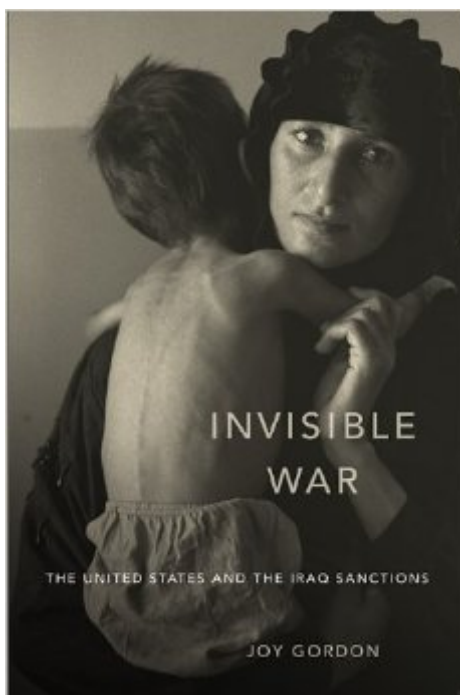


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Invisible War: The United States And The Iraq Sanctions



Synopsis

The economic sanctions imposed on Iraq from 1990 to 2003 were the most comprehensive and devastating of any established in the name of international governance. The sanctions, coupled with the bombing campaign of 1991, brought about the near collapse of Iraq's infrastructure and profoundly compromised basic conditions necessary to sustain life. In a sharp indictment of U.S. policy, Joy Gordon examines the key role the nation played in shaping the sanctions, whose harsh strictures resulted in part from U.S. definitions of "dual use" and "weapons of mass destruction," and claims that everything from water pipes to laundry detergent to child vaccines could produce weapons. Drawing on internal UN documents, confidential minutes of closed meetings, and interviews with foreign diplomats and U.S. officials, Gordon details how the United States not only prevented critical humanitarian goods from entering Iraq but also undermined attempts at reform; unilaterally overrode the UN weapons inspectors; and manipulated votes in the Security Council. In every political, legal, and bureaucratic domain, the deliberate policies of the United States ensured the continuation of Iraq's catastrophic condition. Provocative and sure to stir debate, this book lays bare the damage that can be done by unchecked power in our institutions of international governance.

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Customer Reviews

This may be the most important book published this year about American foreign policy. Joy Gordon's meticulous research provides a detailed account of how the United States manipulated

and controlled the creation and administration of brutal sanctions against Iraq between 1990 and 2003 that according to most credible accounts resulted in the deaths of at least 500,000 innocent children under 5 years old. I can't imagine a more important book for American citizens to read in order to understand the way their country really operates in the world. The evidence does not suggest that American officials intended to kill masses of innocent Iraqi children, but that they were coldly indifferent to the collateral damage caused by their actions. They wanted to totally defang Saddam Hussein and force regime change, even though this was never a stated aim of the sanctions, and simply ignored and suppressed overwhelming evidence of the immense humanitarian damage they were causing. A series of senior career UN humanitarian officials working in Iraq resigned in protest at the carnage the sanctions policy was creating. Gordon's book is particularly valuable because she is able to reconstruct how US officials cleverly and amorally used bribes, threats and inducements to win UN Security Council approval of the extreme sanctions regime in the first place and then to control it for the next 13 years. Yemen, one of only two countries to vote against the program had all its American foreign aid cut off three days later, for example. The Russians, the Chinese and many elected member states of the Security Council at the time received concessions or bribes to win their approval.

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