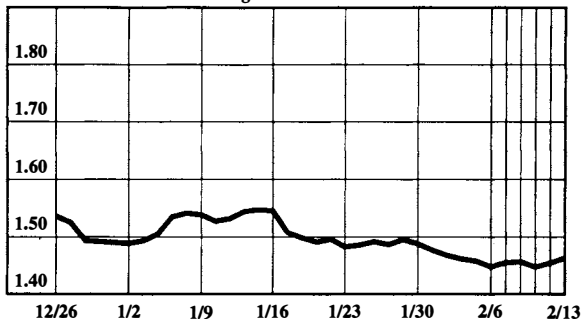


## Currency Rates

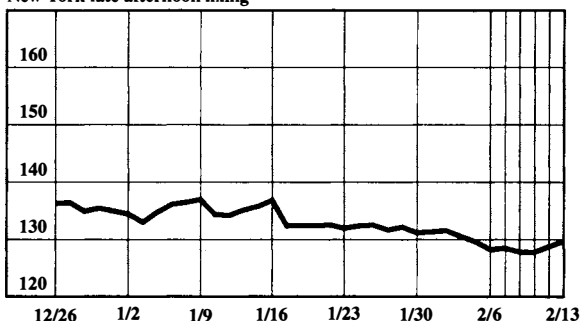
**The dollar in deutschemarks**

New York late afternoon fixing



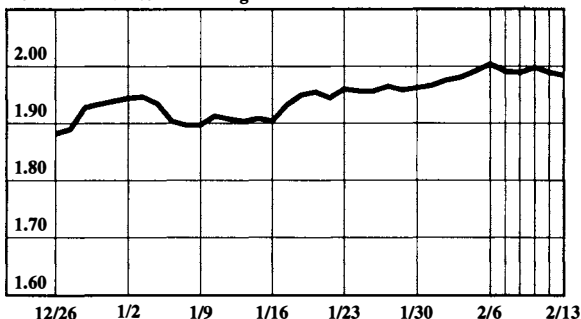
**The dollar in yen**

New York late afternoon fixing



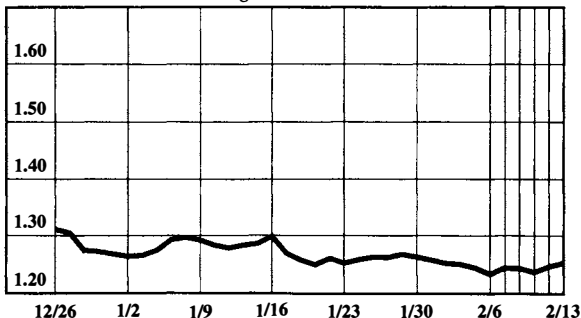
**The British pound in dollars**

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.

In Iraq and the surrounding deserts, the host vermin is the desert rat—usually an anti-social creature, keeping the disease to itself. However, under conditions of mass destruction of cities where the urban rat population is soaring, the fleas of the desert rats are finding a transmission belt of rat hosts, reaching finally to human victims.

The U.S. and London have also pressured Turkey to wage “water warfare.” Press accounts report that as of Feb. 1, Turkey started holding back 40% of the flow of the Euphrates River to Iraq, by storing more in the giant reservoir of the Ataturk Dam, not far north of the Syrian border. The Berlin daily *Tageszeitung* estimates that 5 million Iraqis face drought unless the flow of the Euphrates is restored. The Turkish government claims there are “technical” reasons for holding back the Euphrates waters.

### Bush is waging population war

In addition to the unleashing of diseases endemic in the area, there is the risk of detonating biological warfare. The Iraqis have said they possess biological and chemical warfare capabilities. In a Feb. 6 communiqué, the U.S. boasted of bombing such facilities, but avoiding release of any diseases.

On Feb. 6, Mostafa Tolba, head of the U.N. Environment Program, warned in a BBC interview of the deadly microtoxins and toxic agents that could be unleashed like anthrax,

which could take “40-50 years to disperse,” and which could be carried by air as far away as northern Europe. He said the effects would be intensified by a ground war in the region.

On Feb. 4, at a London press conference held by the Campaign to Stop the War in the Gulf, Prof. Steven Rose of the Open University of London, and others, blasted biological warfare. One scientist warned: “There is one cautionary note . . . which should be kept in mind, which is whether the Iraqis really have the facilities that they, on the one hand, claim they have, and that the Americans and British, on the other hand, claim they are bombing. . . . But if they do have the facilities that are claimed, the global dangers are very real . . . and it’s absolutely fatuous for the British Ministry of Defense to claim, as they are now doing, that British pilots have ‘taken very great care not to release toxic agents’ from the Iraqi biological facilities they are bombing. A smart bomb can’t tell whether or not it’s hitting a test tube of anthrax or not.”

Soviet General Petrov has warned of the danger of biological warfare in the region, because epidemics are “not respecters of frontiers.”

In addition to the general spread of disease in Iraq, stranded refugees in Jordan are living in virtual death camps, as a result of the U.S. war operations. Thousands of refugees are without food, clean water, and shelter.

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