

The 'Oil For Food' Scandal

The United-Nations-run 'oil-for-food' program was intended to shield the Iraqi people from the effects of UN-mandated sanctions. Despite consuming staggering amounts of money, it largely failed to do so. It was profoundly corrupt, not only in the sense that all sorts of people unjustly enriched themselves through it, but in the sense that it undermined every institution and sabotaged every political process that could genuinely have improved the lives of Iraqis. All this has been well known for years, but to the great shame of the international community, was regarded as an inevitable part of the scenery of world politics.

Now that hard evidence and the sordid details are beginning to come out, there is a chance that the world may learn a lesson. Everyone should at least read these articles:

The Oil-for-Food Scam: What Did Kofi Annan Know, and When Did He Know It?

The next month, "humanitarian" became a broad category indeed. On June 2, Annan approved a newly expanded shopping list by Saddam that the Secretariat dubbed "Oil-for-Food Plus." This added ten new sectors to be funded by the program, including "labor and social affairs," "information," "justice," and "sports." Either the Secretary-General had failed to notice or he did not care that none of these had anything to do with the equitable distribution of relief. By contrast, they had everything to do with the running of Saddam's totalitarian state. "Labor," "information," and "justice" were the realms of Baathist party patronage, propaganda, censorship, secret police, rape rooms, and mass graves.

And:

World leaders on list of oil recipients

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