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Iraq

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have been in place since the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

Malthaner's opposition to sanctions and another attack on Iraq have their basis in a trip he made to that country in October 1997. He traveled to Iraq as part of a peace delegation organized by Kathy Kelly of Voices in the Wilderness. With this delegation, Malthaner visited various hospitals in Iraq and to the north in Mosul to see firsthand what effect the sanctions were having on the Iraqi people. What he witnessed devastated him.

"Each place we saw children just dying of malnutrition," Malthaner said. "You could see a lot of pain on the faces of the mothers. It was really a horrific thing."

Malthaner said the sanctions have prevented proper medicines from being made available to the Iraqi people, and that food and clean drinking water are also scarce. A lack of construction materials also has prevented the Iraqis from rebuilding their water and sanitation plants and dilapidated schools. Educational materials in the schools are also outdated, which has caused literacy rates to drop.

Quoting recent statistics from the United Nations, Malthaner said 20 percent of Iraqi children born now will die. He added that 5,000 Iraqi children under the age of 6 die each month.

"I had to do something ... to stop the sanctions," Malthaner said.

Chris Powers of Irondequoit agrees.

Powers is a graduate student in history at the State University of New York at Brockport. In an interview with the *Catholic Courier*, he said he accompanied Malthaner to the fast in New York City to protest sanctions against Iraq, and also participated in the war protest in Rochester. He is a member of a campus-based anti-war group called Brockport Students Against War.

Powers said he joined the war protest because he thinks the U.S.'s arguments justifying an attack are weak. He joined in the fast because he said he can clearly see that the sanctions against Iraq are not working.

"It's more tragic because there's no justification for it," he said. "How do you get rid of weapons of mass destruction by depriving people of clean water and food?"

Plea from Iraq

Chaldean Archbishop Djibrail Kassab of Basra, Iraq, has appealed to U.S. citizens to call for an end to the U.N. economic em-



Reuters/CNS

Seven-year-old Sari Ali works in a blacksmith's shop in Baghdad in this Jan. 29, 2001, file photo. Some Iraqi children work hard jobs to improve their living standard due to the trade embargo imposed on Iraq following the Gulf War.

bargo against Iraq.

During a homily at St. Nicholas Church in Evanston, Ill., Aug. 18, Archbishop Kassab said the U.S.-supported sanctions have paralyzed Iraq, causing death, disease, widespread poverty and birth defects.

Archbishop Kassab said the sanctions have caused massive shortages in food and medical supplies, which in turn have resulted in a high incidence of chronic disease and death among children and the elderly. The sanctions also have caused long power outages, disrupting the country's factories and manufacturing plants, which are forced to close down.

"Everything I share with you today goes back to one single reason: The embargo, the sanctions that have been imposed on us for 12 years," he said. "If it was not for this embargo, we would not have to suffer without food, clean water, sanitary conditions for we have enough natural resources to use and to maintain a healthy life."

Defending the sanctions

A U.S. Department of State official, who asked to remain anonymous, acknowledged that Iraqi civilians had suffered under the sanctions. But the official laid the blame squarely at the feet of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's dictator.

"We would say we have never targeted civilians in these sanctions," she told the *Catholic Courier*.

If Iraq had complied with the conditions for lifting the sanctions — including weapons inspections — Iraq's civilian population would not be suffering, the official said. Asked whether it was fair that civilians should suffer from sanctions when they cannot force their dictator to comply with conditions for lifting them, the official replied that, unfortunately, civilians often suffer because of their governments. For example, even when aerial bombing is designed to hit military targets, civilians nonetheless often die, the official said.

She also said that the Bush administration is arguing for a regime change in Iraq, in part, because it would rid the Iraqis of a dictatorship that has not served civilian interests. The official pointed to recent improvements in Afghanistan as an example of the benefits of regime change. Under the Taliban, Afghans were on the verge of starvation from a potential mass famine last year, she said. Although hunger still exists in Afghanistan, she noted, the threat of famine has receded with the ousting of the Taliban.

The official dismissed the notion of lifting sanctions simply to alleviate the suffering of civilians.

"We believe that anything that would go into the country under this regime would be diverted for security purposes and aggression," she said.

Opinions on war

Many experts interviewed by Catholic News Service said they find philosophical

inconsistencies in Bush's proposal for an attack on Iraq and one or more of the church's just-war criteria.

In their 1993 letter "The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace," the U.S. bishops outlined seven points necessary for justifying force: just cause, comparative justice, legitimate authority, right intention, probability of success, proportionality and last resort.

Dave Robinson, the national coordinator of Pax Christ USA, emphasized that "all the just-war principles must be met to even consider a show of force."

Force is "only acceptable if danger is imminent and extremely serious," said Jesuit Father John Langan, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin professor of Catholic social thought at Georgetown University. "Given ... the reports on the technologies Iraq has, the danger really isn't. It's a serious threat, but ... there's time yet, which should allow us to consider alternatives."

Robinson agreed, saying the only way to ensure that Iraq doesn't have weapons of mass destruction is to "get U.N. monitors and inspectors back into Iraq."

Sandra Yocum Mize, associate professor of religion at the University of Dayton in Ohio, said the probability-of-success principle is reason enough not to attack Iraq, because an attack would ensure civilian casualties.

That premise is close to the principle of proportionality, which requires that the overall destruction resulting from force be outweighed by the potential good achieved by it. Applied to Iraq, this principle, too, posed problems for some.

In a letter to President Bush signed by 48 Christian leaders, including 14 Catholics, the National Council of Churches cautioned that militants could seize the opportunity "to incite people not only against the United States but also governments that cooperate with the U.S."

Yet, for Joseph Loconte, the William E. Simon fellow in religion and a free society at the Heritage Foundation, the principle of proportionality legitimizes the Bush administration's plan, because of the potential havoc nuclear and chemical armaments could wreak.

"In the nuclear age, with nuclear-armed thugs, there is a need to act offensively that's not inconsistent with the principles of just war," he said. If there hadn't been four years of no inspections ... it might be a different story. In (Hussein), you have a leader who is very much like a psychopath. ... You've got to do whatever you can to stop him."

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Contains reporting by Jennifer Ficaglia and Rob Cullivan in Rochester.

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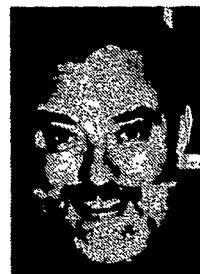
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