

Germany's Colonel Hübschen Proposes Urgent Change in Policy Toward Iraq

Col. Jürgen Hübschen, retired from Germany's Air Force, was German defense attaché in Baghdad from 1986-89. He worked in Latvia for several years with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and served in the German Defense Ministry until March of last year. He gave this briefing on March 19 to EIR staff in Leesburg, Virginia. Editor Nancy Spannaus also interviewed him during his visit (see p. 24). An earlier interview with him was published in EIR, Aug. 6, 2004.

Iraq's Neighbors

It's a pleasure and an honor to have the opportunity to give some of my visions of the area of the Middle East. When you try to talk about the owner of a house, it's quite interesting to look, first of all, a little at his neighbors. This I will do briefly, starting in Turkey.

In Turkey, you have huge water projects in the east of the country, the Euphrates and the Tigris—and the Euphrates water is the only water supply for Syria. Turkey is having [to pass over its] good business with Iraq, and Iraq is essential for Turkey, because to deal with the countries on the Arab Peninsula, you have to cross Iraq. There are two huge Iraqi pipelines going through Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea.

There is very close cooperation in the arms industry sector with Israel. They are even discussing a water pipeline to Israel. Turkey is a very important bridge between Europe and Asia. Turkey has about 10 million Kurds living in its country. Turkey's relationship to the United States of America has been heavy-burdened since the war against Iraq. The Turks are looking forward very much to becoming a member of the European Union. They already have quite a lot of Russian weapons systems.

Now, we make a right turn and go to Iran. We have the fundamentalists there; and there's a lot of oil, much more oil in Iran than is discussed in the world.

Iran is a member of the club "axis of the devil." Iran has a huge atomic program, which, according to all knowledge we have, is explicitly according to the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation] Treaty. That is one of the big differences with the United States. There is a good relationship between Iran and Russia, and there is an even better relationship between Iran and China. Iran has a very strong arms industry, and very

effective armed forces, including submarines.

And now, look at the map, where you have the Strait of Hormuz: That means that Iran is the big power on the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf. Iran is dominated by a Shi'a population, and they have Shi'a cells all around the world. There are Shi'a minorities also in the countries of the Arabic Peninsula. If you look at Saudi Arabia, the Shi'as live especially in the area where Saudi oil is exploited. We also have the Alawites in Syria, who are very close to the Shi'a. Iran has strong connections to the Hamas, and to the Hezbollah.

The U.S. Armed Forces, for the time being, are now within the range of Iranian weapons systems, all around: in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Kuwait. We have to take that into consideration. Iran also has quite a lot of Kurds, and Iran is, if it is your friend, a very important country concerning the exploitation of oil in Asia. Because, if you can use Iran and reach the Persian Gulf, then you know how to export the oil.

Now turn to Kuwait: That is a country America made become a democracy a couple of years ago. It paid a little bit, as far as I know. The border between Kuwait and Iraq is not defined yet. Kuwait blocks the Iraqi exit to the Persian Gulf. It doesn't make any difference who's in charge in Baghdad; it is absolutely mandatory to have a guaranteed exit to the Gulf, because the islands there in the Kowr Ab Allah [channel]—Warbah and Bubiyan—belong to Kuwait, and there's no guarantee that Baghdad can reach the Gulf. In Kuwait, we also have a lot of American Armed Forces stationed.

Next, we come to Saudi Arabia, also a country with a long border with Iraq. Saudi Arabia is even more far away from being a democracy than Kuwait. We had these very impressive elections in Riyadh three weeks ago; they elected seven people, and only men were allowed to vote. And as far as I understand, President Bush is announcing that as a beginning of democracy also in Saudi Arabia—not very convincing. This system is totally degenerated! There's no doubt about that. This goes back centuries. It is a very fragile system; it has very strong connections to al-Qaeda. And Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia is a very special Islamic school. And wherever we have had huge terrorist attacks in the past, there were links to this Wahhabism school. I talked already about the Shi'a minority.

We all know, Saudi Arabia has a lot of oil. Saudi Arabia



Col. Jürgen Hübschen (ret.) called for the creation of an international task force for the reconstruction of Iraq, in which each country would specialize in one area—railroads, dams, health care, civil administration, and others.

also still has a lot of its money in the United States. And if they take that out, that might also affect the economy here.

Saudi Arabia already has weapons systems from China. You know, we're always thinking that Saudi Arabia is a country that is only close to the West, but it is not true. The medium-range missiles they have come from China. In Saudi Arabia, we have the Aramco computer, that is the computer managing the oil business all over the world. It is close to Dharhan, and that is also the reason why, during the Operation Desert Storm, the American forces landed first in that region: to make very clear what was really important for the United States.

Going, quick-step, to Jordan: Jordan is economically very weak. It is on the American tap, so to speak—if you close that tap, it's gone. We have American troops also stationed in Jordan. The population in Jordan is about two-thirds Palestinian; that makes it very special, concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. There's a peace treaty with Israel. Jordan is a very important country for conducting business with Iraq, for the time being. There is the airport in Amman, and the harbor in Aqaba. And also, Jordan gets its oil from Iraq.

Traditionally, there are extremely good connections between Iraq and Jordan. We should never forget that the former King Hussein, the father of the present King, was a real personal friend of Saddam Hussein. . . . The former King of Iraq and the former King of Jordan were brothers, and that is also something which is quite important for the future of this area.

Syria and Iraq

Coming to Syria: which also belongs to the "axis of devils": We should never forget that we have in Syria, the same political system we had in Iraq, the Ba'ath Party. And the relationship between Syria and Iraq in the past was only bad because Saddam Hussein, and [Hafez] Assad, the father of

Bashar, hated each other! And in this area of the world, that is very important: If the leaders don't like each other, the countries fight each other. That's the way it is. But you should never forget: If a third party comes from outside, then they come together like members of the same—as they call it—Arab *Ummah*, as their family. And then they turn on the third party.

You know that in Iraq, we had the Ba'ath Party. And we all know that most people call them "insurgents"; I call them "people in the resistance," because if you're always talking about "insurgents," it implies that everything is illegal, and I think it is not. There are groups you announce to be "insurgents"—these are the ones with links to al-Qaeda or Zarqawi or whatever. But, the quite normal Iraqis—that's totally different.

I phoned a friend of mine last Sunday, an Iraqi doctor. He lives in Germany, but his whole family lives in Iraq, a very old Sunni family. And he told me that his family lost *four* members, all killed by Americans, just by mistake, because these young American soldiers don't know better—they're in an absolutely awful position!

And what about the people from your National Guard and from the Army Reserve? That is not their job! They are not trained for that! And I served for almost 40 years, so I know what I am talking about! That is a crime, taking these people, to do such a job.

Now, you have an idea that I'm also mostly really involved in this business—because it's *wrong*, what we are doing. Definitely wrong.

I talked about the Alawites in Syria; the family of Assad, belongs to the Alawites, which is the part of the Muslims very close to the Shi'a. We still have Syrian troops in Lebanon. We appreciate that, by the way; the West appreciated that, for a very long time. We just have a new point of view now. The Golan Heights is still occupied. UN Resolution from 1967 says that the Israelis have to withdraw from there. So, it's not very convincing, when we tell the Syrians now, "There's a resolution from *last Autumn*, which has to be fulfilled by May of this year!" That is always the double standard we are working with, with the different scales we use, to our own benefit. And these people in that area, they are not so stupid that they don't realize that, believe me.

Syria has excellent connections to Russia and also to Iran. There's an Iraqi oil pipeline going from Iraq, through Syria, to the Mediterranean Sea. Syria depends on Euphrates water, more or less totally, the water which is coming from Turkey.

The Syrians were allies of the Americans in Operation Desert Storm—we should remember that. And when Assad, the father of Bashar, was in charge, he made a deal with the Americans, which most people forgot: He said, "Okay, I will be with you against Saddam Hussein." And then, in October 1990, the Syrian Air Force bombed Beirut—and that was all done with protection of the West. And they kicked out the Christian General Aoun, who is now in exile in Paris. Some-

Southwest Asia



Iraq and surrounding countries. "When you try to talk about the owner of a house," said Colonel Hübschen, "it's quite interesting to look, first of all, a little at his neighbors."

times—and you [at *EIR*] are doing that all the time—it's worthwhile to remember what happened in the past.

Lebanon became basically a Syrian province, with the permission of the United States.

Iraq: 25 Years of War

So, now we come to the country itself: Iraq is the only country in the region which has the three important resources you need, to be a country with a future. They have oil; they have water; and they have people. You can look around. If you don't have that—in Saudi Arabia, you have oil, but you don't have the people; and sure, with the water, it's the same problem. You go to Egypt (we didn't talk about that); in Egypt, there's no oil, but lots of people. And so, Iraq is really special.

The war we are fighting today, by my personal assessment, started in 1980. The war in 1980, when Iraq invaded Iran, was done with the support of the Americans, who probably even supplied the trigger. If you remember under American auspices, in the American Embassy in Tehran—they replaced the Shah with Khomeini. I mean, Khomeini was in charge, and they said, "Oh hell! What happened?" And they tried to get rid of him, and they used Saddam Hussein to get rid of Khomeini. There's no doubt.

So, Iraq and Saddam Hussein won this war militarily, with the support of the Americans, especially with American intelligence. And then, afterwards, when we didn't hear the

artillery any more, we were not interested in that region any more. Then came the next step, when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait. That was a crime, no doubt. But there's a lot to say about how it happened and why it happened. I'm personally convinced that Saddam Hussein, when he arrived, so to speak, in Kuwait, and the international reaction heated up, said—"Oh shit!" Yes! How to get out, again? For an Arab dictator, it's absolutely important to save face. But they didn't give him any chance.

And then people, not having the right picture, were saying, "Okay, and now we go to Baghdad and we kick him out." The smart people said, "No, no, no, no, no—why kick him out? Keep him in power, because he is the buffer between us and Iran." So, they did that, and the war kept going by containment—silent war, continuously bombing the Iraqi air defenses.

And that came to the end of the '90s, up to 2000-01, when the American Administration realized that it wasn't working any longer, in the sense, that Hussein was no longer really to the benefit of America. Because they had used him: They had used him as a threat to the countries on the Arab Peninsula; and they sold weapons—I don't know, I think for \$50 billion—to the sheikhs on the Gulf. You can go and look: They have more tanks than they can man! And they have aircraft, but they are not combat-ready. You know, it is not enough to get an aircraft in the air, and then look around—"It's a nice day"—and go back. You have to be

able to do something, and they cannot.

As to the sanctions, everybody in the world realized, that the sanctions hit the people in Iraq, and not the system. For the dictator, it was not a problem. And in 2000, it became more and more business-as-normal: Many countries opened embassies in Iraq again. Royal Jordanian [Airline] flew from Amman to Baghdad on a regular basis. So, there was really the chance that this dictator would survive, again! *Without any lasting profit for the Americans.*

And so, it was about time to kick him out. And they used the lies to do it. We all know the story, and now, we are sitting there [in Iraq]. The country is definitely, totally destroyed. And there's no concept, how to build it up again. One-hundred-fifty thousand American soldiers are at war with an enemy they cannot define, 360 degrees around them, day and night. For a soldier, that is impossible to stand; and for a young soldier, it is unfair that he has to stand that. . . . And some people told me here, that they are collecting the wounded [American soldiers] somewhere, because it's bad for the morale of the population to see them. [From the audience: "They fly them in at night, away from view."] Yes, and that is for a soldier a very emotional business. Soldiers only fight because they love their country. And if they have a feeling that the ones who sent them to war, are now ashamed that they are there and coming back—dead or wounded—that is just ridiculous.

Requirements for an Exit Strategy

What I think is, that we have to give up the good, old American tradition not to question the war as long as the troops are in the field. Because, the best thing that could happen to the troops in the field is, that somebody shows up and gives an alternative: Gives an alternative and an *exit strategy*. Because now, *there is no exit strategy!*

I think the idea is, that the Americans and the multinational force should be withdrawn to the border of Iraq. Because, there are lots of problems there. The terrorists are coming in through the borders—from Syria, from Iran, from Saudi Arabia. That can be done, and that has the advantage, that the American troops will not be seen in the country any more. Because, unfortunately, the image of the American soldiers changed, in less than four months, from liberators to occupiers.

And that can't be changed any more! That's over! The way they behaved, the way they showed up at the checkpoints. And for the Iraqi government (hopefully, we will have one soon), it is important that everybody sees that this is really now an independent government. That means it has to be separated. *We can't have an American Embassy with 3,000 people! That's ridiculous! Three thousand members of an embassy!* It has to be reduced to the tasks of an embassy. And the Iraqi Cabinet, the Iraqi government, they have to be separated, so that everybody sees: Okay, this is the American Embassy, and this is our government.

And the symbols of dictatorship have to be blown up! To me, it means you take Abu Ghraib, and take the people out of Abu Ghraib, and *blow it up*. So, that the people in Iraq see, okay, that's the end. Because, Abu Ghraib was a *symbol* for the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. And we kept it in use. And then we had this torture problem, so the Iraqi people say, "Hey! It's not only the same building. It's still the same business, that's done there!"

Imagine that, in a country where America was *loved*, was *admired*. People dreamed about America! That's all over! And they don't know now, that this is not the real America—they don't realize that it's only Bush and the neo-cons. They are talking about "America."

And we have to create—this is my proposal—we have to create some kind of a task force of countries to take over sponsorship for Iraq. That means, for example, the Germans: They built a lot in infrastructure in Iraq. They could take a sponsorship for infrastructure, for the railroad system and dams. The Dutch could do the health sector—I don't care. The Japanese could do—whatever—the civil administration.

Because, this country is totally broken. And this signal I am talking about, has to be sent *now*. We have to support the ones trying to rebuild and build up Iraq. And for that, it is necessary that all of us step back into the second row. First of all, America. Support them, but don't dominate them. Don't make them as we are—what for? Let them stay different! They have their dreams. They have their culture. They have their thinking about the future—*let's support that.*

Repair European-American Relations

And now, a short word to Europe and America: I'm not an expert on that; I'm just a European. But, when I arrived on Monday afternoon, as a former career officer working with the Americans my whole life; having so many American comrades; having seen—never, ever—a difference between a German and an American officer, because we were sitting together, working together, *defending together*. And now, I show up at an American airport, and they take my fingerprints! That's too much! You get to the point where you'd like to just turn around, and go back! They take my picture, they take my fingerprints—am I a criminal, or what? Huh? So, they can have a file now, a file on Jürgen Hübschen? And probably next time, they'll find out that I've been *here*, and they won't let me in any more! (That would be a big compliment, by the way!)

So, that means, what we have to do, is, we have to find a way, to show Europe, there is another America. And that it is worthwhile to stay in touch with this other America. Because we can't build the future only by America or by Europe: We can only build the future of the world together; and we should include all the countries which are interested in joining us, especially also Russia.

Thank you, very much.