

Now let's charge Saddam's accomplices

In a show trial whose theatrical climax was clearly timed to promote George W Bush in the American midterm elections, Saddam Hussein was convicted and sentenced to hang. Drivel about “end of an era” and “a new start for Iraq” was promoted by the usual false moral accountants, who uttered not a word about bringing the tyrant’s accomplices to justice. Why are these accomplices not being charged with aiding and abetting crimes against humanity? Why isn’t George Bush Snr being charged?

In 1992, a congressional inquiry found that Bush as president had ordered a cover-up to conceal his secret support for Saddam and the illegal arms shipments being sent to Iraq via third countries. Missile technology was shipped to South Africa and Chile, then “on sold” to Iraq, while US Commerce Department records were falsified. Congressman Henry Gonzalez, chairman of the House of Representatives Banking Committee, said: “[We found that] Bush and his advisers financed, equipped and succoured the monster..”

Why isn’t Douglas Hurd being charged? In 1981, as Britain's Foreign Office minister, Hurd travelled to Baghdad to sell Saddam a British Aerospace missile system and to “celebrate” the anniversary of Saddam’s blood-soaked ascent to power. Why isn’t his former cabinet colleague, Tony Newton, being charged? As Thatcher’s trade secretary, Newton, within a month of Saddam gassing 5,000 Kurds at Halabja (news of which the Foreign Office tried to suppress), offered the mass murderer £340m in export credits.

Why isn’t Donald Rumsfeld being charged? In December 1983, Rumsfeld was in Baghdad to signal America’s approval of Iraq’s aggression against Iran. Rumsfeld was back in Baghdad on 24 March 1984, the day that the United Nations reported that Iraq had used mustard gas laced with a nerve agent against Iranian soldiers. Rumsfeld said nothing. A subsequent Senate report documented the transfer of

JOHN PILGER | NOW LET'S CHARGE SADDAM'S ACCOMPLICES

the ingredients of biological weapons from a company in Maryland, licensed by the Commerce Department and approved by the State Department.

Why isn't Madeleine Albright being charged? As President Clinton's secretary of state, Albright enforced an unrelenting embargo on Iraq which caused half a million "excess deaths" of children under the age of five. When asked on television if the children's deaths were a price worth paying, she replied: "We think the price is worth it."

Why isn't Peter Hain being charged? In 2001, as Foreign Office minister, Hain described as "gratuitous" the suggestion that he, along with other British politicians outspoken in their support of the deadly siege of Iraq, might find themselves summoned before the International Criminal Court. A report for the UN secretary general by a world authority on international law describes the embargo on Iraq in the 1990s as "unequivocally illegal under existing human rights law", a crime that "could raise questions under the Genocide Convention". Indeed, two past heads of the UN humanitarian mission in Iraq, both of them assistant secretary generals, resigned because the embargo was indeed genocidal. As of July 2002, more than \$5bn-worth of humanitarian supplies, approved by the UN Sanctions Committee and paid for by Iraq, were blocked by the Bush administration, backed by the Blair and Hain government. These included items related to food, health, water and sanitation.

Above all, why aren't Blair and Bush Jnr being charged with "the paramount war crime", to quote the judges at Nuremberg and, recently, the chief American prosecutor – that is, unprovoked aggression against a defenceless country?

And why aren't those who spread and amplified propaganda that led to such epic suffering being charged? The New York Times reported as fact fabrications fed to its reporter by Iraqi exiles. These gave credibility to the White House's lies, and doubtless helped soften up public opinion to support an invasion. Over here, the BBC all but celebrated the invasion with its man in Downing Street congratulating Blair on being "conclusively right" on his assertion that he and Bush "would be able to take Baghdad without a bloodbath". The invasion, it is reliably estimated, has caused 655,000 "excess deaths", overwhelmingly civilians.

If none of these important people are called to account, there is clearly only justice for the victims of accredited "monsters".

Is that real or fake justice?

Fake.