southern and northern border. The northern no-fly-zone was to protect the northern governorates of Dahuk, Hawler (Erbil) and Sulaymaniyah, i.e. the Kurdish population.

Due to the massacre on Kurds and other non-Arabs living in the north during the al-Anfal Campaign81, Iraq was divided into two separate parts; the central and southern Governorates, where Saddam Hussein still was in power, and the northern Governorates, where the Kurds got a form of autonomy. The northern part was constructed into three different regions, named after the three largest cities. 82

This was the first form of internationally accepted autonomy that Kurdistan ever gained.

Map 1
Map 1 depicts the map of Iraq with a special mark on the borders of the autonomous Kurdistan drawn by the United Nations.

Map description
The green lines represent oil pipelines, the red lines are major roads and the black line is the border around the northern governorates (also known as Kurdistan).

81 Perbal (2003), p. 39-40
Through the porous border to Jordan, the Iraqis could receive certain supplies, such as medicine and food supplies. This was the only official open border during this time. All other borders were blocked and the means were to place the Iraqi economy in total isolation. 83

To maintain that the blockade remained, the Multinational Interception Force (MIF) was installed. The Office of International Security Operations 84 and the United States Department of Defence (DoD) were coordinating together with U.S. embassies in the Middle East to enforce UN sanctions against Iraq. In the event that a smuggling vessel was intercepted, ISO worked with the embassies in the Arabian Gulf to identify a country willing to accept the vessel and dispose of its contraband. 85

As mentioned above, the Iraqi sanctions were comprehensive. This is so because that they included almost all forms of the different kinds of sanctions I have been mentioning; bans on the purchase or transhipment or Iraqi petroleum, the proscription of new investment in Iraq and Kuwait (during Kuwait was occupied), the freezing of assets abroad, the interdiction of air traffic and obligatory detention of Iraqi-registered ships violating the trade embargo. Due to that the Iraqi economy is mainly depending on its oil and gas exports it struck hardest on this sector of the economy. The Government of Iraq responded however by introducing rationing for basic food items and took various emergency measures to promote some sort of autarky. 86

From 1991 to 1995, Iraq declined to accept the United Nations proposals to allow Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil to meet the needs of its people because of that Saddam Hussein thought that these proposals threatened Iraq’s sovereignty. But, on 20 May 1996, after four months of talk, the Iraqi Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding 87, accepting the terms of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 986 of April 1995. This paved the way for the United Nations Programme ‘Oil-for-Food’, which started in December 1996. 88

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83 European Regional Survey of the World 2006, Cambridge, written by Moin Siddiq; p. 501

84 The Office of International Security Operations is the primary interface between the Departments of State and Defense on operational military matters (United States Department of State data).

85 http://www.state.gov/t/pm/iso/15965.htm, 2006-04-29

86 European Regional Survey of the World 2006, Cambridge, written by Moin Siddiq; p. 501

87 A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a message from one state to another. Frequently, this contains data of an attitude in a specific question that a state has (http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/4144).

88 European Regional Survey of the World 2006, Cambridge, written by Moin Siddiq; p. 502
5.1 Oil-for-Food programme

On 14 April 1995, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council adopted resolution 986, establishing the "oil-for-food" programme, providing Iraq with another opportunity to sell oil to finance the purchase of humanitarian goods, and various mandated United Nations activities concerning Iraq. The programme, as established by the Security Council, is intended to be a "temporary measure to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, until the fulfillment by Iraq of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including notably resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991". Because of adversities caused by the régime in Iraq, the programme was installed later than it was intended. The intentions were to have some sort of humanitarian relief for the civilians (medical and food support) already at the very first implementation of the economic sanctions on Iraq. This was also expressed in the first resolution that implemented the sanctions, namely resolution 661 (1990). Although, it was not until March 1997 the first shipments of food could arrive to Iraq and reach the needy. The first oil that had been exported ever since the oil trade blockade was implemented took place in December 1996.

It is notably that the delivery of food supplies took quite some time to get to the needy from the day that the oil was delivered. Four months are still quite a lot for starving people. The reason why it took so long remains unanswered.

In the initial stages of the programme, Iraq was permitted to sell $2 billion worth of oil every six months, with two-thirds of that amount to be used to meet Iraq’s humanitarian needs. In 1998, the limit on the level of Iraqi oil exports under the programme was raised to $5.26 billion every six months, again with two-thirds of the oil proceeds earmarked to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. In December 1999, the ceiling on Iraqi oil exports under the programme was removed by the Security Council. 72% of Iraqi oil export proceeds funded the humanitarian programme, of which 59% was earmarked for the contracting of supplies and equipment by the Government of Iraq for the 15 central and southern governorates and 13% for the three northern governorates, where the United Nations implemented the programme on behalf of the Government of Iraq. The balance included 25% for a Compensation Fund for war reparation payments; 2.2% for United

Nations administrative and operational costs; and 0.8% for the weapons inspection programme. 90

As shown in the table below, main focus was on food supplies for the needy in a much wider extent than to other sectors in the humanitarian aid fund. Due to Iraq being a country depending on agriculture and crops trade and self supplies, the agricultural sector was also a main focus for the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme.

The United Nations had a list of all commodities that were drafted by the U.N. Security Council. Besides food and humanitarian supplies, the Oil-for-Food Programme also allowed Iraq to import some transportation and communications equipment, spare parts for oil rigs and other infrastructure, and consumer goods. 91

Table 1
Table 1 indicates Iraq's cumulative imports by sector from 1997 to 2002 under the Oil-For-Food Programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Value of Approved Sales (U.S. $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>13.5 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3.7 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil Spares</td>
<td>3.6 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>3.5 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Handling</td>
<td>3.3 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>3 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>2.7 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication/Transport</td>
<td>2 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>2 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.1 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Allocation</td>
<td>293 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>35 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Affairs</td>
<td>10.2 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>4.8 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2.2 M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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91 Jones (2004), p. 16
5. 1. 1 The Central and Southern governorates

Saddam Hussein was only answerable for the 15 governorates that constituted the central and southern part of Iraq. Therefore, he was answerable for the outcome of the Oil-for-Food programme in these 15 governorates.

The United Nations was only responsible for confirming the exact amount of distribution of humanitarian supplies and to determine the adequacy for future need in the central and southern governorates. 92

However, Saddam was still depended on the United Nations due to that at the start of each phase of the Oil-for-Food Programme, the Government needed to hand out a Distribution Plan to the United Nations Security General that needed to give its approval. The plan covered a list of supplies and equipment to be purchased during the specific time, a budget for implementing the programme and the proposed allocation for activities in each sector of the Iraqi economy. 93

93 Ibid.
5. 1. 2 The Northern governorate (Kurdistan)

In the three northern governorates of Hawler, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah, nine United Nations agencies implemented the Oil-for-Food Programme together with Kurdish authorities. Distribution of food supplies in the north was handled by the World Food Programme (WFP) and medical supplies by the World Health Organization (WHO). As in the central south part of Iraq, the United Nations’ part of the executive decisions was limited even in Kurdistan, although in a slightly wider extent than in the other section of Iraq.

Along with the issuance of the United Nations Security Council 986, Memorandum of Understanding was also signed, allocating 13% of the total oil revenue for the humanitarian assistance of the Kurdish region. This percentage was divided per capita (according to population rates). The central-south therefore received 87 % of the total oil revenue. The United Nations did so to make sure the distribution would be so fair and just as possible to both the Saddam- controlled areas and Kurdistan. 

The outcome, however, would show a wide scope of distinction between the two regions when the time of the sanctions came to an end.

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94 Perbal (2003), p. 42
6.0 The effects and consequences of the sanctions

What was the result of the sanctions? When this is being written, 3 years after their abolition, this is still very hard to address to give a perfect depictive overview of the past situation. Therefore, this chapter is less describable than it could be, and I will give a description of the consequences just in brief. The only reason why I even chose to include this topic in my essay is that I feel it is necessary for the reader to understand some of the consequences that economic sanctions are possible to cause and it is my hope of this suiting also as a help for the reader to understand how sanctions are implemented.

Especially in the case of humanitarian situation, facts differ and opinions are divergent. As I have mentioned in Chapter two, there are huge problems with data collection and the interpretation of the results. Due to that a lot of these researches that had been made prior the fall of Saddam, 2003, were done by organizations that sat in the lap of a dictator, data that deals with statistics and tables compiled at that time must be considered to have a very low rate of creditability. Almost all of the data I have found during my research is partial and biased, due to that they derive mostly from the United Nations or organizations linked to the United Nations, and they were an active faction within this conflict.

One of the most alarming reports on the consequences of the sanctions appeared in a December 1995 letter to ‘The Lancet’, the journal of the British Medical Association. This source laid the background to a lot of researching thereafter. However, in October 1997 ‘The Lancet’ published another letter from the director of the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), Sarah Zaidi, saying that the results of the 1995 survey were just based on estimates and that she ‘cast grave doubts on the most important findings of the 1995 report’. 95

Sadly, this information is still in use by a lot of scholars and circulates among different kinds of sources. Furthermore, this major disavowal of the catastrophic numbers also, very strangely, went unnoticed by the press. But since I do not intend to conduct a piece with focus on source criticism sole, I wish to end this introduction for Chapter 6 with a request to the reader to be aware of this debate about source criticism of data concerning the economic sanctions on Iraq.

95 Garfield (1999), p. 7-8
No modern humanitarian emergency has been as intensely examined as the humanitarian crisis in Iraq during the end of the 20th millennium. Since 1990, more than thirty major studies have been conducted on the impact of the economic sanctions. Although, the image is not yet quite clear and there are still several doubts about the exact outcome of the sanctions. They risk remaining unsolved due to the lack of information from Iraq, especially concerning the five years preceding 1990 when Baghdad did not reported any statistical information at all.

The reason I chose to link the second and third phase together was due to that it would be far easier to explain the results that the International Study Team (IST) presented, rather than tearing the periods apart. The IST carried out their research during the years of 1991 to 1998 indicating changes concerning health issues that might have occurred.

However, scientists and scholars are in accord of that it was a tragically disastrous humanitarian situation for the civilian population in many places in Iraq, and that the official United Nations report compiled in mid-March 1991, describing a 'near-apocalyptic situation on the economic infrastructure of Iraq'\textsuperscript{96}, can be acknowledged as true.

\textsuperscript{96} European Regional Survey of the World 2006, Cambridge, written by Moin Siddiq; p. 501
6. 1 First phase of sanctions (1990-1991)

Prior to the First Gulf War, Iraq had the forth biggest army in the whole world and a socio-economic situation that was, although shattered from the long Iran-Iraq war, giving most of its citizens a very healthy life and, relative to adjacent countries, a stable economic situation. ⁹⁷

The sanctions prior the First Gulf War can be seen as a prelude to the war and it was feared early that the economic sanctions would be superseded by international military conflict. Due to that Iraqi troops began to deploy along the border adjacent to Saudi Arabia, the United States and United Kingdom announced that they were sending naval vessels to the Gulf as reinforcement to the Saudis. The war on Iraq can be seen as a cause of that the impact of the sanctions was not enough for Saddam Hussein to give up his claims on Kuwait and retreat from the occupied country. ⁹⁸

Health indicators from the 70s and the 80s shows that Iraq enjoyed a living standard comparable with upper middle income countries such as Greece and Venezuela. Health indicators from 2003 are in far more comparable with very poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa such as Rwanda and Somalia. ⁹⁹

Although, it is important to remember that Iraq was a heavily indebted country in the 70s and 80s. Researchers estimates that Iraq’s debt lay somewhere between $50 billion and $60 billion. ¹⁰⁰

One can as well say that Iraq lived on borrowed money, and especially their military industry was built upon money from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirate and Kuwait (because of their heavy support of Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war 1980-1988). ¹⁰¹

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⁹⁷ Siemon Wezeman, researcher about arms transfers at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2006-04-10

⁹⁸ European Regional Survey of the World 2000, Cambridge, p. 480

⁹⁹ Hashim and Cordesman (1997), p. 127

¹⁰⁰ Hashim and Cordesman (1997), p. 133

¹⁰¹ Interview, Siemon Wezeman, researcher about arms transfers at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2006-04-10
The first important economic impact of the early sanction régime was that the economy was liberalized. To be able to create an autarky, the Iraqi régime felt needed to sell off state industries, services and agricultural land. Privatization de facto enlarged during this time and consolidated a capitalist class. 102

However, due to the socialistic agenda of the Ba’ath party’s pan-Arabic ideology, the régime saw the private sector as a way to benefit the nation and the community, not themselves as capitalists. In the beginning of the 90s, Saddam Hussein beheaded many businessmen due to that they held too high prices. 103

Another economic issue that is important to address is the international trade that Iraq had. The time after the Iran-Iraq war 1988, export and import increased slightly but between 1990 and 1991 trade plunged and both exports and imports hovered around $300-$600 million per year. When economic sanctions were imposed in August 1990, Iraq’s oil sales dropped from $10.2 billion in 1990 to $305 million in 1991. After the imposition economic sanctions of the U.N., Jordan and Iraq began signing trade protocols on an annual basis, renewed each February. Jordan was especially important for Iraq during the time prior the Oil-for-Food Programme due to that the border between the both countries was the only border that could be legally used for international trade with regulations from the United Nations. As this being the only border used for legal trade, the illicit trade was carried out elsewhere. Illicit trade in diesel fuel reportedly flourished along the Turkish border with Iraq during the implementation of sanctions. 104

The impact on socioeconomic events and health aspects caused by the sanctions prior to the First Gulf War are easier to address due to that the Iraqi régime collaborated more with international organizations during this time. The tables that have been presented by the Minister of Health, Government of Iraq, are considered to be a fraud by Professor Garfield105 and Mr. von Schreeb and I do not intend to use them. It is, as I have tried to explain above, still very hard to describe the mortality rise in Iraq during this time.

However, it is officially agreed that a short-term rise in deaths occurred during the initial embargo in 1990. Diarrhea and war-related mortality rose steeply during and

102 Aziz-Chaudhry (1997), p. 368
103 Hazelton, p. 47-48
104 Jones (2004), p. 6, 9, 22
105 Garfield, p. 14-15
following the Gulf war and postwar insurrection in 1991. Starting in 1991 decreased access to food and increased risk of respiratory and diarrhea infections led to a marked increase in malnutrition among those reaching twelve months of age. Malnutrition among women giving birth led to a high rate of low weight births and high infant mortality. Without significant improvements in sanitation, food sources, or medical care, many of the children with acute malnutrition after weaning became chronically malnourished as toddlers. They were at increased risk of serious disease and death, especially from measles, diarrhea, and respiratory infections. Throughout Iraq, grain and meat production fell, purchasing power and educational achievement declined, and the energy, water, medical, and transportation infrastructure declined. These changes left all Iraqis at greater risk for poor health outcomes. This risk was greatest among those with more limited access to goods, services, and infrastructure. This included those in rural areas, those with lower income and educational levels, girls, and those where the public health infrastructure was repaired the least.  

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106 Garfield, p. 46

Immediately after the Gulf War, Iraq was permitted to import certain supplies needed for medical treatment and health care. Nevertheless was a very small amount of these goods imported to Iraq during the first years of the sanction régime. From 1991 to 1993, humanitarian organizations imported only 5% of the medicines and foods considered necessary for Iraq. To address Iraq’s humanitarian needs the UN Security Council passed Resolution 706 in August 1991 authorizing limited sales of Iraqi oil to pay for imports of food and medicine. The Iraqi government rejected the resolution. In 1995 the Security Council passed Resolution 986, again authorizing sales of oil for food imports. The government of Iraq approved the plan in 1996, and the first deliveries of humanitarian goods began in 1997. It is therefore worth to note that humanitarian suffering became less appreciable, and became to decrease from 1997 and onwards until the Second Gulf War, but it had been more or less changeless from 1991 to 1996.  

From 1992 to 1995, oil exports averaged between only $500 and $600 million. This was a huge loss for the Iraqi Government. Iraq’s economic involvement in the world market, largely dependent on oil exports, varied dramatically during the regime of Saddam Hussein. Due to this, I believe that the best way to indicate economic fluctuation within is to describe the differences in the crude oil trade. Trading patterns have seemed to reflect the domestic situation in the country especially during the invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent imposition of international economic sanctions in its aftermath.

I will indicate these fluctuations within the crude oil trade more clearly with the diagrams on pages 47 and 48.

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107 Garfield, p. 14
108 Ibid. p. 8
109 Jones (2004), p. 31

The International Study Team (IST) carried out a multistage cluster sample survey from 25 August 1991 to 5 September 1991. Weighting of the samples included from each governorate was based on the population enumerated in the 1987 national census. Trying to get an overview over the possible changes, the International Study Team carried out same procedure every year following until 1998. Results from these studies, as we can see in the diagram below, suggest that malnutrition rose rapidly from 1991 to 1996 and has been roughly stable among those under five years of age from August 1996 to March 1998. 110

Diagram 1

Source: The basic data derives from the International Study Team and UNICEF, the numbers can also be found in 'Morbidity and Mortality among Iraqi Children from 1990 to 1998: Assessing the Impact of Economic Sanctions' by Professor Richard Garfield, page 67-68

The biggest impact the economic sanctions had on health issues was the terrible decline of the expectation of life 111 rate. In the beginning of 1990, before the First Gulf War, life expectancy was estimated at 77, 4 years of age for males and 78, 2 for women. When the sanctions régime was removed 2003, the World Health Organization estimated life expectancy at 50 years of age for males and 61 for

110 Garfield, p. 67
111 Indicates the average life length in a specific country and therefore also depicts the socioeconomic situation.
females. This huge leap in life expectancy is only comparable with countries in Africa that had suffered from very harsh drought causing famine, like Ethiopia.  

During this time Iraq received about $1 billion in humanitarian donations for the first eight years. Because of this background, it is more or less unbelievable how these great fluctuations could occur.

Furthermore, the capacity of the Oil-for-Food Programme (that marked the beginning of the third period) was seriously challenged however by a cumulative oil revenue shortfall dating in the end of 2000 until the end of 2002. As a result, some 3,600 United Nations-approved humanitarian supply contracts for the central and southern governorates, worth some $7.1 billion, were unfunded.

In addition, Iraq sometimes unilaterally interrupted the sale of oil to protest Security Council policy or to challenge the United States and its allies. For example, Iraq suspended its oil sales for the month of April 2002 in protest of Israel’s military incursion in the West Bank.

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113 Garfield, p. 15
115 Jones (2004), p. 9
Diagram 2
Diagram 2 illustrates the dollar value of Iraq’s exports of crude oil from 1980 to 2003 as reflected in U.N. trade data.

Source: The basic data derives from the United Nations trade data.
Prior to the implementation of economic sanctions, Iraq’s primary imports included food, motor vehicles, spare parts, iron and steel, and medicines. Beginning in the end of 1991, the United Nations controlled all goods that were imported to the country, and this harmed the import industry sharply. ¹¹⁶

Diagram 3

Diagram 3 illustrates the flow of Iraq’s imports from 1980-2003.

Source: The basic data derives from the Direction of trade data within the International Monetary Fond (IMF) Organization.

7.0 Kurdistan and the northern governorates

Saddam Hussein became the first leader in the world to systematically and aggressively gas his own people. Between 1983 and 1988 alone, he murdered more than 30,000 Iraqi citizens with mustard gas and nerve agents. Several international organizations claim that he killed more than 60,000 Iraqi citizens with chemicals, including large numbers of women and children. During his two-year Anfal campaign against the Kurdish population, Saddam Hussein used these chemical weapons against more than 40 villages. 117

The Kurds have a long story behind themselves, bordered with oppression, betrayal and purges and forced relocations. The Kurds are a mountain people whose economy is mainly based on agriculture and pastorals (although nowadays might switch to crude oil sales A/N). They speak an Indo-European language which, like Afghan and Persian, is part of the Iranian group of languages. Unlike the Persians the Kurds are Sunni Muslims. 118

The population estimations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) illustrate a division of that at least 15-20 % of the Iraqi population is of Kurdish origin. 5 % are of other cultural affiliation, like Turcomans. 119

The Kurdish Security Zone occupied during the sanction régime three of Iraq’s 18 governorates. Although have many of these Kurds been pushed out of Mosul and Kirkuk in Saddam’s efforts of ethnic cleansing. 120

After this introduction in brief over the Kurdish population and its history and significance, I would like to present some of the Kurdish opinions on the economic sanctions on Iraq and also how the impact of the sanctions was onto Kurdistan.

117 Cordesman (2003), p. 5
118 Chaliand (1980), p. 11-13
120 Cordesman (2003), p. 5
Following the rout of the Iraqi army by the United Nations-sponsored multinational force in February 1991, armed rebellion broke out among the Iraqi Kurds in Kurdistan. This was called the ‘intifada’\footnote{Intifada is an Arabic word meaning ‘resistance’.}. In late March it was reported that Kurdish rebels had gained control of Kirkuk and of important oil installations to the west of the city. They could not push on their demand to form an own state, because it was not tolerated by the Turkish and Iranian Governments, so they claimed that their aim was the full implementation of the 15- article peace plan that had been concluded between Kurdish leaders and the Iraqi Government in 1970. Due to lacking military support from the multinational force the Kurdish rebellion was brutally ended and many Kurds were slaughtered. As the Kurdish crises developed, the United States was introducing a ‘safe haven’ for the Kurdish population in the north (1991).\footnote{European Regional Survey of the World 2006, Cambridge, p. 482} The newly declared autonomous territory announced 19 May 1992 a general election to elect a Kurdish Cabinet. The Cabinet was elected and installed in July 1992.\footnote{Hoff and Leezenberg (1992)}

Sadly, however, this Cabinet was dismissed a year later by the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly for its failure to deal effectively with the crisis in the region. A new Cabinet was appointed but several disagreements were still to be seen between the two parties, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). After years of a heavy intra-Kurdish civil war, there was a fragile cease-fire by mid-1998 between the PUK and the KDP, and the two factions agreed to promote co-operation in public health.\footnote{European Regional Survey of the World 2006, Cambridge, p. 482, 483}

It was a lot easier for the United Nations to collaborate with the northern section of Iraq, than within the Saddam controlled areas. Many observers also argues that the economic sanctions had a ‘peripheral’ strategy that combined sanctions with covert action, which attempted to mobilize the Kurds against the central régime and therefore serve the purpose of helping overthrow the political power in Iraq.\footnote{Hashim and Cordesman (1997), p. 2}

Iraq responded to this by declaring its own sanction onto Kurdistan, and some sort of internal embargo was installed. The embargo included, for instance, massive
electric power cut-offs and breakdowns in local water-purification systems. Therefore, it shall be considered that Kurdistan suffered from dual sanctions. 126

Despite these facts, the Kurdish region was undergoing steady development, especially after the relief of the Oil-for-Food Programme. This is quite the opposite picture than that of the central-south region of Iraq, where the situation even worsened in some socioeconomic sectors. According to a United Nations report conducted year 2000, the child-mortality rate in the Kurdish region was lower than before the sanctions, but the figures almost doubled in the rest of Iraq. The money, as I have written about earlier, was handed out per capita and the three northern governorates that unit the autonomous Kurdistan received 13 % of the income from oil sales. 127 A parallel study, which was carried out by UNICEF and local Kurdish authorities, also indicated that child nutrition had markedly improved in the north, and that the prevalence of underweight children in 1999 was almost half the 1994 level. 128

The income from the Oil-for-Food Programme was divided fair and just and it is therefore even more tempting to see for other reasons for the huge differences of outcome between the north and the rest of Iraq. And the fact that the central-south region was a dictatorship and the northern part was, if fragile, a new democracy, has proved to play an important role. It is also important to remember that, like the scientist Johan von Schreeb stressed; high infant mortality rates was for Saddam what low infant mortality rates is for Fidel Castro in Cuba, namely propaganda to win international support for the régime’s legitimacy.

Because of the huge economical problems that the Iraqi régime was facing during the beginning of the 90s, the Iraqi dinar was replaced in the central-south region by the ‘new dinar’ 129 to pay salaries. The Kurds, however, continued to use the pre-1991 Iraqi dinar. The outcome of this monetary occasion was that a ‘Kurdish dinar’ was equal to 100 new Iraqi dinars, leaving the Kurds with an economical lead over the remaining parts of Iraq. 130

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126 Hashim and Cordesman (1997), p. 86
128 Perbal (2003), p 40
129 The benefits of the New Iraqi Dinar were that the government was in possession of more assets than before.
Economic indications may vary and the tables deriving from the northern governorates create a very complex picture of the humanitarian and the economic situation in the region of that time. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a study illustrating socioeconomic issues in the regions of Iraq. On the question whether the person felt he/she belonged to the poor, to the middle-income class or the rich the answers differed even within Kurdistan. Hawler (Erbil) had one of the highest percentages of people who said they were rich and they also had the lowest rate of poor people, in contrast the governorate of Sulaimaniya was the only governorate in Iraq that had a higher rate of people belonging to the “poor” group than the average middle-income class. Still, it is very hard to analyze the relative high living standard among the Kurds during this period. It is tempting to say that the Kurds were so well of because they lived in a more democratic state than the Saddam- controlled Iraq, but the fact stands clear that the border between Iraqi-Kurdistan and Turkey was very porous at this time and black marketeering with crude oil were common. Although unknown in numbers, it is obvious that this had a positive effect on the Kurdish economy. Nevertheless it stands without doubt that the humanitarian situation in the northern parts of Iraq was way better than the situation in Saddam- controlled parts of Iraq.

The Oil-for-Food Programme seems to have been very supported by the Kurds, a lot due to that this programme was really suited for a kind of government that was positive to co-operation, and the Kurdish society benefited a lot from it. However, the Kurdish enclaves kept on fighting each other without any signs of negotiations throughout most of the 90s. Even greater changes would have occurred if the outcome of the general election 1992 had been respected and Kurdistan had not been divided into ‘Barzanistan” vs. ‘Talibanistan’. Both Jalal Talabani and Mr. Barzani could easily face charges of human rights abuses and the Kurdish leaders would better unite towards a common goal in the future. If they refuse to do so, the Kurds will continue to be seen as uncivilized tribal savages and end up in the same barbaric quarrel as always.

There is little reason for Western strategic involvement with a people who are determined to be their own worst enemy.

8.0 Conclusions

The economic sanctions on Iraq lasted for almost 13 years. During the 70s and early 80s, Iraq was a steady going country with a lot of the facilities of a welfare state. 20 years later, due to war, tyranny and sanctions, Iraq is a humanitarian catastrophe and probably one of the most dangerous countries to live in, in our world. How could it end up like this? The answer is difficult to address, but if it is possible to give someone the blame for the destruction of Iraq, it would be Saddam Hussein. However, the most important issue of today is to restore Iraq to how it was and try to look more for the future. International trade and economic development are essential to Iraq’s recovery from all the decades of repression, and from the adverse effects of international sanctions.

The purpose of the economic sanctions on Iraq demands a triple answer. The initial purpose of the sanction régime was to force Iraq to retreat from Kuwait. The idea was to curb the import and export industries that Iraq shared with the world community and therefore force Iraq to accept international law. The sanctions did not work, according to the researcher Siemon Wezeman, because Saddam could not accept this kind of shameful loss. Therefore, the United States and its allies were drawn into war against Iraq to free Kuwait. After the war, it was argued that a Iraq with a strong military force constituted a serious threat to the region of the Arab world and therefore the world community decided to let the sanctions remain, and they should do so until Saddam accounted all his weapons of mass destruction and destroyed them, and also reduced his regular weapon arsenal and military forces. Now a cat and mouse game over Iraq started with the United Nations in one corner, trying to detect and destroy Iraq’s controversial weapons arsenal and Saddam Hussein in the other corner, doing everything to humiliate the United Nations and to slow down their work. In the end of the last decade of the past millennium, the United States and Great Britain had enough of this policy and there was a shift in attitude towards the Iraqi dictator. This was when a hidden agenda along with the third purpose came up, namely to create revolutionary tendencies in the country, support them and then build a new democratic Iraqi state.
To implement sanctions onto a country is not a walk in the park. There are so many things to consider. Firstly, it is very difficult to execute a decision within the United Nations to punish a single country with an economic embargo or such. Many countries have their own interest and international politics is not an easy thing. It is important to remember that these sanctions were applied at a very unique time period in the world, with the Soviet Union’s breakup and the end of the Cold War. The democratic West could easily force both China and former Soviet Union at that point to vote as the United States wanted. If Iraq had annexed Kuwait during the 70s or the 60s, no one would have cared. It is hard to say, but the small countries played a very distant role in the big game of international politics those days. The economic sanctions were applied exactly the right time and it is uncertain to say if the resolutions 661 or 687 would have been welcomed as positively today as they were in the 90s.

There have been miss-calculations, fraud numbers, propaganda and naivety causing different kinds of outcomes of the economic sanctions on Iraq. The estimates offered by Professor Richard Garfield of 106,000 to 227,000 deaths of Iraqi children caused directly because of the imposition of sanctions are significantly lower than the claims presented by the most vocal critics of sanctions in Iraq (about one million). But even the more cautious estimates in Garfield's study are horrifying. It can never be overlooked that mortality of infants rose during the sanction régime, and it can never be overlooked when children are dying. However, it can never be OK to use numbers of dead children to defend your own power as a tyrant or using them just to mock the United States. That is simply not fair to the victims of this tragic event in human history. The humanitarian crisis in Iraq demands urgent attention to put an end to the suffering of innocent civilians.

On May 22, 2003, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1483, lifting all economic sanctions on Iraq, with the exception of arms and related military supplies. The resolution provided for the termination of the sanctions within six months. In keeping with Resolution 1483, the Oil-for-Food Programme terminated its operations on November 21, 2003. This was the end of the heavily debated economic sanctions on Iraq, but the debate surrounding it, seems to be a never ending story of its own.
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