

## **The Iraq War: 4 Years and Counting**

**A Transcript of a Commentary by Ambrose I. Lane, Sr.  
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This is We Ourselves and I'm Ambrose I. Lane, Sr. and of course that was Ray Charles.

Four years ago this President took us to war, and today let me just bring you up to date on how he did it. Not long after September 11<sup>th</sup>, that's 9-11 in short language these days, when there was an attack on the Twin Towers. It was more than the Twin Towers seven buildings came down that day but the press doesn't talk about them. Not long afterwards we had this President go to the Congress and ask for authorization to use military force. It was quite a performance. Now the text of that authorization to use military force, which was later used to convince the people that it should be used against Iraq, here's what it said, it was a Joint Resolution of both Houses of Congress. It read,

To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States.

Whereas, on September 11, 2001, acts of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens; and

Whereas, such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad; and

Whereas, in light of the threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by these grave acts of violence; and

Whereas, such acts continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States; and

Whereas, the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

(a) IN GENERAL- That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or

persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

(b) War Powers Resolution Requirements-

(1) SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION- Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, the Congress declares that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS- Nothing in this resolution supercedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.

That was the beginning of our corruption and our tragedy. On September 14, 2001 this bill passed in the House. The totals in the House of Representatives were; 420 "Yes", 1 "No", and 10 "Not Voting". The "No" vote was by Barbara Lee, Democrat of California. And on the same day this bill passed in the Senate by a roll call vote. The totals in the Senate were; 98 "Yes", 0 "No", and 2 "Not Voting". And who was the lone "No" vote? It was none other than Barbara Lee of California.

Barbara was interviewed by Mother Jones Magazine, and we're gonna share just a portion of that with you. They published a story on September 20<sup>th</sup> by Bill Hogan titled *Alone on the Hill*.

"It was a vote of conscience," says California Democratic Representative Barbara Lee.

On September 15, the US Congress approved a resolution authorizing President Bush to use "all necessary and appropriate force" against anyone associated with the terrorist attacks of September 11. The measure passed 98-0 in the Senate and 420-1 in the House. The lone dissenting vote was a colonel's daughter and longtime maverick from California -- Democrat Barbara Lee.

"I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States," Lee [said on the House floor](#) on Sept. 15. "There must be some of us who say, 'Let's step back for a moment and think through the implications of our actions today -- let us more fully understand the consequences.'"

In the emotionally charged aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Lee's lone vote of dissent brought gridlock to the telephone system in her Capitol Hill office and threats against her life. In the wake of the vote, the Capitol Police assigned a detail of plainclothes officers to guard Lee 24 hours a day.

Lee, whose congressional district includes the liberal bastions of Berkeley and Oakland, is a former social worker who got her start in politics as an aide to legendary progressive Rep. Ron Dellums. When Dellums retired in 1998, Lee won his seat; she was reelected last year with 85 percent of the vote.

Lee, the daughter of a retired lieutenant colonel in the US Army, insists that she isn't a pacifist. Inevitably, however, she has been compared to Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress, who in 1917 voted against the United States' entry into World War I and, later in her career, voted against declaring war on Japan in the wake of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

This is not the first time Lee has taken a lonely stand against military action. In 1998, she was one of only five members of the House to vote against authorizing the bombing of Iraq over its refusal to allow weapons inspections by the United Nations. In 1999, she was the only member of the House to vote against sending US forces into Yugoslavia.

Barbara Lee was the only one to vote against this war. She took that vote early, when the Bush administration first began its disinformation campaign to rope in the Congress of the United States because of the emotional and political reaction to the destruction of the Twin Towers.

The most important thing that happened after that, before a United Nations Security resolution was a presentation by Colin Powell of a concentrated list of lies as he made his presentation before the United Nations Security Council on Feb 5<sup>th</sup> 2003. That followed the setup in 2002 when UN Security Council resolution 1441 that was passed unanimously on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002 offering Iraq a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations. That Resolution specifically stated that Iraq was in material breach of the cease-fire terms presented under the terms of Resolution 687.

Iraq's breaches related not only to weapons of mass destruction but also the known construction of prohibited types of missiles, the purchase and import of prohibited armaments, and the continuing refusal of Iraq to compensate Kuwait for the wide-spread looting conducted by its troops in 1991. This represented Iraq's final opportunity to comply with disarmament requirements. In accordance with the previous Resolutions, this meant that Iraq not only had to verify the existence or destruction of its remaining, unaccounted for weapons of mass destruction stockpiles, in other words they had to prove a negative, but also had to ensure that all equipment, plans, and materials useful for the resumption of weapons of mass destruction programs were likewise turned over or verified destroyed.

“...that false statements or omissions in the declarations submitted by Iraq pursuant to this resolution and failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and

cooperate fully in the implementation of, this Resolution shall constitute a further material breach of Iraq's obligations..."

On September 12, 2002 President Bush had spoken before the General Assembly of the United Nations, outlined a catalog of complaints against the Iraqi government. These included, and I quote,

"In violation of Security Council Resolution 1373, Iraq continues to shelter and support terrorist organizations that direct violence against Iran, Israel and Western governments.

...And Al Qaeda terrorists escaped from Afghanistan and are known to be in Iraq."

"...the U.N. Commission on Human Rights found that Iraq continues to commit extremely grave violations of human rights..."

"...Iraq production and use of weapons of mass destruction, that's bio, chem., and long range missiles all in violation of UN Resolution."

"Iraq used proceeds from the food for oil UN program to purchase weapons rather than food for its people."

"Iraq flagrantly violated the terms of the weapons inspection program before discontinuing all together."

Following the speech intensive negotiation begin with other members of the Security Council. In particular three permanent members with veto powers were known to have objections to an invasion of Iraq; Russia, People's Republic of China, and France.

On September 26, 2002, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld accused Iraq of harboring Al Qaeda terrorists and aiding their quest for weapons of mass destruction. In the mean time Iraq while denying all charges announced that it would permit the re-entry of UN weapons into Iraq. The United States characterized this as a ploy by Iraq and continued to call for a Security Council Resolution that would authorized the use of military force.

The Resolution text was drafted jointed by the United States and the United Kingdom, the results of 8 weeks of negotiation, particularly with Russia and with France. France questioned the phrase 'serious consequences' and stated repeatedly that any material breach found by the inspectors should not lead to war. Instead the United States should pass another Resolution deciding on the course of action.

In favor of this is the fact that previous Resolutions legitimizing war under Chapter 7 use must stronger terms like 'all necessary means' and that Resolution 1441 stated that the Security Council shall remain 'seized' of the matter.

Now, in the Security Council meeting following the vote of November 8, 2002 when they passed Resolution 1441, urging Iraq to disarm or face serious consequences, this Resolution passed with a 15 to 0 vote, supported by Russia, China, France and Arab countries like Syria. This gave this Resolution wider support than even the 1990 Gulf War Resolution. Although the Iraq Parliament voted against honoring the UN Resolution, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein agreed to honor it.

In the Security Council meeting following the vote the Syrian Ambassador said on the record

“Syria voted in favor of the Resolutions having received reassurances from its sponsors, the United States and United Kingdom and from France and Russia through high level contacts that it would not be used as a pretext for striking against Iraq and does not constitute a basis for and automatic strikes against Iraq. The Resolution should not be interpreted through certain paragraphs as authorizing any state to use force. It reaffirms the central role of the Security Council in addressing all phases of the Iraqi issues.”

But that wasn't what the United States and United Kingdom had in mind. On December 7, 2002 Iraq filed its 12,000 page weapons declaration with the United Nations in order to meet requirements for this Resolution. The five permanent members of the Security Council received un-edited versions of this report while an edited version was made available for other UN member states. On December 9<sup>th</sup> Hans Blix reported before the United Nations and stated in regard to Iraq's December 7<sup>th</sup> report, the un-edited version, he said,

“...that during the period 1991-1998 Iraq submitted many declarations called full, final and complete. Regrettably much in these declarations proved inaccurate or incomplete or was unsupported or contradicted by the evidence. In such cases no confidence can arise that proscribed programs or items have been eliminated.”

But by March Blix declared that the December 7th report had not brought any new documentary evidence to light.

On March 7, Blix reported that quote,

“Iraq with a highly developed administrative system should be able to provide more documentary evidence about its proscribed weapons program. Only a few new such documents have come to light so far and have been handed over since we started inspections.”

But the inspections should they had no weapons of mass destruction. Then the US Administration asserted that Iraq remained in material breach of the UN Resolutions and that under Resolution 1441 this meant that Security Council had to convene immediately in order to consider the situation and the call for full compliance with the relevant council resolutions in order to secure international peace and security.

What we have to always remember is that the 12,000 page weapons declaration filed by Iraq on December 7, 2002 the un-edited version is still being kept under seal. Why is not that un-edited version, which Iraq said is the truth about its weapons of mass destruction, why hasn't that version been released to the public and why haven't freedom of information requests been made in court to force the administration to release the un-edited version. In fact we only know about the supply of chemical weapons fixes for Saddam Hussein by American firms because a French newspaper got a hold of the un-edited version and published it outside the country. Where is the un-edited version of the 12,000 page report filed by Iraq on December 7, 2002? Where is it? Why hasn't it been made public? Because now we can determine whether or not we were lying or Iraq was lying and whether or not our government hid the truth from the public of the world in order to justify what it did.

And we have to remember that on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003 there was called what they called the Azores Conference. When I saw what they were doing in the Azores I could not believe my eyes. Here were the four countries most responsible for the slavery and the destruction and killing and annihilation of peoples in the southern hemisphere of the world and stealing their gold and treasure coming together for a meeting. Who were they? They were the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, and the United States. It was as if these horrible countries, who had visited such horror on the people of the southern hemisphere of the world, were coming together to declare a re-colonization, a re-enslavement of the world again.

Because you have to remember, Portugal was the first European nation to decide that they were going to steal the gold and the wealth from the peoples in the southern hemisphere who didn't have the kinds of weapons they had. Then they were overcome by Spain. Spain had developed its superior forces on the seas; they ruled the seas until they tangled with the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom had developed cannon that could shoot farther and ships that were lighter and therefore could travel more speedily. They defeated Spain. Then the defeat of Spain opened up the Atlantic Ocean for the United Kingdom, or Britain, to invade this continent, where they killed, slaughtered and annihilated all of the peoples of this country who occupied this country because they figured that if they had the power they could steal and take the land and take the wealth.

And then the United States of America followed the United Kingdom. And here they were meeting together on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, and what did they do? They put together a draft Resolution for the United Nations and what that Resolution said in part was first the Security Council repeated all of the anti-Iraqi resolutions, including 1441 of the November 8, 2002 and all the relevant statements of its President and then it said

*Recalling* that its resolution 1441 (2002), while deciding that Iraq has been and remains in material breach of its obligations, afforded Iraq a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations under relevant resolutions,

*Recalling* that in its resolution 1441 (2002) the Council decided that false statements or omissions in the declaration submitted by Iraq pursuant to that resolution and failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and cooperate fully in the implementation of, that resolution, would constitute a further material breach,

In other words they had to prove a negative. The Resolution said,

*Noting*, in that context, that in its resolution 1441 (2002), the Council recalled that it has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations,

*Noting* that Iraq has submitted a declaration pursuant to its resolution 1441 (2002) containing false statements and omissions and has failed to comply with, and cooperate fully in the implementation of, that resolution,

*Reaffirming* the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Kuwait, and the neighbouring States,

*Mindful* of its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Recognizing* the threat Iraq's non-compliance with Council resolutions and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles poses to international peace and security,

*Determined* to secure full compliance with its decisions and to restore international peace and security in the area,

*Acting* under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Reaffirms* the need for full implementation of resolution 1441 (2002);
2. *Calls* on Iraq immediately to take the decisions necessary in the interests of its people and the region;

3. *Decides* that Iraq will have failed to take the final opportunity afforded by resolution 1441 (2002) unless, on or before 17 March 2003, the Council concludes that Iraq has demonstrated full, unconditional, immediate and active cooperation in accordance with its disarmament obligations under resolution 1441

(2002) and previous relevant resolutions, and is yielding possession to UNMOVIC and the IAEA of all weapons, weapon delivery and support systems and structures, prohibited by resolution 687 (1991) and all subsequent relevant resolutions, and all information regarding prior destruction of such items;

4. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

*(Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: draft resolution)*

Now that was giving Iraq a deadline to do what it could not do, that no one could do, that is prove a negative. They had submitted a 12,000 page document and there was no evidence submitted by anyone that the document was in error or a lie and to this day that document remains unavailable to the people of this nation.

After the Azores conference of March 16<sup>th</sup>, they announced an imminent, these four slave states and that's what you need to call these states; Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States of America, issued a statement that included such language as 'tomorrow is a moment of truth for the world' because they announced a deadline of the next day, March 17, for complete Iraqi compliance. On that date, March 17, speeches by Bush and the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, explicitly declared the period of diplomacy to be over as declared by resolution 1441's prohibition on giving Iraq new opportunities for compliance. And that no further authorization from the United Nations would be sought before an invasion of Iraq.

The USA and Britain, while admitting that such a Resolution was diplomatically desirable, insisted that Iraq now had been given enough time to disarm or provide evidence thereof and that war was legitimize by 1441 and previous UN Resolutions.

Now, that going to war was illegal. That's why we were so angered when Koffee Anan told the world that the invasion was illegal. As an aftermath of that horrendous decision to go into Iraq, no weapons of mass destruction were found. Disputes continued with the United States and its allies claiming vindication on the basis of statements by David Kay, head of the Iraq Survey Group, that investigators had found weapons of mass destruction related program activities, a statement derided by critics of the war.

In June 2006 the National Ground Intelligence Center, a Dept. of Defense entity, released a report detailing the weapons of mass destruction that had been found in Iraq including pre-1991 Sarin Gas and Mustard Gas. The report stated that

“...while agents degrade over time, chemical warfare agents remain hazardous and potential lethal.”

The Bush administration commissioned the Iraq Survey Group to determine whether in fact any weapons of mass destruction existed in Iraq. After a year and a half of meticulously combing through the country, the Administration's own inspectors reports, and I quote,

“While a small number of old, abandoned chemical munitions have been discovered, the Iraq Survey Group believes that Iraq unilaterally destroyed its undeclared chemical warfare stockpile in 1991. There are no credible indications that Baghdad resumed productions of chemical munitions thereafter; a policy the Iraq Survey Group attributes to Baghdad's desire to see sanctions lifted or rendered ineffective of fear of force against it should weapons of mass destruction be discovered.”

End of quote.

The review was conducted by Charles Duelfer and the Iraq Survey Group. And in October 2004, bush said of Duelfer's analysis, and I quote,

“The Chief Weapons Inspector Charles Duelfer has now issued a comprehensive report that confirms the earlier conclusion of David Kay that Iraq did not have the weapons that our intelligence believed was there.”

Factual questions about the Iraqi declaration still remain. To this date the content has not been made public for independent scrutiny. When the United Kingdom government was asked to state where in the Iraqi governments declaration there were false or inaccurate statements the reply was that it was a 'confidential matter' and that 'huge quantities of documents remained to be translated.'

There has not yet been any proof on record that there were any inaccuracies in the declaration. The Iraq Survey group showed how little there was to declare anyway and the small fragments that remain can not be checked against the documents to see if they were listed. That's the horrible thing that we have done, and we have killed more than 655,000 Iraqis!

And we have a corrupt administration continuing to try to justify what we have done. We have committed genocide, 655,000 Iraqis we have slaughtered! Now let me tell you, the America people need leadership that has integrity and this one doesn't have integrity!

And let's finish by going back to Barbara Lee. Barbara Lee invoking Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. just a few days ago, Thursday, called for a fully funded withdrawal of US troops from Iraqi, criticizing funding for the Bush administrations escalation of the conflict in Iraq and the lack of enforceable timetables during the House Appropriation Committee's markup of the proposed \$124 billion Emergency Spending Bill for Iraq and Afghanistan.

The following is her statement. She said,

"When Dr. Martin Luther King Junior gave his speech 'Beyond Vietnam, A Time to Break Silence' at the Riverside Church in New York City in 1967, he said that 'a time comes when silence is betrayal.'

"He said 'Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak.

She said, "Mr. Chairman, Mr. Murtha...

"We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak.'

"That is very much the position I find myself in today. What I have to say is not comfortable, yet I am compelled by my conscience to speak."

"As many of you know, this is my first time addressing the full Committee, and I am mindful of the fact that the matter we are considering today is perhaps the single most important issue facing Congress and our nation.

"The American people went to the polls in November and gave us a mandate to end the occupation of Iraq, and to bring our brave men and women home. The legislation we are taking up today constitutes the first real steps of this Congress to grapple with how to fulfill that mandate.

"The administration is basically forcing Congress to intervene to bring a responsible end to their failed policy in Iraq. Given the enormity of what that entails, it is not surprising that we have differences of opinion...

"...we have not only an opportunity, but an obligation to pass a bill that will end the occupation of Iraq and bring our troops home.

"My amendment is designed to fully fund the safe and orderly withdrawal of our troops from Iraq by the end of the year.

"It would require that all funds appropriated for Iraq could be used only for the following purposes:

"First, to complete the withdrawal of all US Armed Forces

"And second, to provide for the protection of those forces and contractors now and during the course of that withdrawal.

"And provide for diplomatic, social, and economic reconstruction activities in Iraq"

She's back on the case and I want to thank her again for standing up for truth and for the people of this country. Thank you, Barbara Lee.