

essentially a U.S. policy. 'The United States exercised singular influence over every aspect of the structure and extent of the sanctions.' The Multinational Interception Force, which enforced the policy, 'for its entire history was under the command of U.S. naval officers.' The United States first created the policy by intimidating and bribing member nations to vote for it — offering aid to Colombia, Ethiopia, and Zaire to vote for the sanctions; making deals with China and the Soviet Union; and canceling aid to Yemen for refusing to go along. Then, by exercising its veto power over the implementation of the sanctions, the United States would put a 'hold' on various importation contracts — blocking agricultural goods, children's milk, food-packaging materials, raw cotton, and glue. The United States even 'blocked the purchase of salt on the grounds that it could be used for the salinization of leather, which contributed to Iraqi industry.' These holds were at times both absurd and devastating: 'Vehicles in general were targeted by the United States on the grounds, for example, that a vehicle that could carry a bulldozer could conceivably be used by the military to carry a tank.... Sixty percent of transportation contracts on hold were for accessories such as tires, car batteries, or spare parts, making it impossible to maintain or repair whatever vehicles there were.'

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"This 'dual use' rationale for blocking items that could supposedly be used for both civilian and military purposes was taken to obscene levels. The United States 'blocked a contract for 1,000 water tankers on the ground that they were lined with stainless steel and therefore were "WMD dual use."' A 'catering truck was blocked because it was refrigerated.' Propellant used to make inhalers was disallowed. Vaccines were blocked, because it was supposed to be possible to turn the weak viruses into biological weapons. Pesticides were blocked because 'Iraq might extract chemical components...to make chemical weapons.' Although the UN monitored how imports were used, the United States insisted on blocking such important goods outright. And although the holds were supposedly for security reasons, the United States was willing to reverse itself to benefit nations that went along with its sanctions policy.

"All the while, Congress was content to allow the executive branch to handle the sanctions, blindly accepting State Department propaganda and only occasionally speaking up insofar as it concerned the disarmament of Iraq and regime change. Only a few legislators spoke in behalf of the devastated Iraqi people. Gordon provides a very good chapter on congressional dynamics. Of course, even with the Democrats running 'both houses of Congress until 1995, for the most part they had little interest in the humanitarian situation.'

"The UN itself is to blame as well, but, notably, most other member nations, the elected members of the Security Council, and the humanitarian organizations within the UN tended to protest the policy as framed by the United States and to an extent Britain. UN agencies produced damning reports of the humanitarian disaster. UN secretaries general complained. Starting in 1991, nations such as India, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Cape Verde, and Morocco proposed reforms to allow for more humanitarian aid. In 1999, UN panels issued reports finding that the Oil-for-Food Program could not be sufficiently reformed to deal with the horror. In 2000, delegates from more than 20 nations, at this point even including the United States and Britain, gave presentations urging reform. But at every turn, "the United States either prevented the reforms from being adopted or undermined their implementation after they had been adopted.'

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"As for the well-publicized Oil-for-Food scandal, Gordon has a whole chapter detailing the facts, showing that the corruption involved was overblown compared with the destruction and corruption of the sanctions policy itself. Even without the Oil-for-Food corruption, the Iraqi people would have been virtually no better off. And even here, the United States is hardly blameless: 'By far the greater part of Iraq's illicit funds came from ongoing trade with Jordan, Turkey, and Syria.... The United States blocked any punitive action by the Council against either Jordan or Turkey.' The amount of misallocated money involved in the scandal was dwarfed, for example, by the waste and mismanagement of Iraqi funds by the Coalition Provisional Authority established by the United States in 2003:

From 1990 to 2003 Iraq averaged about half a billion dollars in illicit trade annually. By contrast, in fourteen months of occupation, the U.S.-led occupation authority depleted \$18 billion in funds, a good deal of it on questionable contracts with little justification but much of it just an outright giveaway of cash.

"None of this is to defend the Iraqi government, which Gordon writes about extensively in one chapter. Some people mistakenly place all the blame on Saddam's regime for its corruption and cruelty; the Iraqi state did exacerbate the problem but not as much as is often believed. 'The more serious failings concerned the basic structure and policies of the



### Van Fossan - Cooper wedding

Lori Van Fossan of Grand Rapids, Michigan and Carson Cooper of Fruitport, were married on September 3, 2010.

The ceremony was held at the bride's parents' home on Bear Lake with the reception following at the Fruitport Banquet Center.

Carson is the son of Ken and Sue Cooper of Fruitport, and is a salesman for Tandus Incorporated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Lori is a nurse at St. Luke's Medical Center, and is the daughter of Darrell and Suzanne Van Fossan of North Muskegon.

Following a winter honeymoon in Hawaii, the couple will return to their Milwaukee, Wisconsin home. •

Iraqi government itself: the centralization, the reliance on oil income, reliance on imports and on foreign professionals, and the reliance on advanced technology.' Indeed, the centralized nature of the Iraqi state and the widespread public dependency upon it meant that its bankruptcy under the sanctions regime impoverished the whole country. Gordon credits the government for some of its rationing and subsidy efforts, but it is telling that one of the effective and positive things the Iraqi government did was to allow 'the expansion of the private sector in health care, to compensate for the state's inability to meet health care needs.'

#### "Philosophical, legal, and political lessons

"Gordon finishes with a couple of chapters exploring the implications for international law and political and ethical philosophy. Libertarians will not be overimpressed with UN guarantees such as the 'right to health care,' but they will find very compelling the discussion of the Geneva Convention, war crimes, and the like. Gordon finds little legal recourse for the Iraqi people in the form of prosecution or judicial oversight of the Security Council. The sanctions, she concludes, probably do not rise to the level of 'genocide' or 'a crime against humanity' — 'but it seems to me this does not constitute a vindication of the sanctions, but rather a failure of international law.' She comes to a rather encouraging libertarian conclusion: 'It may be that, in the end, there is a particular risk posed to humanity by international governance,' whose institutions 'entail the risk of a new form of global violence.'

"Gordon comes to a rather encouraging libertarian conclusion.

"But there is so much to learn from this tragic and disgusting episode. Conservatives need to recognize that totalitarianism and socialistic central planning are indeed not just an abstract threat under the banner of the Democratic Party, but are a reality of U.S. policy, especially as it concerns foreign affairs. They must come to grips with the evil and systematic destruction and terror that are unleashed in the name of U.S. national security upon innocent people in other countries. Liberals should learn that central economic control and restrictions of free trade contain the seeds for near-genocidal levels of cruelty and oppression; that allowing international bodies to govern trade is far from a panacea but is rather a tool of imperialism; that no political party and no state — American, international, or Iraqi — can be trusted not to put political interests above the human right to engage in economic exchange. The Iraqis have been brutalized by the U.S. government for 20 years now, and neither their own government, for all its monopolization of public services, nor the United Nations, for all its high rhetoric, has done much other than worsen their misery. The rest of us can learn about the extent of death and destruction meted out by our own government, in our own name, and come to see why so many in the world would hate us and be willing to kill us — not for our freedom, but for Washington, D.C.'s war on the freedom of others. Invisibile War is a very important book about a very important topic, a topic at risk of being neglected and forgotten, as have so many other atrocities committed by the U.S. empire."

("Anthony Gregory is a research analyst at the Independent Institute, editor in chief of Campaign for Liberty, a policy advisor for The Future of Freedom Foundation, and a columnist at LewRockwell.com. Visit his website: AnthonyGregory.com. Send him email: AnthonyGregory@gmail.com.)

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