

1. We, the undersigned, believe that **the current US-led and UN-imposed sanctions against the people of Iraq are immoral and genocidal.**
2. While we do not condone many of the actions of the current leadership of Iraq, we recognize that the citizens of Iraq who are suffering under the sanctions are powerless to affect their government. We believe that **sanctions constitute a form of collective punishment banned under international law** (UN Charter, Geneva Convention of 1977—Covenant Against Genocide), **and banned under US law as terrorism** defined by the US Legal Code (Title 18'2331).
3. We are concerned that **each day 250 Iraqis, primarily children and the elderly, die from want of basic food and medicine**, unavailable because of the sanctions. (UNICEF—4/98)
4. We believe that **the current sanctions policy, which has already killed well over a million Iraqis** (UN Report—9/97), **constitutes genocide.**
5. We believe that our government has embarked upon a deadly policy from which it is unable to extricate itself.
6. We fear that the judgment of history will be unkind to those of us who stood idly by and allowed this carnage to continue in our name without protest.
7. Therefore, we declare that **we will be considering all nonviolent means at our disposal to bring these sanctions to an end.**
8. We pledge to remain nonviolent, but confrontive, in our efforts.
9. **We call upon our friends and colleagues in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and other Southeastern Michigan communities to join us in this effort.**
10. We challenge the religious communities in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti to examine their basic beliefs and assist us in leading this effort.
11. Since the effects of the sanctions are centered in health issues, we call upon the medical, mental health, and public health communities to join in our effort.
12. We call upon the City Councils of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti to issue statements against the sanctions.
13. We call upon Representatives Lynn Rivers and Debbie Stabenow, and Senators Carl Levin and Spencer Abraham to support our endeavors by taking action in the House and Senate to end the sanctions and to reassert the Constitutionally-mandated power of Congress to declare war.
14. **We hope that our efforts here at home will provide inspiration for individuals of conscience throughout the country and the world to take action to end the sanctions and bring relief to the suffering citizens of Iraq.**

Sponsors so far: *Prevent; Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice; Womens International League for Peace and Freedom; Veterans for Peace.* Contact: Bill Thomson (wthomson@umich.edu)

Where the Path Takes Us by Will Youmans

Once in a while I am the fortunate recipient of the most eloquent and tidy hate-mail. Blatant racism exists at the “highest” levels of society, as is shown by the racist conversations taped in the offices of upper-management at Texaco in 1996. Now, for those privileged with easy access to the Internet, electronic mail provides the comfort of anonymity—a racist’s dream.

Being an activist who is concerned with such novel concepts as human and civil rights, I have occasionally touched a sensitive nerve with certain anti-civil and anti-human rights members of this great society. Most recently, my activism around the issue of the murderous sanctions on the people of Iraq has provoked many an e-mail war which for the most part did not go beyond minor name calling like “hey stupid, get your head out of your ass” and “bleeding hearts should be deported.”

It gets worse

Recently, though, I received a group e-mail which took the racist name-calling to a new level. It came in with the subject “A Call for the Elimination of Ingnorant (*sic*) Subversives,” and basically consisted of racist, xenophobic, and fascist rhetoric mingled with academic bird droppings. (See sidebar.)

Sure, there were baby arguments interspersed in talk of “ungrateful towelheads,” “brown parasites,” and “uncivilized, backward Arabs,” but they got lost in what is nothing more than the baseless words of a perverted hate-monger. Most of the author’s e-mail read like it was an auto-ethnographic study co-authored by Timothy McVeigh and David Jaye. In a follow-up personal e-mail, the same author wishes that my family would be burned with chemical weapons like some of Saddam Hussein’s victims were and that I should be hung and fed to my family (who would already be dead on his proposal, and are vegetarians anyway). That sadistic fantasy puts the e-mailer on quite a lower moral plane than Saddam Hussein, about at the level of his clear superiors in the art of killing, Bill Clinton and George Bush (1.4 million Iraqis dead in 8 years—Saddam couldn’t beat this with General Zod on his side).

Democracy, anyone?

The most perplexing idea conveyed in the e-mail was that disrespecting or undermining this “great free and open democracy”, as we anti-sanctions folk supposedly do, should be punished by deportation (my choice of the two options offered) or public execution (his preference). Last I heard, tolerance of dissenting views was an essential part of “free and open democracies.” This may be elementary, but for slow-witted hate-mailers, I will spell it out: disallowing dissent makes a society *nota* free and open democracy. Perhaps the author of the e-mail meant that a democracy where utter and blind obedience to governmental policy—no matter how imperfect or atrocious—and naive, unwavering, loyalty was the basis for being considered a “true” American.

But such a meaning strikes me as illogical and just plain zany: the notion that since most of us have some freedom to say and write as we please, that therefore we should silence our criticisms with gratitude, this just seems mistaken. My reaction is first, that such freedom is not a privilege, it is a right. Second, the intelligent response to being granted freedom is not to refrain from exercising the rights provided, but to take advantage of them. Third, if this is a government by the people, for the people, then people have no duty to be quiet, subordinate subjects of the state. Ultra-“patriots”, like my little e-mail friend, his comrades, and their neighbors the neo-fascists, seem to think that an uncritical allegiance to the state apparatus is the most important thing in the universe (except for the anonymity of e-mail, of course).

It’s no exception and no accident

Although it would be easy and comforting to dismiss the e-mail as an extreme product of society’s fringes, I fear that this is not the case. It is the work of a college graduate who has interned in Washington DC, probably been active in the College Repugnants, I mean Republicans, and is viewed as a productive member of society.

I view these racist, xenophobic, and angry attacks as a clear by-product of the campaign of fear which the US government, the media, and Hill and Knowlton (Kuwait’s PR firm, which masterminded the short-lived “Kuwait’s a liberal democracy” drive), embarked on to justify US policy in Iraq. Only after convincing the American people that, in the words of William Dordand of UC-Santa Cruz, “a Third World country with the gross national product of Kentucky was as dangerous to world peace as Hitler’s Germany,” could the genocidal sanctions and incessant bombings be supported.

Noam Chomsky referred to this common formula when he wrote “the standard device to mobilize a reluctant population has been the fear of an evil enemy, dedicated to its destruction.” This tactic breeds several consequences. For one, people hate those perceived to be enemies regardless of any real threatening intents or danger. This also means that they fail to distinguish the actions of an unaccountable, unselected dictator from the innocence of an oppressed population—as if it required too much brain power. Second, it is easy to be apathetic about, and as in the case of the author, even supportive of, massive starvation, suffering, and death of the racially marked and dehumanized “enemies.”

The path to follow

The e-mail I received clearly demonstrates the obsessive fear and violent reaction that has in fact mobilized this person to the length of fervent support for an unbelievably disgusting policy of genocide despite the moral, practical, and logical implications. As for blindly obeying doctrine and authority, if your role in society is merely to reaffirm the dogma of power and the status quo no matter how despicable it is, you are simply a waste of a citizen.

I find the best solution is to open up the mind, question what you’re told, and hold no allegiances above morals, ethics, and the sincere pursuit of the truth. I encourage all to look beyond the distortions and fabrications needed to push US policy, newspaper sales, TV ratings, defense contracts, and oil prices. The real deal is out there, the logically and morally superior answer is waiting to be grabbed. However, the intoxicated analyses of those simply reasserting the half-baked and incestuous shells known as policy obstructs the path that needs to be taken. I want to cut right through the moral and mental fluff no matter the amount of threats, attacks, and hate-mail thrown at us. What about you?

SIDEBAR FOR ARTICLE AT LOWER LEFT (apologies for font size)

Date: Sun, 14 Mar 1999 23:12:15 -0600
Subject: A Call for the Elimination of Ingnorant Subversives

The history of the great country has been littered with the remains of failed subversives: from British sympathizers at our birth to Communist sympathizers of our 20th century. Of course, as the history and political science departments here at Michigan can attest, the Communist sympathizers have merely hid themselves in the shadow of the American university since the only people that would take them seriously are naive teenagers and some old bastard on his deathbed in Cuba. The jesters of higher education aren’t smart enough to figure out why their cause has failed due the marijuana they smoked in the 60s which has left these poor bastards unable to comprehend fundamental economics—leaving them no choice but to seek refuge in degrees whose only requirements are a creative mind and the ability to place a verb after a noun. One last word to you sorry saps who’ll never amount to shit...congratulations on being able to manipulate the soft minds of children. You sit in your dusty offices pleasuring yourselves to the discredited works of Marx and Co. while devising plans to spread your ignorance to our youth. For those professors who take such delight I would like to remind you that in your sorry situations, Ph. D really stands for “piled high and deep.” Your lives are meaningless and worthless. You should do our society a favor and kill yourselves since you offer NOTHING to the world but idealistic rehash due to your obvious lack of intelligence.

Speaking of people that should do society a favor and quickly kill themselves.....

How dare you ungrateful, odorous immigrants and parasites come to MY COUNTRY and spew your bleeding heart ignorance and treacherous nonsense. In just about any other country in world (including those wonderful socialistic countries that dip-shit Michigan professors love) you sorry, smelly asses would have been quickly shot and disposed of. You sons of bitches have the audacity to leech the resources of this country that generations of my family and other grateful immigrants have created...and then criticize the “inhumanity” of U.S. policy in Iraq? Sniveling, filthy wasteful hunks of mindless flesh criticizing the country they leech off of...in support of nut who has mutilated his own people as well as his neighbors. Where was your outrage when he used chemical weapons on Iran? Where was your outrage when he used biological weapons on his own citizens? Where was your outrage when his troops raped and murdered innocent women in Kuwait? You hypocrites ought to be shot on grounds of stupidity as well as treason. The only justice in this situation would be to take your ungrateful asses...lock you in a room with your equally stupid and smelly family...and make you shower in mustard gas. After extermination of your subversive seed you should be fed to dogs. Heck, you should be fed to these phony idiots in the History and Political Science departments here at Michigan since those flat-lined clowns are lower than a dog. At least the dog learns to change his behavior once it realizes the error of it’s way. The damn leftist college professor still can’t catch a hint when even the rotten Chinese are adopting market policies to survive! Perhaps these pretenders would care to stand in a long line reminiscent of Soviet bread lines to await a yummy plate of mustard gassed Iraqi sympathizer. (By the way: WE SHOULD HAVE NUKED THE CHINESE IN THE 50s WHEN THOSE YELLOW BASTARDS WERE RIPE TO BE ANNIHILATED)

For those of you who come from the Middle East to suck my countries resources dry and then ungratefully complain about it: I would like it if you returned to your country in the next twenty years. Here’s why:

Hopefully someone will come to power in this country that has the balls to treat Arabs just like they treat the rest of the world that doesn’t fit their uncivilized, backward standards. I hope that this country begins bombing for the pure reason of killing as many civilians as possible in these rogue countries. One less filthy towelhead is one less bastard I have to worry about sticking a bomb on my airplane. At least this great country takes the fight right to the protagonists! The dirty Arabs are so lacking in humanity and balls that they must resort to killing innocent women & children when their heads are turned. Just because those unintelligible wimps can’t put a missile on their camel they must resort to the most gutless, reprehensible warfare imaginable. Don’t you dare lecture me in my country about U.S. policy toward those pathetic wretches in Iraq too stupid to do anything about their pitiful situation. Get the hell out of my country. Go to Iraq and starve with them you ungrateful shits! We should be bombing the hospitals to put the sorry sons of bitches out of their misery. You fools blame sanctions! You naive and laughable jackasses! Saddam has warehouses full of food and medicine! If those wretches starve to death it’s because of a deranged towelhead-not because of the U.S.

Just get the hell out of MY COUNTRY. Better yet, please hang yourself or jump into traffic. No, don’t jump into traffic because I’d hate to see you ruin a good car by having your worthless body dent it.

May the United States bomb Iraq and ALL of it’s smelly wretched people until it is nothing but a smoldering piece of charcoal.

God Bless America..home of the free, the brave, and some pathetic bleeding hearts, communists, and ungrateful towelheads at Michigan University.

If anyone has a problem with this I encourage you to eat shit...which I’m sure some of you are accustomed to in your “homeland.”

Date: Sun, 14 Mar 1999 15:21:12 -0500
Subject: To others interested

First of all, you should be deported back to the dirty, smelly Middle Eastern hut from which you were shot out of your filthy whore of a mother.

Do you have any idea how stupid you sound. Iraq has two scud missiles? If you know so damn much, why don’t you float back to that sand dumpster. Take your smelly family with you as well. So what if you listened to two assholes that this joke university brought in to speak. That makes you an expert? You’re a joke. You and your family should be burned with chemical weapons just like the Kurd and Iranian civilians.

You come to this country, leech on to our educational system, then do nothing but undermine MY COUNTRY. Notice I said “MY COUNTRY.” This isn’t your country. You are a parasite just like the other devils that rode their camels to my country.

If I was running this country, I would have you publically hanged for treason. Then I would feed you to your family. After their stomachs were full of your filth, I would strap bombs to their backs and have them dropped on Iraqi orphanages. As a matter of fact, instead of bombing military installations, I would begin bombing hospitals and schools. I would turn that dirty sandy rock in the middle of no-where into a piece of charcoal. After anihilation of those dirty stinky Iraqis, I would have all waste (feces and sewage) along with garbage shipped to what used to be Iraq. Iraq would no longer exist other than to be a drop off for America’s trash and shit. Of course you might enjoy this a little since the smell of feces is what your born out of.

May you burn in hell with the rotten Iraqi men, women, and children.

God bless America....home of the free, the brave, and a few smelly brown parasites that ought to be eradicated like common rats and cockroaches.