

AUSTRALIA'S SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ

Motion

Resumed from 13 November on the following motion moved by Hon Dee Margetts -

That this House notes -

- (1) The recent comments from the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding Australia's possible support for US military action in Iraq.
- (2) That these comments were made in the absence of any United Nations resolution or processes.
- (3) The threat to the livelihood of Western Australian agricultural producers and exporters in light of the Prime Minister's indication that any request for Australian assistance would be considered against the "national interest test".
- (4) The statements from Labor Leader Simon Crean that Mr Howard's and Mr Downer's statements are out of step with other international opinion.
- (5) The likely impact on the civilian population, particularly women and children.

Therefore, the Legislative Council informs the Federal Government that it does not support Australian involvement in military action in Iraq without UN backing.

HON FRANK HOUGH (Agricultural) [10.06 am]: I said when I started my speech yesterday afternoon that this motion was obsolete before it even hit the deck. Ironically, this morning on the *Today* show I saw something that is indicative of the perception of the Greens. A fellow called Simon Butler, the national president of Resistance, was interviewed. He, along with Greenpeace and the green movement, was protesting in Sydney about the supposed war in Iraq and the World Trade Organisation. Steve Liebmann asked what would be the alternatives if the WTO were disbanded and the war in Iraq stopped. Steve Butler said that they would keep protesting. This is indicative of what these people do. They protest but have no real answers. The motion put forward by the Greens (WA) is absolute rubbish. I do not know why I am surprised. Every time someone wants to help someone else, the green movement protests. It is anti-American today; it will be anti-English tomorrow and anti-Australian the day after that. It is just anti, anti, anti. One wonders why. These people think they get credibility for it. They keep pulling in the fringe element. Unfortunately, five or six per cent of Australians belong to a fringe element that wants to protest about something. They are prepared to protest but have nowhere to go. They get dressed up for a party, and then try to create a party.

However, I refer to Saddam Hussein, the leader of the country the Greens say should be protected. The atrocities committed by this man - who the Greens want to protect - are incredible.

Hon Jim Scott: When did we say that?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: They have stood up for him. Let us look at the human rights violations of Saddam's group. In 1984, 4 000 prisoners were executed at Abu Ghraib prison, and between 1993 and 1998, 3 000 were executed at Mahjar prison. Another 2 500 prisoners were executed between 1997 and 1999. It was called prison cleansing. I guess the prisons were overcrowded, so they killed some prisoners. In February and March 2000, 122 male prisoners were executed at Abu Ghraib prison, and 23 political prisoners were executed in October 2001.

Points of Order

Hon JIM SCOTT: I ask the member to identify the document he is reading.

The PRESIDENT: Will the member identify the document?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: The document is headed "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government". It is the Tony Blair dossier.

Debate Resumed

Hon FRANK HOUGH: Hon Jim Scott would find out how bad these people were if he read page 28 of the document; he would probably be sick by the time he got to the end of it. I know that the weak-hearted member will be sick by the time I am finished, but he will have to put up with it. The document continues -

- . Women prisoners at Mahjar are routinely raped by their guards.

That is part of the daily routine, I guess. The document continues -

- . Methods of torture used in Iraqi jails include using electric drills to mutilate hands, pulling out fingernails, knife cuts, sexual attacks and 'official rape'.

Hon Jim Scott: Who are these people; Iraqis?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: This is in an Iraqi prison.

Hon Dee Margetts: Is this being done by Saddam Hussein or Iraqis?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: The buck stops at the boss and the boss is Saddam Hussein. We cannot blame his subordinates; we must blame the person at the top. As I said yesterday, Saddam Hussein had a very good election in which he was re-elected as the leader unanimously - with 100 per cent of the vote. That is something for the *Guinness Book of Records*. However, he will beat that record again because the next time he has an election he will be elected by 105 per cent of the people; five or six people will be counted two or three more times than they should be. There is no question that he will break the record in the *Guinness Book of Records*. This man is unquestionably Houdini - he gets away from everything. He cons people like those in the green movement.

Hon Jim Scott interjected.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: The Greens (WA) are standing up for him.

This next part of the document is very good. I would love to be a member of Saddam Hussein's family. How comforting it would be to have a father-in-law like he is. Some 40-odd of Saddam's relatives, including women and children, have been killed. His son-in-law defected to Jordan in 1995 and returned to Iraq after the Iraqi Government announced amnesties for defectors - they were executed in February 1996. Saddam's attitude was, "Ha, ha, I tricked you." That is amazing! That is the type of bloke for whom the Greens stand up.

Hon Jim Scott: No, it is not. That is a lie.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I must have misread the paper. I will read it again - no, I did not misread it. An article by Kenneth R. Timmerman of 13 September 2002 headed "Saddam's European helpers" states -

The information, from recent defectors and other sources working with the broad-based Iraqi National Congress (INC), indicates that Baghdad has made "a recent breakthrough" in production of the fissile material needed to produce the bomb. It was buttressed on Sept. 24 when the British government released an "unprecedented" white paper based in part on classified intelligence information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. As U.N. inspectors ultimately discovered after several years of investigations in Iraq, the lack of nuclear-weapons materials was the only obstacle that blocked Iraq from joining the nuclear club before the Persian Gulf War . . .

The plot thickens as the article goes on. It further states -

. . . think tanks also admit that they are just guessing. For the last four years there have been no international weapons inspectors in Baghdad. The only hard information on Iraqi weapons programs has come from Iraqi defectors and from U.S. national-technical means, including spy satellites and overflights of Iraq by combat air patrols. The U.S. intelligence community has all but admitted publicly that it has no human sources in Iraq.

"We know that Saddam Hussein pursued weapons of mass murder even when inspectors were in the country," President George W. Bush reminded the United Nations on Sept. 12. "Are we to assume that he stopped when they left?" To credit this regime's good faith is "to bet the lives of millions and the peace of the world in a reckless gamble."

President George W. Bush said that. Back about 10 or 12 years ago his father George Bush was at the helm.

Hon Jim Scott: The one who gave him the weapons.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: An article in the "Outlook" section of the *Washington Post* of Sunday, 25 November 1990 - I can give the Greens the web site address - states -

On Thanksgiving Day President Bush told our troops in the Persian Gulf that the Iraqi nuclear-weapon program may be more advanced than previously thought. He warned against "underestimating the reality of the situation."

I am talking about Iraq in 1990. The article goes on -

Iraq already possesses more than 200 tons of natural uranium, enough for at least 50 bombs if its fledgling weapons-production industry ever reaches the technical sophistication of other nations in the nuclear club, such as Pakistan. Intelligence reports indicate that Saddam's scientists have the technology and expertise to chemically convert the uranium to a gas and will soon begin building the centrifuges needed to enrich the gas to nuclear-weapon grade.

I am talking about 1990, nearly 13 years ago. The article continues -

By spinning uranium gas at high speed, the centrifuge separates the heavier isotope of uranium, which is inert, from the lighter isotope, which is unstable and produces the chain reaction needed for a bomb.

The Iraqis were, therefore, doing that about 12 to 13 years ago. The article continues -

The German government does not dispute the widely reported fact that it licensed all of the material and equipment for export, despite the fact that it was on international control lists. To see German-style centrifuges in action, Iraqi engineers even visited a secret site in Brazil where Brazil was running centrifuges made with machines that the same German firms had sold to Brazil a few years earlier. Brazil could have taught Iraq what it needed to know about centrifuge operation. According to a US official the Iraqis have also received technical help from Pakistani nuclear experts who, in turn, got help from Germany and China.

It is not as though these people are on a truth run and not doing this stuff. I will return to the Kenneth R. Timmerman article.

Points of Order

Hon JIM SCOTT: I ask the member to identify the document from which he is reading.

The PRESIDENT: The member has asked that the document be identified.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: Mr President, I have identified it; does the member want me to identify it again? As I said, I am going back to the article by Kenneth R. Timmerman presented on 30 September 2002.

Hon JIM SCOTT: The member has another pile of documents which I will probably ask him to table.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: If the member refers back to *Hansard* he will see it identified quite clearly. I am not dyslexic, Mr President. For the past seven minutes I have been reading an article in the "Outlook" section of the *Washington Post* of 25 November 1990. I will return to that document.

The PRESIDENT: The member has now identified the two documents.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: The other document I read is from Tony Blair's dossier headed "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government".

Debate Resumed

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I have referred to three documents. I guess I should be smarter and quicker when identifying them, but I will try desperately hard to satisfy the green movement. I refer to an article by Kenneth R. Timmerman, which reads -

The credibility of the INC information was given a new boost in a White House report issued to buttress the president's U.N. speech. The section on Iraqi weapons programs began by citing Adnan Saeed al-Haideri, an Iraqi specialist who visited scores of clandestine weapon sites before defecting to the INC in November 2001. Al-Haideri had become Iraq's top authority in specialized epoxies used to seal minute cracks in concrete structures and clean rooms to prevent leaks that could give away their location. His skills made him an essential partner of Iraq's Special Security Organization, which used him to hide mini-production labs and storage facilities in private houses and other sites across Iraq.

Although we keep on referring to palaces and other sites, apparently the Iraqis are also using factory units and private houses. It continues -

When the CIA debriefed him in December 2001, al-Haideri identified 300 separate clandestine sites used by Iraq to hide biological and chemical weapons and nuclear materials. Some of the equipment was hidden in lead containers stored in fake wells lined with concrete. Al-Haideri said he was called in to seal cracks in the concrete because the Iraqis feared U.S. surveillance satellites would pick up the slightest radioactive emissions.

Adnan Saeed al-Haideri was one of Iraq's major chemists working on these projects. It continues -

Al-Haideri's access to Iraq's best-kept secrets provided the United States with a "motherlode of intelligence," one source familiar with his debriefing tells Insight. Iraq is so worried about what he told the CIA that a senior official took reporters in early August to a Baghdad site he claimed al-Haideri had identified as a biological-weapons production plant.

There is no question that Iraqis are building weapon sites, chemical weapons and various weapons of mass destruction. The Tony Blair dossier reads -

Recent intelligence indicates that they may have succeeded at that time. In particular, Iraq had plans for a new SCUD-derived missile with a range of 1200km.

It is no longer a 600 kilometre range. It continues -

Iraq also conducted a partial flight test of a multistage satellite launch vehicle based on SCUD technology, known as the al-Abid . . .

Iraq had made frequent use of a variety of chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War. Many of the casualties are still in Iranian hospitals suffering from the long-term effects of numerous types of cancer and lung diseases.

I do not have to go into details of what that dreadful person did in that war.

Hon Dee Margetts: Is that the result of Gulf War syndrome from American weapons perhaps?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I am talking about Iranians who were hospitalised as a result of the war with Iraq in 1998. In 1998 Saddam Hussein also used mustard gas and nerve agents against the Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq. Estimates vary, but according to Human Rights Watch, up to 5 000 people were killed. Fighting his enemy outside a State is one thing, but it is quite another to kill his own people, torture them, drill through their hands and rape women, which makes one sick.

I question the member who moved the motion. What is it that the Greens have against America? They do not want Americans coming to our ports and helping with tourism. They blame America for everything that goes wrong in the world. It is fairly indicative of those people in this country who want to cut down the tall poppy. Why do they want to cut down the tall poppy or the white knight? They are part of Black Bart's cavalry and they are all baddies. I do not know why they cannot join the good side. I believe their motives run much deeper. This motion is about the next Green minister in the Labor-Green coalition. We cannot work out which one of the five will get the ministry. I hope the portfolio is not agriculture. Fancy having a Green minister in the Green-Labor alliance as the Minister for Agriculture. That minister would fix all the woes in country Western Australia because he or she would simply close it down. Everyone would be sent to the city. I will leave the Green party with this question: Who will be the Green minister? Hon Robin Chapple and Hon Dee Margetts would both be vying for the position. Hon Jim Scott would be in there with half a chance. The member who has been here longer than anybody else -

Hon Jim Scott interjected.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I did mention Hon Jim Scott. The longest serving member of the party probably should have a good go at it, but at this stage her legs are restricting her from moving around the Agricultural Region, so one might say she is months away.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I ask that the member table the document he has identified.

The PRESIDENT: Will the member table those documents?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I am happy to.

[See paper No 472.]

HON GIZ WATSON (North Metropolitan) [10.28 am]: I support the motion. The Leader of the House suggested that this was not a suitable motion for a State Parliament to be discussing. I believe it is a motion of great importance. From the contributions of members so far, it is obviously a debate to which members are keen to contribute. I wanted to make a comparison with other issues that this House has debated. It has debated issues such as genetically modified organisms being introduced into this State, which is a national and international issue. It has debated issues such as nuclear waste and its possible impact on the State.

Hon Norman Moore: We have some capacity to legislate on those issues, which we have already done, but we cannot legislate Iraq out of business.

Hon GIZ WATSON: The State has a responsibility and a role in deciding what happens in Western Australia. Some of the suggested activities that would be directly linked to the United States' involvement in Iraq would take place in Western Australia, not the least being the proposed escalation of arrangements with the United States Navy to provide sea-swap facilities at the port of Fremantle and issues to do with spy facilities in Western Australia. No doubt they also link Western Australia directly to international events, including what role the United States might take on Iraq. It is a very pertinent issue to discuss in this place. This country has State Labor Governments and a profoundly conservative federal Government. I find it extraordinary that the State Governments have tended to shy away from taking a position that is independent from that of John Howard, particularly on this issue of Iraq, although that is beginning to change a little.

Australia is already playing a role. The Greens (WA) want to send a message that we do not support the possible Australian support for United States military action in Iraq. We should not forget that the Australian military, which includes Western Australians, is already involved in activities that pose a threat to Iraq. I will backtrack

for one minute. It has been said a couple of times, particularly by Hon Frank Hough, that the Greens are Saddam Hussein's supporters. That is the most outrageous thing I have ever heard. The Greens might argue about how to deal with dictators and despots, but we would never suggest that the actions of dictators such as Saddam Hussein are acceptable. A far more useful question to ask is why so many people support him. That is a far more interesting question than to ask why there are despots and whether they should be shot. If a dictator is shot, another appears in his place. This whole argument is about encouraging civil societies and democratic structures. Simply seeking to bomb or assassinate dictators often makes them more popular.

Australia already plays a role in supporting US actions against Iraq. Obviously, the support provided by Australia in enforcing sanctions against Iraq is one way in which Australia is already implicated in an appalling attempt to bring Saddam to his knees, or something along those lines. I recognise that that attempt is being made. The use of sanctions must be critically examined. I am not saying that there is never a role for sanctions. I will go into the impact of some of those sanctions on the civilian population of Iraq, particularly on children under five years old.

The second issue is the role played by the Pine Gap facility. Members would be aware that Pine Gap, which is the largest Central Intelligence Agency spy base outside the United States, was established in 1966 just south of Alice Springs. This base plays a critical role not only in possible future actions in the Middle East but also in current actions. According to an article headed "Pine Gap: Exposed" by Bianca Billik -

Its past operations have included targeting of bombs during the Gulf War, and most recently, targeting of bombs against Afghanistan and Iraq.

This is already happening. The article continues -

It is currently also an integral part of the proposed US National Missile Defence (NMD) scheme.

Pine Gap is described as a joint facility; however, elected members of Australian Parliaments have been refused access to information about the role of the Pine Gap facility and what information is gleaned from its operations.

Hon Tom Stephens: I understand that the facility was used extensively to assess what the militias were up to in East Timor.

Hon GIZ WATSON: I acknowledge that any spy facility is able to glean information that might be used for the enforcement of requirements such as missile limitations and those kinds of things, or to observe military manoeuvres in places such as East Timor. We need to be aware that that is a small fraction of the operations of that base. The majority of the activities involve spying on a whole range of countries, particularly in Asia and the Middle East, not just in terms of their military operations and the building of facilities and those kinds of surveillance operations but also through the monitoring of radio and microwave communications; that is, the monitoring of phone conversations of commercial interests.

Hon Jim Scott: They might be listening to One Nation.

Hon GIZ WATSON: I am sure they would be. Pine Gap is a so-called joint facility. Although its day-to-day operations and functions are directed by the United States military and the CIA, in fact the key agencies involved are the National Reconnaissance Office, which designs, constructs and operates US reconnaissance satellites, the National Security Agency -

The PRESIDENT: Members, there seems to be an outbreak of mobile phones ringing in the Chamber today. I trust that members may regain their composure.

Hon GIZ WATSON: Thank you, Mr President.

The Central Intelligence Agency is also a key agency. I was not previously aware of the amount of Australian taxpayers' money that goes into the operations at Pine Gap - \$30 million is spent each year. The Australian taxpayer is funding the operations of a US spy base that does not provide information on what that facility is engaged in to elected representatives of any Australian Parliament. Another facility is the Echelon spy base out of Geraldton. Similarly, little is known about what that spy base actually does. I suggest to members that that operation directly involves Western Australians in covert operations of which we have virtually no knowledge.

The final paragraph of this motion states -

... the Legislative Council informs the Federal Government that it does not support Australian involvement in military action in Iraq without UN backing.

As Hon Dee Margetts or Hon Jim Scott mentioned, the motion was couched in those terms in the hope that at least members on this side of the House would be able to support such a motion. The involvement of the UN in any international action is critical. Members know that an uneven approach is taken to the enforcement of inspections and international treaties. We know that the United States and others clearly possess nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional weapons in excess, including the main protagonists of this particular

conflict; that is, the United States and the United Kingdom. We also know that the role the United States plays in the United Nations Security Council is one of blocking international agreements, even on issues which have very strong public opposition, such as the production and use of landmines. The US has also refused to be part of the International Court of Justice, no doubt because it would be in breach itself by detaining so-called terrorist suspects without trial and charge in various places like Cuba.

I now wish to raise the part of the motion that refers to the likely impact of an attack by the US on the civilian population, particularly women and children. We know that in wars that are fought these days, the balance shifts dramatically from the statistics of the First World War or even the Second World War, when 90 per cent of the deaths and casualties were members of the military, whereas now 90 per cent of casualties of war are innocent civilians. In 1991, after the massive bombing campaign of the Gulf War had ceased, civilian death tolls stood at 110 000 people. Out of the 110 000 deaths, 70 000 were children under the age of 15 and, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, the combined effects of the Gulf War and a decade of economic sanctions which followed have led to 500 000 deaths from children due to preventable diseases, such as diarrhoea and malnutrition.

If for no other reason, Greens (WA) members will consistently say that this is the consequence of choosing war rather than resolving conflicts and international disputes in a peaceful manner. I now want to quote from and table a report released in the last couple of days entitled "collateral damage - the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq." This paper was prepared by Medact, the United Kingdom affiliate of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. It states -

This evidence-based report analyses from a public health perspective the health and environmental impact of the previous, ongoing and any future conflict with Iraq.

It shows that waging war on Iraq would have enormous humanitarian costs, including disaster for the Iraqi population in both the short and long term, and would create enormous harm further afield to combatants and civilians alike.

Members might be aware that when this paper was released, there was some comment on it in the Press, including an article in the *Canberra Times* of 13 November 2002, which states -

A United States attack on Iraq would kill anywhere between 48,000 and 260,000 people in the first three months of a war, according to the Medical Association for the Prevention of War.

And a further 200,000 people could die as a result of poor health conditions caused by damage to vital infrastructure. The casualties could climb into the millions if nuclear weapons were used or civil war broke out.

Let us not forget, many countries have that capability and have threatened to use nuclear weapons, and the United States is one of them. They always need a good, live target to test out the effectiveness of these things, such as Nagasaki or Hiroshima.

I now return to the report itself and look at what we now know was the impact of the 1990-91 Gulf War. The report states -

The most reliable estimates of Iraqi military deaths during the war ranged from 50,000 to 120,000 . . .

That is from United Nations statistics. It continues -

When 3,500-15,000 civilian deaths are added the short-term Iraqi death toll is in the range of 53,500-135,000 A further 20,000-35,000 Iraqi civilians died in the uprisings and other postwar violence.

One of the most atrocious aspects of the Gulf War was the bombing of retreating troops. I remind members that we have discussed Saddam Hussein's atrocities on the Kurds and the Shiite minorities in the country. I share members' horror and condemnation of those acts within Iraq, but we must remember that the majority of those retreating troops who were killed by the alliance forces were Kurdish and Shiite conscripts. This is the trouble with using warfare - it is a very blunt instrument. The conflict inflicted further heavy casualties on those minorities. There are incredibly grave consequences for choosing that route. The report continues -

Military sources estimate the number of wounded at three times the number of deaths . . . Declassified documents from the US Defence Intelligence Agency show that a deliberate decision was made to destroy electricity-generating facilities and water storage and treatment, and then -

This is in relation to the sanctions -

put chlorine and medicine on the UN embargo list . . . The wide-ranging and cumulative effects provided the preconditions for famine and epidemic . . .

A UN mission in March 1991 found 650 out of 1330 active oil wells ablaze, releasing acrid smoke that spread many hundreds of miles and had respiratory and carcinogenic health effects. Many other wells were gushing oil; between four and eight million barrels entered the sea and 35 to 150 million barrels were spilled over up to 60% of Kuwait, evaporating toxins into the air and contaminating groundwater.

Hon John Fischer: Are you talking about the effects, not blame?

Hon GIZ WATSON: I am talking about the effect that has already been experienced following the previous Gulf War, which forms the basis of an estimate for what the impact of another war with Iraq would be. We are not kidding ourselves; war is a tool that has been used over hundreds and hundreds of years, but we should be really clear about the consequences, both in terms of human and environmental costs and in the actual outcome - does it achieve what it claims?

Hon John Fischer: I am interesting in what you are saying. I would also be interested to hear your comments about the costs if we do not put a stop to this.

Hon GIZ WATSON: That is a reasonable question. The report goes on to discuss the impact on life in Iraq. It continues -

Sanctions and the Iraqi government response together create continuing shortages of government-supplied essentials such as electricity, water, food, medicines and basic education, and/or people lack the money to buy them. The UN estimated that 55% of Iraqis lived in poverty and 20% in extreme poverty in the late 1990s . . .

Those most likely to be affected by sanctions include pregnant and lactating women, children under five, older people and those with chronic diseases. Garfield suggests an excess of between 344,000 and 525,000 under-five deaths in the 12 years of sanctions - far outnumbering deaths on all sides among combatants and civilians during the war.

This particular part of the report concludes -

The health of the Iraqi people, previously reasonably good despite life under a brutal regime, suffered enormously from the combined impact of the war and sanctions, and has not returned to prewar levels.

The report provides some statistics about life expectancy and infant mortality.

Hon John Fischer: Have you any similar figures regarding the Kurds in northern Iraq prior to the Kuwait war?

Hon GIZ WATSON: I have not seen that detailed analysis. However, I am saying that to argue that a war that has been proposed in these terms would advantage the Kurds is exceedingly dubious logic.

Hon John Fischer: At the moment the Kurds who are controlling the northern part of Iraq where there is a no-fly zone are in fact extremely happy with the situation because they are probably better off. These are the very people whom Saddam Hussein bombed; yet they are - I would not say extremely happy - probably in a better situation because of the security they have from the no-fly zone, as well as the fact that they can tax all the illegal oil going out of northern Iraq.

Hon GIZ WATSON: I am happy to acknowledge that the situation in Iraq is exceedingly complicated, as is the situation in Afghanistan. I would not stand in this Chamber and give members the whole picture without having spent several months studying the history and the current statistics. The fundamentals to re-establish a just and democratic society are not enhanced by bombing the civilian population, and we will see that played out in Afghanistan over the coming months. These are the points that I want to make.

I will talk also about the impact of depleted uranium in the Gulf War. The "collateral damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq" report states -

The longer-term impact on veterans of exposure to depleted uranium and other toxins is difficult to quantify, as is the extent of Gulf War Syndrome, said to affect over 25,000 US and UK veterans. A third of Gulf War veterans experienced post-traumatic stress disorder.

I will move from that report to an article written by Helen Caldicott on depleted uranium titled "The Spoils of War", which was originally published on 6 October this year in *The Baltimore Sun*. The article states -

By the end of that 1991 conflict, the United States left between 300 and 800 tons of depleted uranium 238 in anti-tank shells and other explosives on the battlefields of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The term "depleted" refers to the removal of the fissionable element uranium 235 through a process that ironically is called "enrichment". What remains, uranium 238, is 1.7 times more dense than lead. When incorporated into an anti-tank shell and fired, it achieves great momentum, cutting through tank armor like a hot knife through butter.

What other properties does uranium 238 possess?

First, it is pyrophoric. When it hits a tank at high speed, it bursts into flames, producing aerosolized particles less than 5 microns in diameter, making them easy to inhale into the terminal air passages of the lung.

Second, it is a potent radioactive carcinogen, emitting a relatively heavy alpha particle composed of two protons and two neutrons. Once inside the body - either in the lung if it has been inhaled, in a wound if it penetrates flesh, or ingested since it concentrates in the food chain and contaminates water - it can produce cancer in the lungs, bones, blood or kidneys.

Third, it has a half-life of 4.5 billion year, meaning the areas in which this ammunition was used in Iraq and Kuwait will remain effectively radioactive for the rest of time.

Children are 10 to 20 times more sensitive to the effects of radiation than adults. My fellow pediatricians in the Iraqi city of Basra, for example, report an increase of six to 12 times in the incidence of childhood leukemia and cancer. Yet because of the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United States and the United Nations, they have no access to antibiotics, chemotherapeutic drugs or effective radiation machines to treat their patients.

The incidence of congenital malformations has doubled in the exposed populations in Iraq where these weapons were used. Among them are babies being born with only one eye and with . . . the absence of a brain.

Hon Kim Chance: Encephalic.

Hon GIZ WATSON: Yes, I thank the Leader of the House. There are enormous consequences of not just wars of this nature but also the choice of weapons that are now being used, particularly by the United States.

Finally I will refer to the financial costs as outlined in the "collateral damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq" report. It indicates -

- . All sides will pay a heavy financial cost, including arms spending, cost of subsequent occupation of Iraq, relief and reconstruction, possibly exceeding \$150-200bn

In fact, war is good for the economy. The report does not state that. However, we know that if things are measured simply by gross domestic product, wars and environmental disasters are very good for the economy. That is why economics is such a limited tool. The report continues -

- . The US is likely to spend \$50-200bn on the war and \$5-20bn annually on the occupation
-
- . A projected war cost of \$100bn would fund about four years of health expenditure to address the health needs of the world's poorest people

While I am making these comparisons, I will refer to an article titled from the "Global Issues" web site. It states -

The Arms Trade is Big Business

- . Global military expenditure and arms trade is also the largest spending in the world at 800 billion dollars, annually.
- . As world trade globalizes, so does the trade in arms. In order to make up for lack of domestic sales, newer markets must be created.
- . USA, Russia, France and Britain do the largest businesses of arms trade in the world.

Previous speakers have made the point that the helicopters that were used to attack the Kurds with various chemical and biological weapons were supplied by the US Government. I suggest that in particular the eagerness of the United Kingdom to join with the US in any adventure in Iraq is because it sells an enormous amount of weaponry, both conventional and other weapons.

Hon Frank Hough interjected.

Hon GIZ WATSON: It might want world peace, but it also sells a lot of weapons. The British economy is very heavily dependent on the armament sector. I spent five years working on that issue when I was in England, so I am well aware of how intimately embroiled the British economy is in providing arms to all sorts of people, whether they be the Kopassus who bombed the East Timorese or whomever.

We could probably spend another 45 minutes discussing the arms trade and the cost of that to the planet. If that \$800 billion annually were used for peaceful purposes, I suggest that we could go a long way towards sorting out a lot of the problems underlying these conflicts. Perhaps I will leave my comments on some ways forward until

the end. Members have said that it is all very well but the Greens (WA) never have any answers to how else we could possibly respond to these sorts of issues.

I now move to the issue of Saddam Hussein and how we deal with dictators and despots. I refer to an article on the human rights issues by the Evatt Foundation, dated 15 August this year. It states -

Despite Mr Hussein's unpopularity in the circles GW -

That is George W. Bush -

travels in, both here and abroad, Saddam is tremendously popular among many people in the streets of Palestine, Jordan, and other Middle Eastern and Islamic nations. This is not because he treats his people fairly; nor is it because he has a program that addresses the daily reality of these disenfranchised masses. No, the reason Mr Hussein is popular is because he stands up to the US behemoth, no matter what the cost. In a world where Washington can do whatever it wants (and does), those who are opposed to Washington's plans for global domination will take their inspiration wherever they can find it. Right now, the only sources appear to be Mr Hussein, Mr bin Laden, and a few other men who owe their prestige to brute force and/or terror.

The lack of other more humane and democratic leaders can be traced to the vacuum created by the Israeli/US policies around Palestine and their support of reactionary and autocratic regimes in the Middle East and around the world. At one time, there were a number of revolutionary organisations and leaders in the developing world who were not religiously connected or despotic. Now, after years of covert and overt operations designed to destroy these elements, all that remains are the religious radicals and Saddam Hussein. Interestingly enough, Mr Bush's war on his "axis of evil" may bring these two elements together in their struggle against the US empire.

That being said, it is vitally important to remember that it is not Saddam Hussein who will bear the brunt of any US campaign to end his rule. No, the primary victims will be the people of Iraq. Already devastated by the first Gulf War in 1990-91 and the sanctions against their country, the Iraqi people will once more bear the brunt of the killing campaign being planned by the US national security apparatus. The last time, around thousands of Iraqi draftees and civilians were killed during the US campaign. Several thousand died without even being able to defend themselves as US forces bombed air raid shelters, buried troops alive on the front lines after surrendering, and killed them with US gunships as they retreated on what became known as the "highway of death." The US was found guilty of war crimes by an international tribunal. Of course, as we all know, victors never commit war crimes, only losers.

Hon Norman Moore: Was that from the Evatt Foundation?

Hon GIZ WATSON: That is correct. Ron Jacobs was the author.

It is important to debate motions such as these, even though some members do not see the relevance they have to Western Australia, because when society entertains being involved in conflicts - I am not saying that there are never occasions when strong actions must be taken - the position of the Greens (WA) is always to seek other ways to resolve conflicts before resorting to warfare. I will refer to what the change in thinking and the politics of fear does to the community, let alone what we might be contemplating doing to Iraqi civilians. On Monday night I was fortunate enough to attend the Inaugural Megan Sassi lecture by Moira Rayner.

Hon Barry House: You lead a desperately sad life if you were fortunate to attend that.

Hon GIZ WATSON: I do not think so.

During the lecture, Moira discussed the impact of the terrorism threat. She said -

Terrorism has changed that: the threat from without is mirrored by a threat from within. Al Qaeda, and terrorist attacks, most recently in Bali, have destroyed our island confidence. Our inability to assess the nature and credibility of the threat that our leaders constantly reinforce is allowing government to do things that would have created a furore before the hijackings and the bombs. In the US, for example, a special system of 'justice' has been established for those who are accused of being enemies of the state. Actually it's the old form of justice: arbitrary. Prisoners may be held indefinitely without access to the courts or legal representation and without contact from their families, and without being charged or tried. Australians are among them. We have done nothing for them. It would be unpopular to defend their rights. They are accused of being terrorists. This is enough.

Terrorism is the use of violence to create acute fear and anxiety. It is a pejorative term, used to justify extreme 'defence' measures, and to de-legitimise an opponent's purpose, methods, ethics and credibility.

Terrorism is also a drama: the commission of unspeakable acts to achieve the maximum psychological effect beyond the immediate, nearly always innocent, civilian victims, through the transmission of fear to a wider population. In every case, the media is a party to the deed: it is re-enacted on the news, then on the current affairs program, the commentary, the aftermath, the funerals: The revenge.

In the hands of insurgents, terrorism changes the political environment through violent, disorienting behaviour. When governments do it, terrorism is designed to shore up power and enforce obedience.

Terrorism usually produces an anti-terrorist backlash: greater repression inside a country, and war against “the forces of evil” in other nations. Those who use the universal language of human rights to criticise the actions of their own sovereign governments, liberals, intellectuals, peace activists, environmentalists and others at home, those “soft on terrorism”, are said to be co-conspirators, a part of the threat.

This is happening in Australia now. A critic is called, ignorant, a bleeding heart, a fool and a traitor. Once this is established, the diagnosis of the terrorist disease is complete - the collapse of moral authority - and its treatment becomes the preservation of national security; border protection; greater governmental authority; more secrecy, and special and broad exemptions from the usual standards of civilised conduct. When was it ever acceptable to punish unconvicted families of ‘criminals’ by destroying their homes, as Israelis have done, or to murder suspects by remotely-controlled missiles, or to place a gun at the head of an Australian Muslim child? Random arrests, detention, and denial of access to the mechanisms of justice, meeting force with force rather than with creative thought on what causes terrorism, as the US has done, sets up a spiral of retaliation. It becomes necessary to take sides. This sets up a new moral basis. Terrorism legitimates the violence of anti-terrorism, making fear truly systemic.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.