

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 661: INTERVENTION, DEVASTATION AND THE
INTERNAL COLLAPSE OF 1990s IRAQ

by

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Abstract

In 1945, the United Nations was created to uphold international peace and security. In order to ensure prosperity for all members of the international community, the United Nations implements economic sanctions against countries that violate pre-determined standards. Such was the case in August of 1990; when the United Nations created UN Resolution 661 in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. What followed was a 13-year sanctions regime against Iraq that created a humanitarian crisis, specifically in the areas of healthcare, infrastructure, and domestic economy. The use of sanctions by the United Nations violated their purported goal of promoting peace and prosperity for all. Instead, sanctions create more instability for the states they are placed on and the UN continues to prey on vulnerable populations by instituting sanctions, as happened in Iraq with UN Resolution 661.

Introduction

“The United Nations was born in the hope that survived a world war, the hope of a world moving toward justice, escaping old patterns of conflict and fear. The founding members resolved that the peace of the world must never again be destroyed by the will and wickedness of any man.”¹

On September 12, 2002 President George W. Bush issued a passionate call to action a year after the famed terrorist attack on United States soil on September 11, 2001. Addressing the room filled with delegates of the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush cited the creation of the United Nations following World War II. He went on to give riveting remarks about the ways the Iraqi regime had continued to engage in violations of sanctions that were placed on the country twelve years prior, in 1990. These violations included the continued oppression by Saddam Hussein on his own people, the continued production of “Weapons of Mass Destruction” and the continuation of support for other terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East. This speech by President Bush showcased how the international support and continued call for sanctions against Iraq was apparent even near the end of the sanctions regime. This speech called upon the high power of the United Nations to produce even more actions against Iraq and its population, even after regional instability had already ensued. While President Bush’s speech was a call to action, it also provided the world with a clear understanding of how to tap into the potential of the United Nations; by calling for action in the name of international peace and security.

Citing the violation of Chapter VII of the United Nations charter, the Security Council of the United Nations voted to institute sanctions on the country of Iraq in August of 1990. This

¹ George W. Bush, “President’s Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly,” (speech, New York, NY, September 12, 2002,) <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>.

decision came at the heels of Saddam Hussein using armed forces to invade the country of Kuwait, which the United Nations determined was, “a breach of international peace and security.”² Chapter VII of the UN Charter states,

All Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security.³

The United Nations implemented this excessive use of comprehensive sanctions over a 13-year period against a country whose population suffered greatly. Given the power by the population of the international community, the United Nations exercised its ability to implement growth-halting sanctions against countries throughout history, but United Nations Resolution 661 was the first instance of sanctions that created a humanitarian crisis while still ensuing international support.⁴ The current historiography has failed to recognize not only the role that Resolution 661 played in the internal collapse of Iraq but also the role that the United Nations played in the creation, utilization and continuation of these sanctions. This thesis will combine both of these aspects to add more scholarship regarding the use of multilateral organizations in the intervention of other countries in order to promote international peace and prosperity, specifically through examining the most comprehensive use of sanctions to date.

² United Nations Security Council Resolution 660, *The Situation between Iraq and Kuwait*, S/RES/660 (1990).

³ “Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression,” United Nations Charter, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html>.

⁴ For this thesis, the ‘international community’ can be defined as all members of populations within a nation that exist and are active within their nation. This includes but is not limited to: government officials, workers, average citizens, students, etc.

To examine how sanctions against Iraq by the United Nations showcased a misuse of power by the United Nations, this thesis will first examine the origin of the United Nations along with the power that was wielded in 1990. Second, an in-depth look at United Nations Resolution 661 and the hardships that the civilization of Iraq had to bear through the lens' of healthcare, infrastructure and domestic economy will be analyzed. These three areas are all interconnected due to the lack of revenue for oil exports, which in turn caused the collapse the domestic economy and infrastructure wherein the healthcare system is located. Finally, international economies and opinions will be brought into the fold by taking a step outside of Iraq and looking at how the United Nations influenced other countries from 1990 until 2003. All of this will aim to answer the question if there was a misuse of power by the United Nations with Resolution 661 and if there has been any recognition and change by the UN since the failures of Resolution 661.

United Nations sanctions are a Cold War legacy that are still utilized today, with the most famous sanctions placed against Cuba and other Latin American countries. In an article in *The Guardian*, Kenneth Rogoff reaffirms that the Cold-War use of sanctions was meant to destabilize unfriendly governments by both the United States and the Soviet Union. Rogoff describes the outdated use of sanctions not succeeding in most cases because countries do not comply to sanctions. When countries do not follow the sanctions placed on them, Rogoff also states that countries do not reevaluate the domestic system in place.⁵ This means that after sanctions are introduced and determined to be a failure, there is not effort to re-engage with the domestic systems such as infrastructure or the government in order to find a way in which sanctions could be the most effective for all members. If the purpose of sanctions is to destabilize unfriendly

⁵ Julian Borger, "Mosul dam engineers warn it could fail at any time, killing 1m people," *The Guardian*, March 2, 2016.

governments, this goal will never be achieved if countries do not follow the regulations and examine their system of government. Sanctions can be seen as outdated following the creation of UN Resolution 661 because sanctions are a continuation of old policy that was found during and immediately after the Cold War. The opportunity to shape the moment with both the US and the USSR working together in tandem overshadowed the continued use of an outdated and failed policy. There was no counter-strategy or other plan, sanctions were the only option on the table in 1990.

In another examination of the use of sanctions, Peter Andres writes that sanctions can manipulate the targeted country through many means but the negative unintended consequences of direct United Nations sanctions creates the ensuing humanitarian crisis within these states.⁶ There are some instances in which United Nations sanctions have been deemed effective by certain entities, such as the case in Libya and the former Yugoslavia, which resulted in the loss of weapons of mass destruction as well as a push towards a more democratic government.⁷ In one of the first comprehensive economic studies of all sanctions imposed by the United Nations, the findings concur that the use of United Nations sanctions could have varying degrees of success in regards to upsetting a regime or curbing the creation of weapons of mass destruction.⁸ It is important to recognize these successes within the United Nations but the failures outweigh the successes since these are so rare. These minor or temporary successes of the United Nations within aggressor states do not outweigh the ensuing regional and international instability that follows when sanctions are placed on states. Such was the case in Iraq during the 13-year period

⁶ Peter Andres, "Criminalizing Consequences of Sanctions: Embargo Busting and Its Legacy".

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kimberly Ann Elliot, Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Jeffrey J. Schott, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered, 3rd Edition*, (Washington, DC: Printing United Book Press, 2007,) 156-158.

of sanctions. This power that the United Nations has wielded since the 1940s had morphed into a weapon of chaos which has created more insecurity within the international community.

The utter collapse and devastation within the country of Iraq was unprecedented considering its strong position in not only the Middle East and North Africa region, but also in the international community. Prior to sanctions in 1990, the country of Iraq had asserted itself to be near the top of developed nations within the Middle Eastern region in the areas of healthcare, infrastructure and economy. A country study done by the United States army completed in 1990 showed that Iraq had made these changes in such a way that benefited a majority of the Iraqi population. Massive economic projects such as a paved road network, the building of a pipeline as well as the building of the Mosul Dam created a strong infrastructure.⁹ This allowed for the movement of goods throughout the country, including profit from oil and other resources. The economy also became settled and revenue was coming into the country in response to high oil sales, which averaged around \$11.3 U.S in the year 1988.¹⁰ The healthcare system within Iraq was also flourishing prior to sanctions, which is described by author Sarah Graham-Brown as, “centralized in organization, highly medicalized, with a heavy dependence on prescribing drugs.”¹¹ According to the Regional Health Systems Observatory’s Health System Profile on Iraq the 1970s and 1980s was a time of exponential growth for the healthcare system.¹² Iraq also imported around \$500 million in medical supplies, including drugs, before the sanctions were placed in 1990.¹³ The international community recognized the great strides that Iraq had made

⁹ Department of the Army, “Iraq: A Country Study, 4th Edition,” 1990, xvi.

¹⁰ Ibid, xvii.

¹¹ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq* (New York: NY, St. Martin Press, 1999), 181.

¹² Regional Health Systems Observatory-World Health Organization, “Health System Profile: Iraq”, 2006, 5.

¹³ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam*, 180.

under the rule of Saddam Hussein, despite some military turmoil which was seen during the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s. All of this massive growth in the late 1980s would soon collapse under UN sanctions at the turn of the decade.

With the analysis of United Nations government documents as well as interviews and newspaper articles from not only non-governmental organizations and other experts in the areas of healthcare and infrastructure and other sources, points to the humanitarian crisis and unintended consequences of United Nations sanctions against Iraq. These primary sources will be used to depict the hardships of Iraqi citizens during the sanctions era as well as the regional and international instability that appeared in the region due to United Nations sanctions. Secondary sources have also been utilized, including journal articles on the history of sanctions as well as multiple scholarly books on specific instances of regional instability within Iraq. No sources have been consulted with regards to the United States military invasion of Iraq because the emphasis of this thesis is on the misuse of the United Nations method of imposing sanctions, not United States military tactics in regard to curbing Saddam Hussain and Iraq. This paper demonstrates the negligence of the international community in placing an outdated method of sanctions on a country and region that was already unstable during a time of uncertainty for members of the UN, due to the year of 1990 providing the opportunity for a change in tactics and the role of the UN as a multilateral organization. This practice of implementing sanctions on a country that has previously had turmoil creates a vacuum of instability along with reinforcing the idea that comprehensive sanctions will lead to a viable solution.

Chapter 1: A Crack in the Foundation: How 1990s Sanctions Begins to Re-Shape the United Nations

*“May God assist and support the Council.”¹⁴
-Representative of Kuwait, August 6th, 1990*

Rising out of the ashes of World War II, the United Nations was founded under the umbrella of international peace and security. As the League of Nations failed and a new organization known as the United Nations came to be, an unprecedented international order arose with the intent to prevent large-scale conflict and to protect the global citizens from harm. With the first congregation of 50 representatives converging on San Francisco, California on October 24, 1945 to sign into existence the United Nations Charter, it was clear to all members that this organization would produce great results. “We the Peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” These opening lines stood as a beacon of hope for all to see throughout the world which provides a promise that the monstrosities that occurred during the past two world wars would never again plague this great planet.¹⁵ While the pain and fear of the preceding events of the Second World War most certainly guided the Charter, the use of sanctions against aggressor states beginning in 1966 would prove to the international community that the United Nations unwittingly, but nevertheless actively, goes against its own charter in

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty-Third Meeting*, S/PV.2933 (1990).

Representative of Kuwait speaking to the Security Council of the United Nations on August 6, 1990.

¹⁵ “United Nations Charter,” United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>.

creating more international and domestic instability within the states that they target. The use of sanctions by the United Nations have become the new norm in curbing aggressor states and leaders, but ultimately have produced less-than desirable results within the countries in which they are instituted. Such is the case with Iraq, which saw the most comprehensive institution of sanctions in the modern age was implemented. It caused the United Nations to reevaluate the use of sanctions, which highlights how the intention of creating safety and prosperity for all actually creates more destruction. Along with the deviation from their own charter, the specific instance of sanctions within Iraq provided a real turning point for the United Nations. The United Nations was put in uncharted territory by the possibility of the United States and the Soviet Union to work together for the first time since the beginning of the Cold War. An organization that was given enormous power after a time of great vulnerability for the world following the end of Cold War was able to capitalize on a situation that seemingly was a threat to the international community.

Sanctions have been around since at least 1966, with the first instance of sanctions in Rhodesia to overthrow their government. The United Nations has implemented sanctions another 25 times since 1966. According to the United Nations, sanctions are, “most effective at maintaining or restoring international peace and security.”¹⁶ Sanctions are typically placed in the form of economic embargos with the hope for some sort of desirable action to be taken. By placing an economic embargo, sanctions would essentially cripple all aspect of society including infrastructure, government practices and other essential services. At the same time that the

¹⁶ “Sanctions,” United Nations Security Council, <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/information>.

United Nations believed sanctions would bring about change, they also would create lasting effects within the state that they are placed in.

The United Nations truly gained its footing during the Cold War era. During this time, members of the United Nations, specifically the Big Three countries of the UK, the US and the USSR, were trying to find a balance in international cooperation and what purpose the United Nations would serve during this time. The Cold War was a time of tension for not only the United States and the Soviet Union, but also for the international community. The Cold War was not a particularly active time for the United Nations in terms of sanctions, with sanctions only being implemented twice during this era.¹⁷ The United Nations work was overshadowed by the problems between the US and the USSR engaging in a proxy war. The power of the United Nations did not reach its full potential during this era and brought about a hope for change once the Cold War ended in the early 1990s.

Even though one of the powerful states of the United Nations, the USSR, collapsed at the end of the Cold War, the international organization of the United Nations survived. Mark Mazower has written widely on the subject of the United Nations and their role in shaping international policy. Mazower argues that the end Cold War was a period of great transition and growth for the United Nations. Mazower comments that, “The decades-long standoff between the superpowers had marginalized it [United Nations], but...offered the UN not only challenges but renewed meaning.”¹⁸ This “renewed meaning” included expanding the powers of the United Nations to be present in rebuilding the lives of people displaced by war as well as supervising the

¹⁷ Uri Friedman, “Smart Sanctions: A Short History,” April 23, 2012, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/04/23/smart-sanctions-a-short-history/>.

¹⁸ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Oxford: UK, Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

reconstruction of bureaucracies. Mazower also highlights how the height of the Cold War damaged the reputation and potential of the United Nations, but the emergence of the need for a possible international armed force and a clear, direct violation of international peace allowed this organization to take action towards the end of the Cold War. With the potential for a renewed meaning to international cooperation by countries such as the US and Russia breathed new life into the United Nations and ultimately pushed them towards taking such a harsh stance against aggressor states, such as Iraq.

This new role of the United Nations at the end of the Cold War provides the backdrop for the conflict of 1990 when sanctions would be placed on Iraq. With this unique situation of international cooperation following decades of turmoil, the United Nations took swift action against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Both the United States and Russia voted together to implement sanctions on Iraq and began a period of mutual trust between two major players who for decades prior had been on the brink of international war and disaster. United Nations Resolution 661 pushed the United Nations into uncharted territory following the end of the Cold War but did so with the hope of maintaining international security for all.

The practice of implementing sanctions did not happen lightly and by order of the United Nations, each sanctions regime has its own committee that oversees them. The practice of sanctions follows the chain of command through the United Nations. An act of aggression or threat to the peace and security to the international community is first determined by the Security Council within the United Nations. In order to prevent full-scale military action, the United Nations therefore may deem it necessary to impose some sort of non-invasive threat. This non-invasive threat is what is known as sanctions. These “measures” can include, “complete or partial interruption of economic relations...and other means of communication, and the severance of

diplomatic relations.”¹⁹ So, sanctions are not given a full name within the United Nations charter, but their intervention is implied. When the charter was created, sanctions had not been yet created or utilized. Therefore, this phrase does not appear in the charter but becomes the action of choice by the United Nations in the decades to follow. This action by the entity that promotes peace and prosperity for the greater good of all peoples is supposed to fix all international threats of peace but this is certainly not the case, like with Resolution 661.

United Nations Resolution 661 is, to date, the most comprehensive use of sanctions by the UN, with sanctions lasting a long thirteen years. What is historical about this use of sanctions is the voting record and debates that ensued to administer sanctions against Iraq. On August 2, 1990, the United Nations passed Resolution 660 which was the first of two sanctions imposed on Iraq. Condemning the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces, the United Nation called for negotiations to begin immediately between the two countries with the impending threat of sanctions in the future.²⁰ Four days later, the United Nations passed Resolution 661 on August 6, 1990. Under Chapter VII, the United Nations implemented these devastating sanctions because of the aggressive nature and breach of peace to Kuwait by Iraq.²¹ This Resolution calls for the prevention of all imports into Iraq as well as the attempt to purchase or transport of the shipment of goods of Iraq or Kuwait.²² This resolution also prevented revenue from coming into the country of Iraq through the form of selling goods and commodities from the country.²³

¹⁹ “United Nations Charter,” United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>.

²⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution 661, *The Situation between Iraq and Kuwait*, S/RES/660 (1990).

²¹ Chapter VII is from the United Nations charter under which the international body is authorized to act. The charter is the basis for all workings of the United Nations.

²² United Nations Security Council Resolution 661, *The Situation between Iraq and Kuwait*.

²³ Ibid.

Resolution 661 isolated Iraq from the international community by preventing any workings between other countries and calls for compliance with non-state actors as well. While the intended purpose of sanctions against Iraq was to force Saddam Hussein to remove his troops from Iraq, and later give up his weapons of mass destruction, the unintended consequences of these sanctions did not allow for these results to be achieved. The misuse of this outdated policy in an increasingly unstable region created a humanitarian crisis that still plagues Iraq today.

There was considerable debate which led to the creation of Resolution 661. In 1990, there were five permanent members of the Security Council. These five countries included China, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union. The non-permanent members of the Security Council consist of 10 other nations including but not limited to: Cuba, Canada, Romania and Yemen. The decision to institute Resolution 661 came at the heels of multiple speeches made by the representatives of Kuwait and Iraq as well as the written testimony of many countries, including Italy. Many countries who co-sponsored the resolution spoke in the Security Council meeting on this day in strong support of UN Resolution 661 including the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. Many cited the reasons for their support of this document was to preserve peace and economic security of all nations, since Iraq held a large amount of oil reserves that were exported all over the world. Interestingly, Cuba did make a statement to the Council on this day as well. As previously mentioned, Cuba abstained from voting on the resolution and the reasons are seen within the speech delivered to the chamber. Cuba cited the reason that they couldn't support the drafted UN Resolution 661 was because it had the potential to cause more issues within the region and also between the two

established governments.²⁴ While they do adamantly condemn the aggressive actions of Iraq, Cuba expressed that the actions of permanent members of the Security Council are not in line with promoting international peace and security, despite what the organization was created for. Under an imposed embargo by the United States, Cuba correctly predicted the future problems that would be seen with Iraqi sanctions which resulted in a humanitarian crisis. Although the majority of the speech was directed towards the large role the United States played in the creation of UN Resolution 661, it can be determined that there were questions and discourse among members of the Security Council that questioned whether or not this was truly the role the organization was meant to take. Ultimately, there were thirteen votes in favor of sanctions, zero in favor of no sanctions and Cuba and Yemen abstained from voting. This voting record indicates that the majority of the fifteen countries that determine the fate and security of other international communities saw it fit to punish not only the leader of Iraq but also its citizens.

On the same day that UN Resolution 661 was voted upon in the Security Council, both representatives for Kuwait and Iraq addressed the fifteen members of the council. At one point, Representative Abdulhasan of Kuwait stated, “The convening of this meeting today and the intensive efforts that have been exerted by the Council during the past three days are a reflection of the sincere international commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter.”²⁵ However, I would argue that what follows is the organization deemed by the people to keep the security and prosperity of all countries alive takes advantage of this power which the United Nations Charter lays out. Abdulhasan also states that it is the Security Council, and subsequently

²⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty-Third Meeting*, (1990).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the United Nations, “historic responsibility” to secure the safety of all nations.²⁶ This is a big statement from Abdulhasan that questions the integrity and purpose of this massive international organization. The role of the UN was questioned by a member of a community that had been invaded unjustly, so in some ways it is not surprising the next move by the Security Council. The testimony by the Representative of Kuwait cannot be ignored, especially when the argument is not whether or not Iraq unjustly invaded Kuwait but rather, the argument is focused on the actions of the Security Council and the United Nations. The response by the Representative of Iraq also called upon the duty of the Security Council and the United Nations to fail the proposed resolution on the table. Al-Anbari from Iraq stated, “We had hoped that after the end of the cold war we would see a new climate in international relations...played by the United Nations and the Security Council with regard to the maintenance of peace and security in the world.”²⁷ Beyond this statement, Al-Anbari also predicts the future economic crisis that would ensue from the implementation of this resolution, should it pass. These statements by both countries creates a picture of the Security Council and United Nations to be in an immense position of power and have the ability to reshape history. Such was the case with United Nations Resolution 661. For separate reasons, the representatives from both Iraq and Kuwait looked to the UN as a leader and protector of the international community. The UN believed they were upholding their duty by the creation of Resolution 661 but in doing so solidified the destruction of one population while protecting the other.

The creation, formation and continued utilization of the Security Council and United Nations highlights the ultimate use of the international organization which is to create and keep

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ United Nations Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty-Third Meeting*, (1990).

peace for all members of all states. The high power that was given to this organization following the upheaval of international peace after World War II and the position of mutual trust by the members of the United Nations following the Cold War ultimately gave this organization more power to press forward into the turn of the twenty-first century. This power was utilized and executed when Resolution 661 was introduced. Following the implementation of this resolution, several aspects of Iraqi society were greatly affected, with the healthcare system in particular being decimated. UN Resolution 661 saw the collapse of Iraqi healthcare, which was the not the intended purpose by the United Nations for imposing these sanctions.

Chapter 2: Internal Collapse of Iraqi Infrastructure and Economy

“The human and economic cost of sanctions has, indeed, been enormous, and it has largely been borne by the civilian population of Iraq. There can be no question of seeking justification for policy-induced human suffering of this magnitude.”²⁸

Since sanctions placed upon Iraq were in the form of sweeping economic embargos, one can assume the infrastructure and the economy saw complete and utter devastation. The Center for Economic and Social Rights produced a study in 1997 in order to examine the impact of sanctions against Iraq.²⁹ It concluded that the civilian population of a country was forced to bear the brunt of economic disparity and collapse of internal infrastructure due to an outdated policy of United Nations sanctions. This lack of prosperity in a once growing economy was seen almost instantly after United Nations sanctions were placed upon the country of Iraq. These sanctions caused both a regional and international economic instability which was seen in both a lack of revenue within the country of Iraq and the continued collapse of infrastructure.

The sanctions placed on Iraq saw the physical prevention of supplies being distributed throughout the country due to the embargo implemented by United Nations Resolution 661. The resolutions passed specifically prevented Iraq and Kuwait from participating in any of outside trade with countries as well as selling any goods that would produce any economic output. These barriers caused the infrastructure within Iraq to disappear as well as the domestic economy to collapse.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Iraq’s economy was growing at a rapid rate. After Saddam Hussein rose to power, he had his sights set on turning over massive profits within Iraq. This turn of economic power was modeled after a socialist economic plan with oil revenue at the top of the

²⁸ Boone, Gazdar and Hussain, “Sanctions Against Iraq: Costs of Failure Center for Economic and Social Rights,” ii.

²⁹ Please see reference 50 for background on the Center for Economic and Social Rights.

list. The country was one of the leading exports in oil, which produced a large cash influx. The economy was also heavily reliant on petroleum, agriculture and other domestic projects in transportation and infrastructure.³⁰ In fact, according to a country study done on Iraq, in 1980 Iraq had an estimated total of around US \$35 billion in revenue.³¹ Following the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s, the economy experienced a dip in revenue as well as a rise in national debt. Although the revenue of the economy was not as prosperous as it was before the Iraq-Iran war, the country did decide to make a sweeping economic reform in order to kick start the powerhouse economy again. Saddam Hussein saw this as more of a strategic move and therefore focused on cutting the cost of government subsidies, offering investment opportunities to Iraqi citizens and create an economic environment in which more Western countries could provide loans to Iraq when needed.³² Unfortunately, three years after these reforms were to be implemented the United Nations placed harsh economic sanctions against Iraq.

United Nations Resolution 661 specifically cut off Iraq's ability to trade or sell goods to any country in the world. This resolution also prevented any states from making any sort of funds available to the country of Iraq as well as importing or exporting any commodities originating within the sanctioned country.³³ The consequence of the decisions made by the United Nations in this resolution include the destruction of the infrastructure which collapsed in less than a decade, and the effects are still seen today. This chapter will examine in detail the once powerful domestic economy and infrastructure of Iraq and follow its collapse due to sanctions as well as how this lack of infrastructure played into an economic crisis. It will focus

³⁰ Department of the Army, "Iraq: A Country Study, 4th Edition," 124.

³¹ Ibid, 123-124.

³² Department of the Army, "Iraq: A Country Study, 4th Edition," 128.

³³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 661, *The Situation between Iraq and Kuwait*, S/RES/661 (1990).

specifically on the lack of economic revenue from oil exports as well as the status of the Mosul Dam, whose collapse has the potential to wipe out a majority of the Iraqi population.

Iraq was devastated in multiple ways following the placement of sanctions, but the part of the country that was hit the hardest was the economy. The economic sanctions used to block the movement of supplies into and within the country of Iraq along with the end of revenue from oil sales caused the economy to plummet. The country was mainly dependent on oil export revenue, but United Nation Resolution 661 forbade the country from selling or making a profit on any goods or commodities within the country.³⁴ The lack of revenue capability for Iraq was a hopeful wish for the United Nations in the attempt to curb Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program, not to create an economic crisis. Unfortunately, this move by the United Nations created a regional disaster.

This disaster is highlighted in many reports from multiple sources. One example of these reports is from the Center for Economic and Social Rights which was completed in 1997. This study argues that Iraq was devastated by the lack of oil revenues, which in turn caused the economy to completely collapse. This economic collapse reached all aspects of society, not just oil production. The study states, "The result of this shut down is widespread economic disruption and impoverishment. The public sector has reduced wages to \$3-\$5 a month...and industrial production is down 80% in many regions due to reduced purchasing power and imports."³⁵ The study also highlights how the regional collapse of Iraqi economy halted all state projects within the country. Some of these projects included infrastructure rebuilding, such as the Saddam (Mosul) Dam. These state projects were financed directly from oil revenues, which highlights

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Boone, Gazdar and Hussain, "Sanctions Against Iraq: Costs of Failure Center for Economic and Social Rights."

how dependent the country of Iraq was on revenue from oil sales. The study states, “The oil revenues had been used to finance a range of investments, expenditures and subsidies.”³⁶ The international community eventually responded to this lack of revenue for oil, but it came with moderate success as the program was contingent on Iraq not re-militarizing and following all the sanctions rules.³⁷

The domestic economic crisis within the Iraqi government affected the civilians of Iraqi society as well. Since the government went into a financial crisis, programs were not able to purchase necessary goods such as food and medicine for the civilian population. This caused the price of goods already available within the region to inflate drastically. Within the study, the CESR concluded, “With reduced supply of imported goods, the price of these was bid up relative to domestic goods and particularly labor.”³⁸ Since Iraq was not able to import or export any goods, this also impacted production within the country. Production could not keep up with demand for necessary goods in Iraq, which in turn made prices too high for the average citizen to cope with.³⁹ Agriculture remained a profitable sector of the economy but soon it too would face the hardship from the lack of import and export from United Nation sanctions. The instability that the country of Iraq faced with the economy only exacerbated the other crisis that were present due to United Nations sanctions.

The United Nations was not blind to the suffering of Iraqi citizens and the collapse of Iraqi infrastructure. A letter from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the Secretary-General, outlines the areas in which the country of Iraq was damaged the most from sanctions. The letter

³⁶ Ibid, 13.

³⁸ Boone, Gazdar and Hussain, “Sanctions Against Iraq: Costs of Failure Center for Economic and Social Rights,” 17.

³⁹ Ibid.

details inflation and the halt of the movement of goods through the country due to the collapse of the economy and infrastructure of Iraq. The letter states, “The long-term effects of such progressive obsolescence mean in reality the destruction of the industrial base and the entire infrastructure of the country.”⁴⁰

An in-depth look into the collapse of infrastructure within Iraq and ongoing regional crisis was highlighted by a criminal complaint against the United Nations in 1996 for war crimes by Ramsey Clark. Clark was a lawyer who frequently took cases against human rights violations and worked with other law firms to prosecute the United States and the United Nations for their unjust treatment of Iraqis during the 1990s and 2000s. In a series of letters presented to the Security Council of the United Nations, Clark outlines how the deaths of millions of Iraqis were due to United Nations sanctions but most importantly the lack of movement of goods which include: medicines and medical supplies, safe drinking water, adequate food, insecticides, fertilizers, food storage and other basic human services.⁴¹ He argues that the intentional implementation of sanctions caused the deprivation of essentials to Iraqi citizens. Other aspects of society such as education services and cultural gatherings were also no more due to sanctions and the collapse of infrastructure within the region.⁴² The government could no longer support these state-sponsored services because of the lack of funding as well as economic resources caused by the regional instability that appeared when sanctions were placed.

⁴⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *Letter dated 17 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*.

⁴¹ Ramsey Clark, “Document 2 and 3: Criminal Complaint against the United States and Others for Crimes against the People of Iraq (1996) and Letter to the Security Council (2001),” in *Genocide, War Crimes & the West: History & Complicity*, ed. Adam Jones (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2004), 270-275.

⁴² Clark, “Document 2 and 3: Criminal Complaint against the United States and Others for Crimes against the People of Iraq (1996) and Letter to the Security Council (2001),” 270-275.

The lack of infrastructure within Iraq was a heavily discussed topic on many segments of *Meet the Press* between interviewer Tim Russert and Nizar Hamdoon. Hamdoon was Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations from 1992 and 1998 and was frequently critical of both the United Nations presence in Iraq as well as the United States'. When pressured by Russert, Hamdoon engaged in a battle of words with the host of the morning show, discussing the negative effects of sanctions against his home country. On multiple occasions, Hamdoon recounted the horrors that the citizens of Iraq faced due to the lack of infrastructure within the country. Hamdoon was heard making critical statements including, "22 million people cannot continue to suffer under the sanctions" and discussing the plight of his own people.⁴³ In a separate prime-time interview with Charlie Rose, Hamdoon laid out the lack of infrastructure and stability within the region. He discussed with Rose the absence of revenue flowing into the country, which he believed to be a direct consequence of the non-existent infrastructure within Iraq.⁴⁴ Hamdoon's frequent public appearance on prime-time television provided a critical Iraqi voice against the United Nations sanctions as well as a window into suffering of his own people.

Perhaps the most obvious and most deadly factor affecting Iraqi citizens even today is the Mosul Dam. In 1983 the Saddam Dam was constructed on the Tigris river near the large town of Mosul.⁴⁵ This dam was built during a time of reconstruction for Iraq. The construction was completed hastily in order to create a more efficient irrigation system for the massive amounts of farmland that made up the countryside of Iraq. The dam was built on a bed of limestone and gypsum which is now severely eroded by the 11.11 billion cubic meters of water that are blocked

⁴³ Nizar Hamdoon, "Meet the Press," interview by Tim Russert, *Meet the Press*, November 23 1997.

⁴⁴ Nizar Hamdoon, "60 Minutes," interview by Charlie Rose, *60 Minutes*.

⁴⁵ Department of the Army, "Iraq: A Country Study, 4th Edition," 154.

on the other side of the dam. Problems began to arise immediately following the start of the construction process. Sites along the Tigris river frequently flooded during construction. Leaks and cracks appeared in the foundation of the dam and no adequate solution was found to prevent more of these leaks from occurring in the future.⁴⁶ These cracks and seepages, although readily known within the Iraqi government, were kept largely silent to the public and to the international community.⁴⁷ Looking beyond construction and into the early 1990's, the dam saw a large amount of damage due to the military invasion of Iraq during the Gulf War.⁴⁸ This damage was in the form of aerial assaults, which prompted the George W. Bush administration to provide funds in order for the dam to be restored to its full glory pre-1990s. Now, after the completion of the dam nearly 30 years later, the dam remains one of the deadliest silent killers in Iraq.

The damage from the military invasion along with United Nations sanctions at the time made these much-needed repairs to the dam very difficult and in some cases impossible. It is not uncommon for corps of Engineers, both Iraqis and outside workers, to reinforce the foundation of the dam. The same practice is used today as it was years ago which requires grout to be pumped into the weak spots of the dam in order to ensure the foundation will not collapse.⁴⁹ Following the discovery of the failing foundation of the dam by the US Army Corps of Engineers in 2004, immediate repairs began to ensue but it unfortunately was too late.⁵⁰ This

⁴⁶ "Mosul Dam Crisis," International Foundation Peace Ambassadors for Iraq, May 2016, <http://pafi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Mosul-Dam-Report-PAFI.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Nadhir Al-Ansari, *Geological and Engineering investigations of the most dangerous dam in the world*, 2015.

⁴⁸ *Middle East and North Africa 2004-50th Edition*, (London: Europa Publications, 2003), 496.

⁴⁹ Jim Michaels, "Mosul Dam risks devastating failure as Iraq government keeps stalling," *USA Today*, May 30, 2017.

In this instance, grout is a mixture of cement, water and clay.

⁵⁰ Nadhir Al-Ansari, *Geological and Engineering investigations of the most dangerous dam in the world*, 2015.

method has not found much success and the Iraqi government now is lacking the funds, much as they did during the sanctions decade, to continue the repairs of the dam.

The impending doom that the dam could and will bring to the city of Mosul and the surrounding areas is catastrophic. In a report released by the United Nations in 2009, the international body stated that the Mosul Dam, “faces a serious and unprecedented risk of catastrophic failure.”⁵¹ The failure of this dam would not only create the displacement and death of many citizens in and around the city of Mosul, but it would cause a large tidal wave of that would instantly kill a large portion of the Iraqi population. There are varying estimate of the number of people that live in the proposed flood zone, but anywhere from 500,000 to 1.47 million Iraqi’s that will be effected by the breach of the dam.⁵² If and when the dam collapses, a 25-meter wave of water would engulf the city of Mosul in under 5 minutes and would reach Iraq’s capital of Baghdad in around 3 days.⁵³ The height of the water as it would reach Baghdad would reach around 8 meters.⁵⁴ This kind of devastation would murder generations of Iraqis who have no way of protecting themselves from the massive wall of water. This destruction would not only wipeout bloodlines but also land which Iraqis have lived on for centuries, which would ultimately mean the loss of an ancient culture. This article also highlights how United Nations sanctions halted all construction and necessary repairs to the dam. It states, “the project was halted in 1991, when sanctions were imposed on Iraq in the aftermath of the first Gulf War.”⁵⁵ This dire state of this dam and the chaos that will ensue when it collapses can all be traced back to the lack of repairs during the sanctions decade. The United Nations impaired the country’s

⁵¹ U.S. Department of State, “Readout of the Briefing of the UN Community on Mosul Dam.”

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

ability to fortify the dam and ultimately provide the safety for its citizens. Instead, the dam has become an object of ruin in Iraq as well as a constant reminder that death is on the horizon.

This extreme death and devastation that could occur if and when the Mosul Dam breaches will not only effect Iraqi's but also ally states and the international community. As most countries do following a natural disaster, they provide aid whether in the form of money, physical items or manpower. The same massive resource allocation will need to occur following the breach of the dam since over half of the country of Iraq would've been wiped out by massive waves and there would be a large number dead. With the infrastructure still not fully recovered from the sanctions period by the United Nations, other countries will have to heavily pitch in to make the country of Iraq functional again, much like it did following the sanctions period and military invasion. It could be said by this near-present devastation that the United Nations created this future problem by implementing sanctions, and therefore creating more international unrest and insecurity.

The infrastructure and economy in Iraq collapsed when the United Nations implemented sanctions in 1990. This collapse was seen in the lack of revenue being brought in from oil exports, which in turn allowed for a freeze of the domestic economy. The reaction of this lack of economic revenue culminated in the failure of movement of necessary supplies for the quality of life for citizens as well as the lack of repairs on the Saddam Dam. The lack of infrastructure within the state caused quality of life for citizens to not be present and continues to haunt the region. The safety of the region continues to be threatened by the continued deterioration of the Saddam Dam, which perches above Mosul waiting to claim many Iraqi lives. In order for a country to have a stable infrastructure and government, they first must be economically stable. The country of Iraq had neither of these important elements of a stable states following the

adoption of Resolution 661 by the United Nations, which created this instability that sanctions were supposed to eradicate.

Chapter 3: Dismantling Iraq's Healthcare System: One Report at a Time

*"I sat in a clinic as doctors received parents and their children, some of them dying. After every other examination, Dr. Lekaa Fasseh Ozeer, the oncologist, wrote in English: "No drugs available.""*⁵⁶

A study done by UNICEF found that half a million Iraqi children died in the years 1992 to 2000 as a result of the lack of necessary medical supplies.⁵⁷ Although other circumstances such as collapse of infrastructure and lack of proper nutrition contributed to the rising child mortality rate, children in Iraq were falling ill with no proper avenue to suitable medical care. This lack of medical care included the lack of medicines available in the region. Unicef in their findings saw a direct correlation with the Security Council decision to impose sanctions and the rising child mortality rate in Iraq.⁵⁸ These sanctions deny access to proper medical equipment and medicines including cancer drugs, pain killers and other basic healthcare and nutritional needs.⁵⁹ With approximately 200 Iraqi children dying each day, even after the height of sanctions, the need for such a harsh policy against a countries' most defenseless segment of the population has to be questioned by the international community. United Nations Resolutions 660 and 661 created an economic halt on all trade in and out of Iraq, but these consequences went far beyond the economy. Sanctions placed on Iraq caused a halt of medical supplies to be delivered to facilities, a large increase in child mortality due to lack of healthcare and nutrition and a mass exodus of Iraqi physicians out of the country.

Before the sanctions of 1990, the Iraqi healthcare system was in a position of exponential growth to provide healthcare to a growing population. The healthcare system pre-sanctions in

⁵⁶ John Pilger, "Squeezed to Death," *The Guardian*, March 3, 2000.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Iraq has been described by author Sarah Graham-Brown as, “centralized in organization, highly medicalized, with a heavy dependence on prescribing drugs.”⁶⁰ This meant that the healthcare system was located mainly in urban areas and if for any reason prescription drugs could not be imported into the country, there would become a crisis. This is exactly what happened following Resolution 661. According to the Regional Health Systems Observatory’s Health System Profile on Iraq, the 1970s and 1980s was a time of exponential growth for the healthcare system.⁶¹ Iraq also imported around \$500 million in medical supplies, including prescription drugs, before the sanctions were placed in 1990.⁶² In a country study of Iraq completed by the United States Army, they concluded that in 1980 many of the practicing physicians were from the Ministry of Health that provided adequate health care that was free of charge to Iraqi citizens.⁶³ This highlights that the healthcare system was organized and highly functioning prior to sanctions with Iraqi citizens being provided more than just emergency care. The type of healthcare system that Iraq had created was one that was tied to the success of the economy and the government. If one or both of those were compromised, the healthcare system would weaken. One of the aspects of a successful healthcare system is the ability to provide ongoing healthcare to a patient at an affordable rate. If the healthcare system in Iraq had baseline healthcare free of charge, it can be inferred that patients were continually coming back for medical assistance, rather than being left to deal with potentially life-threatening illnesses without a care plan by a licensed medical physician.

⁶⁰ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq*, 181.

⁶¹ Regional Health Systems Observatory-World Health Organization, “Health System Profile: Iraq”, 2006, 5.

⁶² Graham-Brown, *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq*, 180.

⁶³ Department of the Army, “Iraq: A Country Study,” 117.

Besides pointing out the strengths of the Iraqi healthcare system, the Department of the Army study does find that one of the problems, which foreshadows the same type of issues following the implementation of sanctions, is the lack of trained personnel in rural areas of Iraq.⁶⁴ During this period, it was one of Saddam Hussein's goals to increase the size of the healthcare system along with the increased access to healthcare.⁶⁵ His goal was not executed well because there was a high concentration of medical professionals in large cities such as Baghdad and Basra⁶⁶. This left the rural cities with no immediate medical care nearby.

Despite this setback with access to medical care, the research conducted about pre-United Nations sanctions Iraq highlights how the country was progressing in a positive way and also puts emphasis on the continued work on access for healthcare for all Iraqis. How did a once strong healthcare system that was committed to provided accessible healthcare to all citizens suddenly collapse, all within a matter of years? The answer is found in the lack of movement of lifesaving medical supplies through the country and the mass exodus of Iraqi physicians.

Sanctions created an intentional physical blockade of essential medical supplies from entering the country since all imports into the country were halted. This lack of movement of supplies into and throughout Iraq caused a massive problem for the citizens that was not addressed by the government or by health officials. A special report submitted to the United Nations Economic and Social Council in February 1999 concluded that, "stocks of medicines and medical supplies have not been distributed as efficiently as required."⁶⁷ This lack of

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., xxiv.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 117.

⁶⁷ United Nations Economic and Social Council Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in any Part of the World, *Situation of human rights in Iraq*, E/CN.4/1999/37 (1999).

movement of essential medical supplies continued to be a major problem, even nine years after sanctions were imposed. In regard to resources, this special report also finds that overall, there was an inequity to the distribution of these resources to the people of Iraq, with some areas receiving more aid than others.⁶⁸ The lack of regulation by the United Nations on the government of Iraq resulted in this inequity, which exacerbated the ongoing healthcare crisis in Iraq.

A letter to the Economic and Security Council by a non-governmental organization that was present in Iraq during the sanctions period urged the members of the United Nations to lift the sanctions against Iraq due to massive human rights violations. It is again recognized in this letter that essential medicine and food continued to be blocked from the citizens of Iraq under the sanctions.⁶⁹ The letter states, “the Commission should request the Security Council to end all sanctions relating to food, medicine and other items needed for the survival of the Iraqi people, its livestock and its agriculture.”⁷⁰ In another instance, the Health Minister of Iraq, Dr. ‘Abd-al-Salam Muhammad Sa’id, pleaded with the United Nations Development Program to allow Iraq to purchase medicine, equipment and other necessary medical requirements to lessen the evil of these sanctions upon his own people.⁷¹

While the United Nations attempted to provide some sort of humanitarian relief to the suffering population of Iraq, the aid did not come swift enough. This aid came in the form of a

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Council Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in any Part of the World, *Written statement submitted by International Education Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the Roster*, E/CN.4/1999/NGO/119 (1999).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “Health Minister, UNDP Official View Sanctions,” *Baghdad INA*, May 22, 1991.

program created in 1995 called the Oil-for-Food program.⁷² The Oil-for-Food program was seen as controversial by many outlets. It allowed Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil for humanitarian assistance, specifically in the way of food, to combat the ongoing famine and other humanitarian crises sweeping the country.⁷³ Although it has been concluded the program provided some humanitarian assistance, it was not able to eradicate the damage the United Nations sanctions had already done. Following 2003, over a billion dollars of aid from the United Nations went into this program for the following six months in order to attempt to stabilize the region, but no tangible results were concluded. The lack of regulation and oversight from the United Nations against Saddam and his government allowed for the suffering of the Iraqi people to continue, even when aid became available. Instead, they continued to keep sanctions in place against Iraq and cause even more regional instability despite the half-hearted attempt to provide aid.

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society was a humanitarian society located in Iraq that became a voice for the people during the sanctions period. The IRCS orchestrated the arrival of the International Red Cross in Iraq as well as the transport of medical personnel from neighboring countries such as Syria and Iran. The IRCS frequently found that the country was in very short supply of basic human needs such as medicinal drugs, rice, sugar and milk for infants.⁷⁴ The society appealed frequently to the international community for more humanitarian aid to be sent to Iraq, as at the current rate of aid being sent only met around five to ten percent of the needs for the Iraq people.⁷⁵ The IRCS partnered with other humanitarian organizations to provide

⁷² Although UN Resolution 986 created the program in 1995, it was not enacted until 1996 until a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the UN and Iraq.

⁷³ "Oil-for-Food," Office of the Iraq Programme Oil-for-Food, <http://www.un.org/Depts/oip/background/>.

⁷⁴ Ahmad al-Dabbas, "Red Crescent 'Ready to Receive' ICRC Team", *Baghdad INA*.

⁷⁵ "Red Crescent Official Requests International Aid," *Baghdad INA*, May 7, 1992.

resources during a time of regional crisis, but it was apparent that the aid being exported to the country of Iraq was not going to provide the substantial help needed to reverse the unintended consequences of the United Nations sanctions.

Whether to defy the sanctions placed against his country or to prove that his country could survive without international aid, both food and medical supplies were left undistributed by Saddam Hussein. While over \$250 million worth of medical supplies remained stacked in warehouses, no attempt was made by the United Nations to pressure Saddam to distribute these materials to a sector of society that was in crisis.⁷⁶

It is important to understand that United Nations sanctions implemented on Iraq affected all aspects of society, including lack of proper water sanitation and suitable working conditions, that eventually had some sort of emphasis on the dismantling of the healthcare system. The healthcare system of any country is present in all facets of society and is very susceptible to any changes within the population. Infrastructure such as electricity and access to clean water were compromised after years of economic and military hardship, which became exacerbated through the United Nation sanctions. Health indicators declined following the placement of sanctions as well. These indicators like water, sanitation and electricity systems failed which caused a widespread of treatable diseases, but because of the lack of medication available, became untreatable.⁷⁷ An outbreak of these treatable diseases was especially present among the elderly and child populations within Iraq, due to their susceptibility.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mac Skelton, “Health and Health Care Decline in Iraq: The Example of Cancer & Oncology” (Brown University Costs of War Project, 2013), 1.
These treatable diseases include: diarrhea, typhoid fever, polio and measles.

In a study done by the Center for Economic and Social Rights over a 6-year period from 1990-1996, it was concluded that the working class of Iraqi society bore the brunt of United Nations sanctions over the years.⁷⁸ Sanctions created a chain of events that was seen in many families. If a person was physically able to work, they were often seen performing in a lower economic status job, such as manual labor. This meant families were relying on a single-working income, which many workers were compromised owing to illness or other disabling features.⁷⁹ It can be inferred from this study that since there was an extreme shortage of medicine and other essential medical supplies, a worker would be unable to be treated which then left a household with no income to support themselves. This caused a vulnerability in all aspects of Iraqi society if most households were reliant on one worker. The World Health Organization in 1996 produced a study that was conducted over a 5-year period and found that there was a massive increase in food shortages and lack of sanitation in the water supply within Iraq, which led to an increase need for healthcare but not enough support in the public sector for the rising number of patients.

This scope of the dismantled Iraqi healthcare system can be seen in the conclusion of this study. The WHO states, “The reduction in the import of medicines...have crippled the health care services, which in pre-war years were of a high quality.”⁸⁰ The study also makes the startling statement that United Nations sanctions have set the quality of health care in Iraq back at least 50

⁷⁸ The Center for Economic and Social Rights is a social justice group that does human rights work in both economic policy and sustainable development. The CESR has been conducting independent studies since 1991, starting with producing reports about the Gulf Crisis. Their studies have been utilized by the United Nations for NGO work in areas of concern.

⁷⁹ Boone, Gazdar and Hussain, “Sanctions Against Iraq: Costs of Failure Center for Economic and Social Rights,” 19-22.

⁸⁰ “The Health Conditions of the Population in Iraq since the Gulf Crisis,” World Health Organization-Current Emergencies-Iraq, March 1996, 1-5.

years.⁸¹ Due to the lack of quality care for a rising epidemic of diseases within the country as well as the utter collapse of the healthcare sector, the population was struggling just to stay alive. With no adequate finances or support from the government, healthcare in Iraq was unattainable for most Iraqis.

Besides the lack of medication and the rising mortality rate within Iraq, there was another national crisis happening at the same time. This crisis was the targeted violence against medical professionals within the country of Iraq. Medical professionals were being kidnapped, threatened and in some instances even killed for reasons that are not entirely clear. Scholars believe that this violence is linked to doctors being unable to provide care to their patients due to no drugs or equipment. This violence began following the placement of United Nations sanctions and is just one example of why trained doctors began to leave the country at a rapid rate. This mass exodus of doctors can be directly traced back to the implementation of sanctions, due to the lack of medicinal supplies available to physicians and the threat of their safety from not only armed opponents but also their own patients that they treat. Nisreen Alwan comes to this conclusion in her findings. She states, “There seems to be a systematic targeting of the brightest, most distinguished, and most highly regarded doctors and scientists...As a consequence, the people whom Iraqis desperately need to help rebuild their country are fleeing in fear for their lives and their families’ safety.”⁸² Already at a disadvantage due to the lack of medical supplies and medicines needed for treatment, the population of Iraq was then hit with another devastating blow by not having access to professional who could treat themselves and their family members.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Nisreen A. Alwan, “The Killing of Doctors in Iraq Must Stop,” *British Medical Journal* 343, No. 7815 (May 2011): 157.

Recent scholarship has emerged regarding the causes and effects of Iraqi doctors leaving Iraq post-United Nations sanctions. One of the leading scholars in this area is Omar Dewachi. He is a professor and scholar whose research is centered around the destruction of the Iraqi healthcare system through the UN Sanctions, and believes that the sanctions placed on Iraq were a tactic of warfare used to target medical professionals and medicine used and needed to sustain the Iraqi healthcare system.⁸³ Dewachi states that sanctions were the direct cause of a mass exodus of thousands of doctors which had caused a shortage in trained medical professionals within the region.⁸⁴ Dewachi has researched into the areas of Iraqi's healthcare system that contributed to disaster caused by the United Nations sanctions which is showcased most recently in his book, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*.

Doctors started to leave the country as early as a year after the sanctions had been put in place. In an interview with *Jayaliyya*, Dewachi discusses both the building and the breakdown of the Iraqi healthcare system. He talks at length about the issue of Iraqi doctors fleeing the country and the outsourcing of healthcare that followed due to the lack of medical professionals in the area. Sanctions not only halted trade of medical supplies but also the newest technology needed to treat patients. This caused many doctors to flee, including Dewachi. Doctors were threatened by their patients as well as by the government for not being able to provide care, even though this was out of their control. This resulted in the threatening, kidnapping and even killing of medical personnel in Iraq. No one really knows who these killers are and have mainly just been

⁸³ Omar Dewachi, "Blurred lines: Warfare and Health Care," *Medicine Anthropology Theory* 2 (2015): 96.

⁸⁴ Omar Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017,) 4.

referred to as terrorists or extremists.⁸⁵ This outsourcing of doctors and medical treatment was an unintended consequence of the UN Sanctions that is still an issue today.⁸⁶

An article in *Al Jazeera* also highlights the exodus of doctors leaving Iraq. According to this article, since the beginning of US military intervention and United Nations Sanctions, the Brookings Institute has estimated that around 20,000 physicians fled Iraq and only around 1,500 have returned as of 2013.⁸⁷ In the article, Iraqi doctor Haidar Ali states he frequently searches his car for explosive devices. Another Iraqi doctor, Yehiyah Karim, acknowledges that Iraqi doctors, along with civilians, are the target for kidnappings and assassinations.⁸⁸ The members of Iraqi society that can help patients are being systematically targeted by families and their connections to state militias. This targeting is due to the inability to treat patients, whether because the medicine hospitals received are expired or machines are out of commission and there are no available parts to repair them.⁸⁹ Patients now have the upper hand against their healthcare providers and frequently engage in threatening phone calls or in most cases, car bombs and kidnappings of trained medical professionals.

The mass exodus of doctors leaving Iraq lowered the ability for the medical community to properly care for citizens. Dewachi expands further on the unplanned effect of doctors leaving Iraq due to the UN Sanctions. He states that, “As a result of the destruction of the country’s health infrastructure and the exodus of many of its doctors, many Iraqi patients now seek health

⁸⁵ Alwan, “The Killing of Doctors in Iraq Must Stop,” 157.

⁸⁶ Omar Dewachi, “Dismantling Iraqi Health Care and its Regional Impacts: A Status Conversation between Omar Dewachi and Rania Masri”, Interview by Rania Masri, *Jadaliyya*, March 15, 2015.

⁸⁷ Dahr Jamail, “No Relief for Iraqi Doctors,” *Al Jazeera*, June 30, 2011, 1.

⁸⁸ Dahr Jamail, “No Relief for Iraqi Doctors,” 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

care from other countries in the region.”⁹⁰ Thus, Iraqis needing medical attention are also leaving the country. In these cases, patients will have to sell their belongings or take out loans to receive medical treatments in neighboring countries such as Lebanon.⁹¹ This medical care often requires follow-ups for patients, which calls for more traveling and more money for medical treatment that cannot be given within the country of Iraq. The mass exodus of doctors leaving Iraq caused medicine to be outsourced. One of the most basic humanitarian forms of treatment for people of providing healthcare was almost entirely wiped out due to the targeting and exodus of trained medical professionals in Iraq.

Hospitals and the medical professionals that remained in Iraq were faced with the reality that the most vulnerable section of the Iraqi population was dying at a rapid rate. With around half a million children dead at the turn of the 21st century, it was apparent to the region and to the international community that United Nations sanctions had devastating consequences for the youngest generation of Iraq’s civilization.⁹² This rising child mortality rate can be directly correlated to the use of sanctions against a vulnerable country as well as the lack of medical care available to the children of Iraq. Lack of medications, such as antibiotics for the same treatable diseases that plagued adults and the rising famine in the country are the major factors in these high child mortality numbers.

At the same time as the ongoing sanctions, there was a military carried out by the United States. This caused mass casualties not just within the armed forces but civilians as well. This meant that rapid medical response was needed in the region. The lack of medical staff available to treat these rising casualties contributed to the health care crisis. Many local hospitals and

⁹⁰ Dewachi, “Blurred lines: Warfare and Health Care,” 98.

⁹¹ Omar Dewachi, Interview by Rania Masri, *Jadaliyya*, March 15, 2015.

⁹² Pilger, “Squeezed to Death.”

medical facilities experienced either the kidnapping or killing of medical professionals, which only led to higher number of physicians fleeing. The lack of acknowledgment from the international community in regard to the danger of trained professionals to treat the humanitarian crisis that ensued from sanctions is astounding considering the number of medical-related deaths that also occurred during the sanctions period. It was reported that around 2,000 Iraqi children were dying each week due to economic sanctions.⁹³ Patients who suffered from chronic illness such as cancer and heart problems were also dying at a rapid rate because of the lack of life-saving medicine available due to the blockade.⁹⁴ The need for medical care was obviously very high in the region, but due to the lack of medical professionals available, patients were not receiving the basic quality care that all humans deserve.

In a series of firsthand account of the devastation on the Iraqi healthcare system and its effects on the rising child deaths within the country, peace activist Kathy Kelly paints a picture of horror within the confines of a hospital. Kelly describes a time while touring a hospital that she encountered a room in which there were rows of hospital beds filled with dying Iraqi children. It soon became apparent that these children would most likely never see the outside of the hospital again because the medical care was not possible. She states, “In one room, fourteen incubators were stacked against a wall, useless because of the lack of repair parts.”⁹⁵ The inability for repairs to be made to lifesaving machines prevented any sort of medical care to be given to the children in Iraq. They were forced to spend the rest of their days suffering at the hands of United Nations sanctions. In another example, Kelly recounts a mother’s plight to

⁹³ “INA Reports Figures on Sanctions-Related Fatalities,” *Baghdad INA*, August 16, 1993.

⁹⁴ “INA Reports Figures on Sanctions-Related Fatalities,” *Baghdad INA*.

⁹⁵ Kathy Kelly, “Raising Voices: The Children of Iraq, 1990-1999,” in *Iraq Under Siege*, ed. Anthony Arnove (Massachusetts: South End Press, 2012,) 152.

purchase drugs on the black market for her nine-year son with a respiratory infection. After spending all of her life earnings on this medication, Ana Anba then asks the question of what type of medication did her son actually need?⁹⁶ Here Anba is insinuating that she recognized that her son was in need of medication for his illness but due to the lack of medical professionals and access to equipment, she ultimately did not know what medication was needed. While Anba had drained her savings on medication, there was no guarantee that her son would be cured of his respiratory infection with the drugs purchased illegally. The placement of United Nations sanctions contributed to Anba's son's death because of the dismantling of the healthcare system in Iraq, including the lack of access to antibiotics needed for a respiratory infection.

The plight of Iraqi children during the “sanctions decade” is hauntingly summed up in a poem by Iraqi Sinan Antoon. It reads:

do you know that your tomorrow has no tomorrow? That your blood is the ink of new maps? Do you know that your mother is weaving the slowness of her moments into an elegy? And she is already mourning you? don't be shy! Your funeral is over the tears are dry everyone's gone come forward! ⁹⁷

Generations lost, all because drugs and other medical supplies were unavailable to the people who needed it the most. This poem not only highlights the hardships Iraqi children faced during the sanctions period but also all generations of Iraqis that were forced to confront the harsh restrictions put against their own country, through no fault of their own. The author of this poem, Sinan Antoon, is a native Iraqi born in Baghdad in 1967 but fled the country in 1991 soon after the military invasion began. In his work he is able to tap into the pain and suffering of his own people during a period of Iraqi history that saw the loss of not only the old generation but also the new generation of Iraqis who had the potential to bring about prosperity and change. Instead,

⁹⁶ Ibid., 154-155.

⁹⁷ Sinan Antoon, *Baghdad Blues* (Vermont: Harbour Mountain Press, 2007,) 10-11.

they were killed in large numbers due to the placement of sanctions by the international organization in the name of peace for all. The collapse of the Iraqi healthcare system highlights how intertwined all three aspects of economy, infrastructure and healthcare were to the stability of Iraq following the placement of sanctions.

Chapter 4: International Scope: Economies and Editorials

“What is the ultimate purpose of a sanctions regime? It is a general lesson drawn from many other sanctions cases that a high degree of international consensus and cooperation...is a necessary requirement.”⁹⁸

The international community saw sanctions as a necessary measure to ensure international peace and security, as showcased in the above quote. When all other options failed, instituting sanctions upon an aggressor state would be the answer. Sanctions require international cooperation as well as an intense desire to obtain peace, which was certainly an objective by the UN. While sanctions require international cooperation as well as modifications, there is always room for consequences to arise that were not intended, like Iraqi sanctions in 1990. The UN had the option to fix these unintended consequences but instead, large Western powers within the UN such as the United States and the United Kingdom campaigned for these comprehensive sanctions to continue despite an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Instances of these consequences began to move out of Iraq and into the economies of third actor states such as Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Lebanon and many others. This chapter will provide an in-depth examination and analysis into the reasons and outcomes why big-power players within the UN used a rhetoric of peace to continue sanctions within Iraq as well as a look into why sanctions were prolonged after a crisis had ensued within Iraq third-actor states asking for economic aid from the United Nations. The regional unrest within the Iraqi economy contributed to the requests for international aid that had previously not been predicted by the United Nations. Along with this, the suffering of Iraqi citizens was evident by the United Nations and other international

⁹⁸ Peter Wallensteen, Carina Staibano, Mikael Eriksson, “The 2004 Roundtable on UN Sanctions against Iraq: Lessons Learned,” *Department of Peace and Conflict Research* (2005), 9.

countries, but the lack of movement to lift sanctions in the name of international peace caused more layers of destruction to appear.

The international opinion regarding the continuation of sanctions varied among states. Countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States stood firm on wanting to keep sanctions going, even after the suffering that Iraqi people was made public. Other countries that held less weight within the United Nations wanted to end sanctions earlier. This brings about the question of what were the international opinions and motivations for continuing sanctions within Iraq for such a long period of time? The answer lies simply in the imagined fear of destruction and lack of security. These fears are most highlighted in the workings of two Western countries, the United States and the United Kingdom. Both countries sought out the continuation of sanctions for different reasons but each country and their leaders publically stated the need for the continuation of sanctions. In some instances, the case was made for the expansion of sanctions in order to ensure that the international community could go about their daily lives without the fear of retribution by Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi community.

While arguments were heard to the left sanctions other powerful countries along with the Security Council in fact wanted to increase their physical presence within the country of Iraq for many reasons, with the most important being the continual threat of power by international organizations. In order to make sure that the threat of retribution by the Security Council to Iraq was always present, an observation force was created in 1991 by the United States and the United Kingdom called the Multinational Interception Force (MIF). This was an organization consisting of officials that heavily monitored Iraq's maritime imports and exports. While the organization was created with the idea to provide more security to all international organizations

by having an organization that would be physically present within Iraq from the UN, it was standing on the foundation of fear.

While the MIF had no real authority on the ground, this organization had the power to immediately report back to the UN if there were any violations of sanctions. In fact, the MIF was undertaking one of the “largest maritime sanctions monitoring and verification efforts in history”.⁹⁹ Specifically, the MIF was monitoring to make sure that no shipments of oil or gas were coming into the country of Iraq, as that would be a blatant violation. The MIF had three main pillars: compliance, containment and change of regime.¹⁰⁰ While these three pillars and the organization itself were not set out to make the country of Iraq more stable, they most certainly were created with the idea of international peace and security in mind for all members of the international community, including the United Nations. It certainly sends a large message to the country of Iraq having an official UN organization checking each maritime shipment that enters the country. Nevertheless, the international support of sanctions began to fade once it became very clear that a humanitarian crisis had appeared in Iraq as a result of the actions of the international organization. While the inspections and monitoring of Iraq to make sure that their compliance was had in all aspects of the sanctions, the international community saw sanctions as an “increasingly hostile way” to bring about change in any form.¹⁰¹ The MIF would continue to be utilized until 2003, it’s power and threat to Iraq faded as international support faded.

One of these strong supporters of keeping sanctions implemented in Iraq was the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom continued to not trade with Iraq or call for an easing of

⁹⁹ “Iraq Sanctions Committee Hears Presentation by Coordinator of Multinational Interception Force,” February 5, 1997, <https://www.un.org/press/en/1997/19970205.sc6322.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Wallenstein, Staibano, Eriksson, “The 2004 Roundtable on UN Sanctions against Iraq: Lessons Learned,” 9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

sanctions, instead they publicly stated that they were “rock solid” on sanctions and saw “absolutely no change.”¹⁰² In fact, the United Kingdom in 1990 campaigned for the sanctions against Iraq to be harsh with British diplomat Douglas Hurd stating, “Making sanctions bite was more important than ever.”¹⁰³ Hurd believed that the only way to make sanctions effective was to recognize the threat Saddam Hussein posed.¹⁰⁴ Whether their motivations were due to safety and security like the United Nations or more geared towards personal reasons, the United Kingdom ultimately felt that continuing and advocating for the expansion of sanctions against Iraq was in their own best interest.

The most intense country who advocated for sanctions to be continued and increased was none other than the United States. With the argument of weapons of mass destruction and a corrupt leadership regime located within Iraq, the United States spoke publically to the international community and to the United Nations to ask for sanctions to be continued. Since the implementation of sanctions in 1990, the US has been in favor of harsh sanctions against Iraq in the name of safeguarding international economic health and stability.¹⁰⁵ Following the implementation of two other resolution by the United Nations after 1990, the United States became heavily invested in preventing the creation and use of suspected weapons of mass destruction within Iraq. What followed was almost a decade of United States officials calling for the continuation of sanctions as well as UN and military presence within the country.

The most outspoken US government officials were Secretary of State Madeline Albright and President Bill Clinton. Both cited the abandonment of peace by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein

¹⁰² Ian Black, “London ‘Standing Firm’ on Iraq Sanctions,” *The Guardian*, January 14, 1995.

¹⁰³ “Hurd on Need for Iraq Sanctions to ‘Bite’,” *London Press Association*, August 28, 1990.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty-Third Meeting*, (1990).

as well as the strength of the Security Council to continue the use of sanctions. In the case of Madeline Albright, she firmly believed in the need for consistent UN inspections and restrictions on rumored WMD's. Bill Clinton on the other hand condemned the government of Iraq and sought the punishment of past mistakes by Saddam Hussein in the form of the lengthening of sanctions.

President Bill Clinton inherited an Iraq that was decimated from not only sanctions but from the First Persian Gulf War. Given the change of administration within the US, Clinton had the opportunity to advocate for releasing Iraq from their sanctions regime. Instead, Clinton publically called for an increase of sanctions while threatening continued military action. Clinton frequently spoke to not only the government but to the American people of how the Iraqi government continued to violate the terms and conditions laid out from UN sanctions in the years prior. In one such speech to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1998, Clinton stated that economic sanctions would remain in place indefinitely until compliance was had from Iraq.¹⁰⁶ AT this point in time, compliance by Iraq was seen in the form of allowing UN officials to conduct investigations within the country freely as well as adhering to economic restrictions on trade. Beyond the threat of the continuation of sanctions, in this speech Clinton also touts the use of American military force against Iraq if cooperation is not found. So, not only is this a call from arguably the most powerful nation in the world to continue sanctions but the international community now sees the United States threatening the use of military force if sanctions are not upheld. This is a weighty threat that was heard around the world.

¹⁰⁶ Bill Clinton, "Text of Clinton Statement on Iraq," (speech, Washington, D.C., February 17, 1998).

In another instance, former President Clinton stated that economic sanctions must be continued for the good of all nations. He stated, “The United States, together with the international community, is maintaining economic sanctions against Iraq because the Iraqi regime has failed to comply fully with the United Nations Security resolutions.”¹⁰⁷ The international community and the United States are calling for the continuation of sanctions, this shows Iraq and other countries that the will of one country is the will of all within the international community. In his speech to the UN General Assembly in 1999, the President of the United States made riveting remarks directed towards the chaos in turmoil in Iraq without mentioning Saddam or the humanitarian crisis. He was able to sum up the purpose of the United Nations but expertly avoided mentioning the continued devastation. Clinton stated, “Powerful forces still resist reasonable efforts to put a human face on the global economy, to lift the poor, to heal the Earth’s environment...when married to advanced weaponry and terrorism, threaten to destroy.”¹⁰⁸ Although Iraq or its aggressive leader was not directly named, this statement sums up why the United Nations was created in 1945 and why a charter was produced to avoid this kind of potential terror. Clinton This call to action by the leader of arguably the most powerful nation within the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole would hold weight when other countries made their decision to support these actions, which would be to step in and save citizens from the dangers of terrorism and violence.

Clinton was not the only US official to call for increased sanctions. Madeline Albright was frequently seen on television as the voice for the American government in continuing Iraqi sanctions. Her stance, combined with others in the US government, paved the way for sanctions

¹⁰⁷ Middle East Editor, “Clinton leads call to keep Iraq sanctions,” *Independent*, August 3, 1994.

¹⁰⁸ Bill Clinton, “Address by President Bill Clinton to the UN General Assembly,” (speech, New York, NY, September 21, 1999).

to not be disbanded. Albright was a popular figure, sometimes for better or for worse, in the international community. Albright served as Clinton's US Ambassador to the United Nations as well as his Secretary of State until 2001. Both positions held by Albright put her in a unique position within the international community to advocate for human rights and international security, but instead she argued against both of these things by fighting for the increase of UN sanctions against Iraq. Albright was very outspoken on the United States' stance on Iraq sanctions and could be seen almost weekly on *Meet the Press* and other television outlets in the late 1990s. In 1998, Albright stated that, "We [the international community] have managed to maintain those sanctions for seven years, and they will stay on until Saddam Hussein carries out his obligations."¹⁰⁹ Following this statement, Albright again reiterates the same ideas that Clinton stated which is that sanctions will continue by the international community until at such time, this community determines Saddam and Iraq is no longer a threat. These ideas contribute to the culture of the international community and the United Nations in continuing UN Resolution 661 and the sanctions regime against Iraq.

The United Nations sanctions in Iraq brought about the threat of economic crisis within the international economies of third-actor states.¹¹⁰ A factor of United Nations sanctions against Iraq that was unforeseen was the effect the embargo had on other countries besides the targeted state. Iraq was a country that lived off of revenue from oil exports as well as the exports of other goods. States that were in close proximity to Iraq or had a strong trading relationship with Iraq soon began to fear what the lack of revenue from Iraq would do to their own economies. These

¹⁰⁹ Madeleine Albright, "Meet the Press," interview by Tim Russert, *Meet the Press*, January 18, 1998.

¹¹⁰ A third-actor state is a state not directly involved with the United Nations sanctions against Iraq but still felt the impact from these economic embargos within their own economies.

third-actor states saw it within their best interest to contact the United Nations for economic support in order to prevent the humanitarian crisis that would soon befall Iraq.

There are many reports that corroborate the idea that third-actor states asked and received aid from the United Nations. There are documented reports from countries such as Lebanon, Yugoslavia and Vietnam amongst many others. These reports submitted to the United Nations Security Council all have a common theme, which is to give international aid in the name of keeping stability in a turbulent time. A letter written to the Security Council from the Ambassador to Lebanon on September 10, 1990 states the concern the country has over the economic sanctions placed on Iraq because of the large Lebanese migrant worker population present in Iraq along with the trade that occurs between the two countries. In fact, the letter states that around 40-50% of Lebanese exports are received by Iraq prior to sanctions.¹¹¹ The letter also highlights the devaluation of Lebanon's national currency due to the sanctions placed on Iraq.¹¹²

Another example of a report of this nature is from the Ambassador to Vietnam. Vietnam believed that these sanctions would continue to hurt their underdeveloped country through massive loss of imports to Iraq as well as the termination of Vietnamese employees based in Iraq.¹¹³ Representative Trinh Xuan Lang takes time to outline both direct and indirect impacts that UN Resolution 661 would put the country of Vietnam at a disadvantage on the international economic scene. These included: Vietnamese workers being released from their contracts and loss of credit from economic deals and loss in items exported to Iraq. Indirect impacts included:

¹¹¹ United Nations Security Council, *Letter Dated 10 September 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, S/21737 (1990).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 15 December 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Vietnam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/22004 (1990).

having to pay a higher cost for oil since Iraq is forbidden from exporting it and having to restructure the entire economy of Vietnam with the influx of Vietnam workers returning from Iraq.¹¹⁴ The cries of assistance from Vietnam to the United Nations once again were heard and answered within the UN. The country of Vietnam had been previously ravaged by war for decades. The UN is tasked with keeping peace for all in the international community but does not. When the same instance of the country of Iraq was ravaged by war was in need of assistance, the UN did little help them. The final line of the letter reads, “It is in this context that Vietnam seeks assistance from the United Nations and international agencies to overcome those difficulties.”¹¹⁵ These difficulties that Vietnam foresaw due to sanctions placed on Iraq are an example of why the United Nations found themselves in a precarious situation due to their self-imposed title of international peacekeepers. While the UN self-imposed themselves to ensure peace, they were asked to protect some countries, in this case third-actor states, but allow another country to be devastated by their own action of sanctions within Iraq. This was not the only instance in which the UN found themselves being approached for economic assistance and asked to provide relief due to the effects of sanctions.

The United Nations subsequently provided aid to many third-actor states that requested it, in the hope that they would not have a huge international economic crisis on their hands, just a domestic/local economic crisis in Iraq. An instance of this aid given to third-actor states is seen in an addendum by the United Nations to Sri Lanka in response to their requests for economic aid because of their lack of tea sales to Iraq. The addendum reads, “[The UN] Recognizes the urgent

¹¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 15 December 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Vietnam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

need to assist Sri Lanka in coping with its economic problems resulting from the severance of its economic relations with Iraq.”¹¹⁶ Subsequently, the United Nations then mobilized to provide immediate economic relief to the country of Sri Lanka in the response to needing economic assistance. The irony continually seen throughout the swift response by the United Nations to provide international economic assistance was the continued neglect of the regional economic crisis in Iraq. The same sanctions that the third-actor states requested aid to alleviate continued to be practiced and even openly campaigned for these sanctions to continue by members of the UN. While the country of Iraq was actively seeking assistance or acknowledgment from the organization that was created to uphold human rights and international security, this same organization was taking preventative measures in other third-actor states to avoid these same circumstances. The UN carried out its job in the case of providing aid to third-actor states but failed in its duty within Iraq.

Economic assistance was not only given to Eastern European and Asian countries, but also to locations in the Middle East. Following the visit of United Nations official, Jean-Ripper, to Jordan in October of 1990, he made the recommendation to the Security Council and Sanctions Commission for immediate, long-term aid to Jordan due to the impending economic crisis.¹¹⁷ Rippert also stated that this form of aid should be in the form of grants and long-term loans, which indicates to not only the United Nations but other members of the international

¹¹⁶ United Nations Security Council, *Letter dated 19 December 1990 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established by Resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/22021/Add.1 (1990).

¹¹⁷ P.V. Vivekanand, “UN Official on Need for Immediate Assistance,” *Jordan Times*, October 16, 1990.

The United Nations established a ‘Sanctions Committee’ to oversee all dealings regarding Iraqi sanctions. Following the 1990 sanctions of Iraq, the UN created a ‘Sanctions Committee’ every time sanctions were implemented.

community who finance such loans that other countries within the Gulf could soon follow suit of asking for enormous amounts of economic aid.¹¹⁸ Economic assistance costs money and the United Nations relies on contributions from its members, so if Jordan requested aid in the form of grants and loans, members of the UN would most likely be asked or expected to contribute, therefore straining the economies of even more nations all because of Iraqi sanctions. Countries such as Japan and Germany at this point had pledged around \$400 in hopes of getting ahead of the impending economic crisis in the Gulf states due to lack of trade between states and Iraq, but if every Gulf state continued to request long-term aid as long as Iraqi sanctions were still in place, the price tag for confining an economic crisis within Iraq would be just as costly as lifting sanctions. This pattern by the United Nations of giving immediate and long-term aid to nations in response to economic sanctions in Iraq has proven to be a costly venture and one that would not soon disappear.

The hypocrisy that the United Nations frequently provided economic assistance to states that were at risk to be affected by Iraqi sanctions but refused to fix the problems that sanctions created in Iraq is present throughout the 13-year sanction regime. Along with this lack of action, the powerful voices coming from the United Kingdom and the United States pushed the Security Council and the United Nations to continue the use of sanctions beyond the period they were meant to be in place. Especially with a change of administration, specifically in the United States, the potential for a reversal in sanctions policy was present but no change occurred. Instead, powerful leaders of stable nations in the eyes of the United Nations advocated for harsher sanctions within Iraq without a regard for the destruction that had occurred.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Conclusion

“By heritage and by choice, the United States of America will make that stand. And, delegates to the United Nations, you have the power to make that stand, as well.”¹¹⁹

George W. Bush concluded his speech to the delegates of the United Nations General Assembly with a promise that the United States would fight the inhumane regime of Iraq but would also uphold Iraq sanctions placed upon the country by the United Nations. President Bush cited five ways that the Iraqi regime could bring about peace, but lifting sanctions was not one of his points. He drove home that the United States was a founder of the United Nations and that this organization is the “world’s most important multilateral body” that has the power to enact change.¹²⁰ Sanctions would be lifted from Iraq by the United Nations on May 22, 2003 following the US invasion of Iraq in March of that same year. UN Resolution 1483 stated that sanctions should be lifted immediately as well as extra funds be funneled into Iraq to support humanitarian efforts.¹²¹ Interestingly enough, the resolution cites that following testimonies from both the US and the UK, sanctions were expedited to be lifted.¹²² Even though the initial embargos put on Iraq by Resolution 661, some restrictions still remained. These restrictions on arms dealing and oil revenue would not fully be lifted until 2010, once the United Nations deemed the situation to be different within the country. These harsh thirteen years of sanctions sparked a change within the United Nations and a recognition of a failed use of sanctions against a vulnerable population. Nevertheless, the international body that has been given an enormous amount of power to shape

¹¹⁹ George W. Bush, “President’s Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly,” (speech, New York, NY, September 12, 2002).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483, *Adopted by the Security Council at its 4761st meeting, on 22 May 2003, S/RES/1483(2003)*.

¹²² Ibid.

the peace and security of the international community has failed in its mission laid out in the charter it so bravely created in 1945.

The year 1990 was a unique time for the international community for many reasons. The decades of proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union was on the verge of ending and there was a power shift within the international community. UN Resolution 661 and 1990 provided a stage for the international community to see if the US and the USSR could work together for the collective goal of international peace and security by punishing the actions of Saddam Hussein. While both countries ultimately worked together and attempted to fulfill the purpose of the United Nations, the multilateral organization failed in protecting the human rights and security of Iraqi citizens. The potential for this organization to curb an aggressive leader and provide the state of Iraq with a future path to stability was enormous, given the circumstances that the international community found themselves in during the year 1990. Sadly, this lofty goal was not met and instead more instability and chaos was created in Iraq instead.

The sanctions regime that was created during the period of Iraq did produce some tangible change within the United Nations. Prior to the utter failure of Iraqi sanctions, all use of sanctions by the Security Council were comprehensive which includes sweeping economic embargos placed on all facets of society. The United Nations recognized the error of their historic ways by placing these comprehensive sanctions, which were meant to ultimately change the actions of one man, but instead created insecurity and devastation across the entire population of Iraq. Because of this, more targeted sanctions have now been the method of choice by the UN. There has been a shift from a more comprehensive use of sanctions in the form of sweeping economic embargos has now been replaced with a more calculated use of targeted sanctions by isolating specific leaders, illegal arms dealers or other sources of funding through

which the country makes a profit.¹²³ With updated sanctions being utilized by the United Nations currently, this still does not align with their charter of keeping the international community peaceful and safe. The practice of an overarching figurehead placing economic sanctions on a country in which they do not reside promotes more instability and domestic conflict. As evidenced with UN Resolution 661, sanctions do not just affect the country they are placed on but have the potential to disrupt other regional states as well. The United Nations has also tried to prevent future humanitarian crises by having members of the UN entering the country to assess the potential for a humanitarian crisis prior to sanctions being placed by the Security Council. The hope is that by assessing the possibility for a humanitarian crisis no future issues would occur. These assessments will be evaluated and taken into consideration before targeted sanctions are introduced to the state.¹²⁴

While all of these adjustments made by the United Nations have attempted to make sanctions as humane as possible, it cannot be ignored that this use of punishing actors or an entire state for previous actions will inevitably violate the security and peace within the region. The UN made a commitment to uphold the security of all members of the international community, but the creation and utilization of sanctions invalidates this promise as evidenced in UN Resolution 661 and the continued practice of sanctions, even with a more updated version. The discussions that surround the use of sanctions have not changed since this shift in tactics by the United Nations. As Mark Mazower stated, “But calls for the UN to engineer a revolution in international law, in human rights enforcement, or in democratic values are probably doomed to

¹²³ Thomas Biersteker, Sue Eckert and Marcos Tourinho, “Targeted Sanctions: The Impacts and Effectiveness of United Nations Action,” (Cambridge: UK, Cambridge University Press, 2016,) 1-5.

¹²⁴ Wallensteen, Staibano, Eriksson, “The 2004 Roundtable on UN Sanctions against Iraq: Lessons Learned,” 20.

fail.”¹²⁵ While the instrument for peace and security is still being heavily utilized by the United Nations with 14 ongoing sanctions regimes still in place, the position of the United Nations as the head of the international community has not been questioned or threatened.¹²⁶ Instead, it has continued to be utilized and abused by many members of the Security Council and other non-permanent members of the United Nations.

The United Nations was created to help keep international order but in reality are imposing sanctions, whether comprehensive or targeted, on vulnerable populations that rarely produce the results that are hoped for. At what point does this historical process get revised? The United Nations needs to recognize that the era of multilateral organizations dictating the future and stability of a nation is over, or at least revisit their policy of introducing economic sanctions on countries where no prior study has been done for the effects on the population. If the future is not a multilateral organization such as the UN creating policies to cage aggressor states, more domestic approaches should be taken by the local governments involved. Slapping sanctions and embargos on a state with hopes of halting economic flow or communication to illicit a response is a policy that may have been successful in the years prior to 1990, but this same response produced devastating effects for Iraq and has been concluded as a failure by the majority of the international community. Death and conflict is in the cycle of every nation, but the United Nations is expediting this conflict by implementing sanctions upon states. As seen with the failures of United Nations Resolution 661 and the pattern of introducing sanctions on aggressor

¹²⁵ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, 203.

¹²⁶ “Sanctions,” United Nations Security Council, <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/information>.

nations, it is a clear conclusion that this organization created more insecurity within the international community.

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