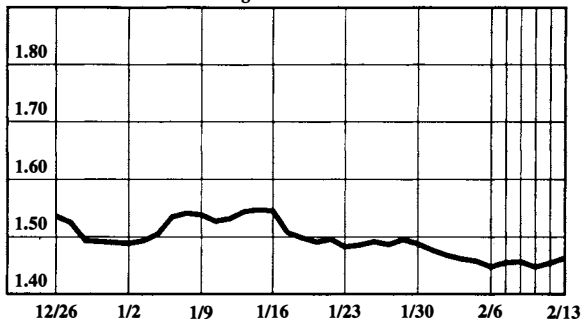


Currency Rates

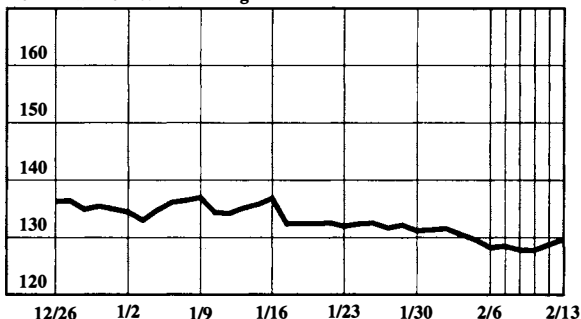
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



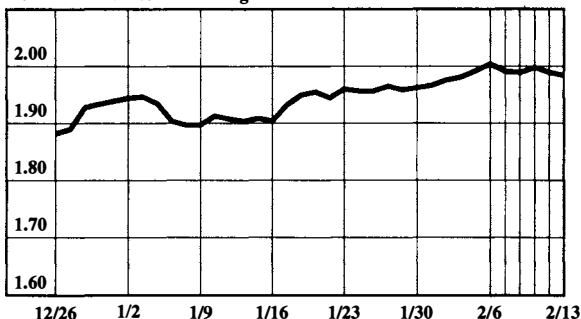
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



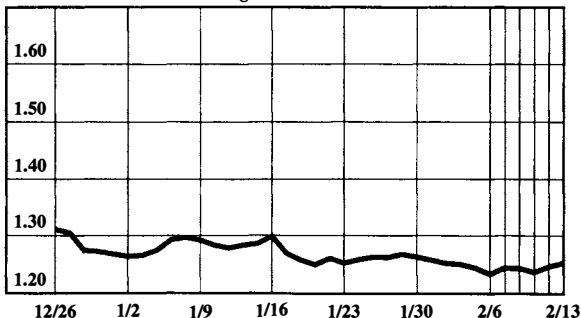
The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



U.S. bombing causing polio and plague

by Marcia Merry

As of Feb. 12, when George Bush gave a defensive speech to the Washington, D.C. press corps denying U.S. bombing raids have targeted civilians, the facts were already out proving the contrary. U.S. military strategists have created the conditions for a spreading biological holocaust in the Middle East—whatever their claims about hitting only military targets.

Apart from hunger and high casualties, there are two aspects to the immediate disease catastrophe in Iraq: the unleashing of water-borne diseases; and the spread of vermin-related disease.

Four weeks of U.S. bombing have systematically knocked out the key elements of the water system for millions of Iraqis—the power plants, and the sewage and water purification systems. Bridges that might have allowed access to safe water from emergency community sources have been bombed.

The outbreak of polio in Iraq was reported in February by UNICEF officials, after the disease had previously been classified as eradicated in the region. There is also a host of other water-connected diseases.

The illnesses for which the infectious agent is directly ingested by consumption of water contaminated by feces or sewage include: viral hepatitis (type A), typhoid fever, cholera, shigellosis, amebiasis, and dracontiasis; also, the enteric viruses, E. Coli, paratyphoid fever, and rotavirus—a major cause of infantile diarrhea.

Diseases in which a pathogen (disease-causing organism) or a vector breeds in (usually) stagnant water, and then disease results from infection via a route other than drinking the water, include: malaria, yellow fever (urban), schistosomiasis, arthropod-borne encephalitis, and intestinal or liver flukes.

The vectors of disease in this region are well documented by the World Health Organization, and well known to U.S. military planners. Besides the obvious water-related diseases, there are others, such as anthrax, and even bubonic plague, endemic to Mesopotamia. Anthrax can be carried on the skins of animals, for example sheep, which are common in the region.

Health officials have now reported that cases of the "Black Death" have broken out in Kuwait. The plague is commonly transmitted by fleas, going from their animal host to the human victim. In North America, mountain squirrels are a host population for the fleas. A different rodent is the carrier in Burma.