

CASI

campaign against sanctions on Iraq

PRESS RELEASE

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CASI disappointed at 'mirage' of smart sanctions

The Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq (CASI) today expressed its disappointment at the failure of UN Security Council Resolution 1409 to address the humanitarian crisis in Iraq sufficiently. The resolution, which implements a revised Goods Review List of 'dual-use' items with effect from 30 May 2002, indicates the cementing of the US-UK policy of 'smart sanctions' on Iraq.

The resolution is likely to have little effect on Iraq's humanitarian situation. It will not alter many of the features that have prevented a revival of Iraq's economy:

- * There will still be a prohibition on foreign investment into Iraq, necessary to rebuild the shattered infrastructure of the country. The Security Council's humanitarian panel reported in March 1999 that for Iraq to recover, "the oil for food system alone would not suffice and massive investment would be required in a number of key sectors, including oil, energy, agriculture and sanitation".
- * There remains no arrangement for Iraq to spend its oil revenues inside the country. It cannot pay its civil servants, teachers and medical staff an adequate wage. Foods have to be imported under the oil for food programme, preventing Iraq from reviving its own agriculture.
- * The central purchasing and distribution of goods by the Iraqi government will remain, with the population receiving primary commodities through the ration system. This system leaves the population in a highly vulnerable position if the distribution of the ration is interrupted, through war or other national emergencies.
- * Iraq will not be allowed to export any goods other than oil.

CASI's co-ordinator, Jonathan Stevenson, said:

"Smart sanctions are a mirage. Far from removing the burden of sanctions from the Iraqi people, this resolution reaffirms their position as bargaining tools in the ongoing political dispute between the United States and the Government of Iraq. Whilst the UN has spent a year haggling over import restrictions, the Iraqi people have continued to suffer. What's needed is income, yet all this resolution has provided is a reduction in paperwork. If you're trying to solve the problem of homelessness in London, it's not particularly helpful to ease check-in procedures at the Savoy. The Security Council should be concentrating on the urgent task of making provisions for investment in Iraq, not handing the US a propaganda victory."

ENDS

(Notes for journalists are provided on the following page.)

NOTES FOR JOURNALISTS:

1. The Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq is a registered society at the University of Cambridge. It was founded in 1997 by students concerned about the humanitarian crisis created in Iraq by the economic sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. CASI's exclusive concern is humanitarian: it campaigns only for the lifting of the non-military sanctions. CASI neither supports nor seeks to topple the Iraqi regime; it does not take a position on the ongoing US/UK bombing of Iraq or on human rights abuses committed by the Iraqi government.

CASI opposes the continued non-military sanctions on Iraq because it believes that they have produced a humanitarian disaster of extraordinary proportions in Iraq. While the Government of Iraq has not taken all the steps that it might have to alleviate this disaster the sanctions are also clearly to blame: economic sanctions work by inflicting hardship.

CASI's website is at www.casi.org.uk, and it can be contacted via info@casi.org.uk.

2. CASI has prepared a briefing on smart sanctions, available at <http://www.casi.org.uk/guide/smartsanctions.html>

3. The full text of the new Security Council Resolution is at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SC7395.doc.htm>