

Iraqi Citizens Suffer as Result of Sanctions

By Katie SMITH

After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations imposed economic sanctions over Saddam Hussein's government. The sanctions remained in place as an effort to pressure Hussein to disarm Iraq, to release the prisoners of war, and so on. The sanctions are still burdening Iraq to this present day. Both the Bush and Blair governments continue to pressure Iraq with these restrictions, and refuse to lift them until the Hussein government is dissolved.

In 1997 the UN began to send humanitarian supplies to Iraq in what is referred to as an "Oil-for-Food" campaign. Items such as food and medical supplies are sent to Iraq in exchange for oil. It has worked to an extent, but a lot of the shipments are intercepted by Iraqi officials and the goods are sold on the black market, leaving the citizens to remain living under harsh conditions, such as poverty. Money going into the "Oil-for-Food" program has been reduced after in 2001, the governments of the US and the UK demanded more rigid measures of pricing the oil from Iraq. This has caused the sales of oil to drop, resulting in a loss of money for the program. Although in the beginning this program seemed to partially alleviate the burden of Iraqi civilians, it cannot be considered a success when one considers the fact that since 1996, less than 60% of items ordered from oil sales have arrived in Iraq.

The sanctions were imposed to pressure the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein. However, the negative effects they have caused on the citizens proves that they are not working the way they were intended, and should therefore either be reformed or lifted altogether. There has been death after death, with the mortality rate being highest among children. There has been an estimated 4,000-5,000 child deaths every month due to the impact of the sanctions, which is a total of about 400,000 deaths! In a 1997 report, UNICEF examined the case of Iraq and concluded that one million children were chronically malnourished and that the death rate of children under the age of 5 was nearly 8 times higher than it was before the Gulf War. Even if the sanctions have worked a little, or even a lot, does that really make up for the fact that they have killed thousands of innocent lives? One would hope that the sanctions were originally imposed as a way to diminish the burden of the citizens, not as a way to cause more problems and hardships.

The UN imposed and US-UK enforced sanctions against Iraq have left the international community questioning the success of the sanctions. It seems that these restrictions over Hussein's regime have all but worked. They have increased humanitarian suffering, and considering they have been in place for over a decade, the pressures of the sanctions have not led to a cooperative Iraq, so can therefore not be considered successful.

Federal Budget Breakdown: David Anderson Tells All

By Robin PLATTS, The Martlet

VICTORIA (CUP) -- The federal government has money, and they're going to spend it. That was the message from Victoria MP and Federal Environment Minister David Anderson in an interview regarding last week's federal budget.

"The main thing is Canadians' needs, first in healthcare," said Anderson, adding that "healthcare requirements are the biggest driving factor," as well as the environment, the needs of low-income groups and the need for increased military spending.

The 2003 budget is certainly not restrained. Some critics have said it harkens back to the Trudeau-era Liberals, and one media pundit likened it to "Michael Jackson on a Las Vegas shopping spree." Anderson said the free-spending budget was a result of the feds having money to burn.

"If we'd had a poor economic performance, we wouldn't have been able to do it," he said. "But we had it and there were needs and so we spent it."

"We've had the most incredible economic year," Anderson said. "We're the only G-7 country that's in the black. Our economic performance has been better than any country in the world in the last year.

"There are human needs that we need to respond to. Now is the time to get a few things tucked away."

Anderson said environmental concerns were a big factor in the budget, for the Kyoto Accord, but also to address the need for upgraded water and sewer systems on First Nations' reserves.

"In terms of dollars, this is the greenest budget Canada has ever had," Anderson said. The budget commits \$3 billion to environmental initiatives.

In terms of the environment, Anderson said technology development is key. "I drive a hybrid car, a Toyota. It gets 55 miles to the gallon." He added that, through technological advances, "we can double the mileage of trucks on the road."

Anderson sees plenty of opportunity for development in

terms of fuel efficiency, but said it's not easy to get the automotive industry to agree that they should be actively involved.

Inevitably, much of the environmental portion of the budget (\$400 million a year) will go towards Kyoto.

As far as those who oppose Kyoto, Anderson said, "The critics have to get their heads out of the sand," pointing out that the "best scientific brains," have said Kyoto is the right way to go.

Anderson feels that the public at large is behind Kyoto.

"The public understands this," he said. "Even in Alberta, for only a very short period did the government lose the support of the majority of Albertans. And that was after heavy advertising by the [provincial] government."

"We need to get the world on the right course," he said. "We're pretty optimistic that this will benefit the economy as well as ordinary citizens."

Anderson rejected the notion that the budget's big spending has anything to do with the fact that it is the last budget of Jean Chretien's run as Prime Minister.

"Anyone who thinks that one or two spending items are a type of legacy... it doesn't make sense," he said, and reiterated that it comes down to the federal government having the money to spend.

