

# Palestine & Iraq are Intimately Connected

A Personal Perspective by Dr Francis Clark-Lowes

- **US Foreign Policy:** The future of both countries is largely dependent not on an objective assessment of the interests and human rights of their peoples, or of humanity in general, but on the perceived interests of the US power élite. Access to OIL is, of course, the central element underlying US policies in the Middle East.
- **US Supports Israel, Iraq Supports the Palestinian Resistance:** A key element of US policy in the Middle East is unswerving support for Israel. If the US presents itself as the new global police force, then Israel is regarded as a bobby on the beat. And it is the Palestinians who are being beaten! Iraq, on the other hand, materially supports the Palestinian resistance and thereby makes itself a target for US attack. Some disagree with elements of that Iraqi support, but whatever your view, the link between Iraq and Palestine is clear.
- **The Regional Balance of Power:** Israel has for many years had a stockpile of nuclear weapons and is not a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Iraq is the most credible potential counterbalance to the threat posed by these weapons. That is why Israel bombed a French-built nuclear power station in Iraq in the 1980s. It is also why controlling Iraq's capacity to manufacture weapons of mass-destruction has become such an issue in the West. The problem is not, as Western leaders have recently been trying to persuade us, that Saddam Hussein is uniquely wicked (he is certainly a tyrant, but in this he is not alone), nor that he aims to attack London or New York (logistically and tactically highly unlikely), but that his country poses a threat to Israeli hegemony in the region. Meanwhile, Israel's possession of such weapons, and the massive regional power-imbalance it causes, receives almost no attention and the courageous (and now sick) Israeli, Mordechai Vanunu, who first revealed his country's nuclear secrets, still languishes in jail.
- **'The War Will Give Us the Land':** First Israeli Prime Minister Ben Gurion's boast about the 1948 war has remained a constant strand of his country's policies. As he well understood, what is impossible in peace becomes acceptable in war. As in those days, it has again become respectable in Israel to discuss the mass deportation of all Palestinians from Israel-Palestine in order to enable an unadulterated Jewish state in the whole of the land West of the Jordan River. So much for Western ideas of multi-culturalism! We should, in these circumstances, consider very carefully how the war criminal Ariel Sharon is likely to use a US campaign against Iraq, particularly if a regional conflagration is thereby ignited.
- **Non-Compliance with UN Resolutions:** One of the main arguments for attacking Iraq is its non-compliance with UN resolutions. Israel remains in long-standing non-compliance with many UN resolutions relating to the Palestinians. The double-standard is staggering.
- **Regime-Change:** Imperial powers have always used regime-change as an instrument of foreign policy. It is, nevertheless, striking that the US is simultaneously proposing, that is dictating, regime change in Iraq and Palestine. Both Saddam Hussein and Yassir Arafat have for years been instruments of Western policy. Hussein was for a while the friend we armed to the teeth and then the enemy we loved to hate, thus enabling us to devastate and neutralise Iraq with a clear conscience; Arafat was the freedom fighter / terrorist (according to your

preference – I go for the first) whom the Israeli government (and therefore the US) would magnanimously allow to suppress his own resistance movement. Such devious policies, justified in the name of democracy, eventually wear thin, and then you go for regime-change, and start the process all over again!

‘Wait a minute. Wasn’t Arafat elected?’

‘Well, yes, but not like we do it in the US. Know what I mean?’

- **Both Countries are Arab and Largely Muslim:** Western anti-Arab prejudice – part of the more general ‘orientalism’ described by Edward Said –, combined with Islamophobia, makes it easy to cast both the Palestinian and the Iraqi people as lower forms of life, with strange and dangerous customs and beliefs. Their lives are infinitely expendable in the interests of US/Israeli policies, whereas ‘Western’ lives must be protected at any almost any price.

**We must resist self-serving imperialist policies**

**We should emphasise the humanity of all peoples**

**International conflicts should be resolved by the UN**

**International law must be respected**

**Down with Nationalism, Up with Multi-Culturalism!**

**Say ‘Yes’ to Human Rights:**

**for Palestinians,**

**for Iraqis,**

**for all peoples.**