
AN OVERVIEW OF THE OIL FOR FOOD PROGRAM

In 1996, the international community launched the Oil for Food Program in response to the persistent hardships of the Iraqi people, who lived under broad international sanctions. While generally the program was a success, there have been recent allegations of corruption and mismanagement, with the possibility of United Nations staff complicity. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has announced that the U.N. will initiate a high-level investigation into the allegations. Assisted by the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi Board of Supreme Audit will conduct a separate Baghdad-based investigation.

THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS A REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS' OIL FOR FOOD PROGRAM

On April 7, 2004, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations convened for a hearing reviewing the United Nations' Oil for Food Program. In his opening statement, Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, identified primary corruption concerns.

- The Iraqi people may have suffered as the Iraqi regime diverted financing from the humanitarian directives of the Oil for Food Program.
- Saddam Hussein likely used the illicit proceeds to procure military goods.
- The stance of U.N. member states regarding continued sanctions on Iraq and the overthrow of the Iraqi regime may have been affected by their own involvement or the involvement of individual actors under their jurisdiction in the undermining of Iraq's sanctions via the Oil for Food Program.
- The scandal surrounding the Oil for Food Program diminishes U.N. credibility and its ability to take on the oversight of new humanitarian projects. Ultimately, this limits U.S. foreign policy options.

Official statements made during the hearing by Senator Lugar, Senator Joseph Biden, Ms. Robin Raphel, the Coordinator of the Office of Iraq Reconstruction, and Ambassador John Negroponte, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations and designated U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, can be viewed at

<http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/2004/hrg040407a.html>.

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
UNITED NATIONS: OBSERVATIONS ON THE OIL FOR FOOD PROGRAM

For the April 7th hearing, the United States General Accounting Office released “United Nations: Observations on the Oil for Food Program,” a statement by Joseph Christoff, the Director of International Affairs and Trade. This GAO report provides an overview of the allegations against the Oil for Food Program. Additionally, the report details the transfer of administration of the program to the CPA as well as its management of the program and its remaining contracts thereafter. The GAO report can be viewed at <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2004/ChristoffTestimony040407.pdf>.

THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
OVERVIEW OF THE OIL FOR FOOD PROGRAM

The Center for Strategic and International Studies’ Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project has released “A Wiser Peace Supplement II: An Overview of the Oil for Food Program.” This report outlines in detail the oil exporting and food/supplies importing procedures of the Oil for Food Program. The report also covers the supply distribution plan, lists the country of origin of supplier contracts between 1997 and 2001, and describes the food ration system, developed under the program, which continues to be implemented by the CPA. The CSIS report provides a useful complement to the GAO report. The report can be found at [A Wiser Peace Supplement II: An Overview of the Oil-for-Food Program](#).

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In addition, the Wall Street Journal has closely followed the development of allegations against the U.N.’s Oil for Food Program. The Wall Street Journal is available online and is searchable. Notable articles include:

- “Saddam’s U.N. Financiers,” Review and Outlook (04/07/04).
- “The Oil-for-Food Scandal,” Therese Raphael (03/11/04).
- “The Cash-for-Saddam Program,” Michael Soussan (03/08/04).
- “Saddam’s Global Payroll,” Therese Raphael (02/09/04).

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