

Secrets Buried with Saddam

Professor Sattar Kassem

Although the Americans expressed their dismay on the method Saddam was executed, they had their own strong reasons to get rid of the man as soon as possible. They were a little embarrassed internationally, but they had the Iraqi government to blame for its “un-professional and in-humanitarian” method. Of course, this is not an excuse because they could insist on certain methodological methods before handing Saddam to his fellow Iraqis. It is known that Saddam had been imprisoned and guarded by the Americans, and he was handed only few hours before the execution.

The sectarian character of those who supervised and attended Saddam’s execution was very much noticeable, and apparently it was meant to fuel the sectarian conflict in Iraq. Iraq is suffering now from chaos and continuous bloody feuds between the Sunni and Shiite Moslems. Saddam as a Sunni leader who governed Iraq for almost three decades, was labeled by the Shiites who are the majority as a ruthless dictator. The Shiites hold all the Sunnis responsible, although Saddam didn’t differentiate in his ruthlessness.

The verbal expressions and slogans that were shouted by the people attending were very provocative for the Sunnis, and thought to be aggravating the internal conflict. The Americans condemned such a behavior but actually they took no fore steps to make sure that the execution will be “civilized.”

What is more important is that the Americans were very much interested in the absence of Saddam because of the hot issues that will be raised in court. Saddam was hanged on a verdict concerning a local massacre in an Iraqi village that had no international impact, but the international flavor is expected to disseminate in the rest of issues. Here I point out these issues in which the US might be involved:

1- currently, the Iraqi court is hearing the details of al-Anfal massacre. Al-Anfal is the name of that horrible chemical bombing of Iraqi Kurds in 1988, and in which thousands of Kurds were intoxicated to death. Saddam is thought to have given the orders of bombing. However, there are so many serious questions are looming over the heads concerning particularly the role of the US in arming Saddam. It is known that the US adopted Saddam as an ally in 1982 for the sake of waging a war against Iran. The US encouraged the Arab states of the Gulf to finance Saddam, and asked the Western countries to extend military help.

Saddam didn’t have any chemical weapons before 1982, but could develop this capability during the war. Who extended the know-how, and who supplied the necessary equipment? It wasn’t the Soviet Union or China or North Korea because they were extremely dissatisfied with his alliance with the Western countries. And it is legitimately asked: did the US know about the chemical activities of Saddam? If not why? Knowing that its presence in Iraq at the time was widespread and had access to all kinds of information. Did the Americans know that Saddam was thinking of chemicalizing the Kurds? Why they didn’t they stop him? And why their reaction to the bombing was mild and diplomatic?

Only Saddam could answer some of these questions, and he could have been an extremely annoying witness to American expedience.

2- The war on Iran. Why did the Americans incite Saddam to wage a war against Iran? What was the role of the Arab states? What was the role of the Europeans? Why was America assisting Saddam, but leaking information to Iran about Iraq's military capability? Why the Americans were interested in keeping the Iraqi-Iranian war going on with all of that bloodshed and atrocities? Certainly, Saddam had so many specific details about these questions, and certainly his absence is more relaxing for the US.

3- The invasion of Kuwait: we badly need to know about the American role in Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. It is thought by some analysts that the American ambassador in Iraq at the time gave strong indications to Saddam that the US would not react militarily if Kuwait is invaded. Is that true? Why the Americans were so soft on Saddam's mobilization of troops on the borders with Kuwait? Why didn't they issue deterring statements that could have stopped Saddam? Were the Americans interested in that invasion so as to create the justification for considerable military mobilization in the Gulf? Certainly, Saddam had so much to say about that.

4- Oil for food program: it is known that the United Nations developed a program called oil for food after the Security Council decided the international siege on Iraq. The UN started to supervise the Iraqi oil exports and channel the revenue in a way to help the Iraqi people eat. So much of the oil was misused, and the revenue was exposed to corrupt policies. Who was responsible for the corruption, and who robbed the Iraqi money?

All of the above questions throw big doubts on the American role in hanging Saddam so quickly. It is known that the logic of legality doesn't accept the execution of a person before completing the interrogation or the trial. At least, this person might have information that are essential to national or civil security. Saddam, for sure, had so much information concerning individuals, organizations and states, and could be very helpful in writing the historical development of very important political and military activities.