

# IRAQ FACTS

## What would a nonviolent response to 9-11 look like?

Americans who were listening in the first weeks after September 11th were told 4 reasons for some of the anger in the Middle East towards the U.S.:<sup>1</sup>

- The deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children due to US/UN sanctions
- The permanent stationing of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia
- The U.S. support for Arab dictators

(including Saddam Hussein)

- The anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab bias of our foreign policy

For a few weeks – until the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan began – the U.S. media was open to listening to what others had to tell us about our foreign policy. Then, once the war began, the attitudes needed to justify our violence stopped us from listening.<sup>2</sup> *(continued on back)*

1 The Christian Science Monitor (9/27/01) <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0927/p1s1-wogi.html>

2 It's remarkable to read in this article how precisely the U.S. was warned against a unilateral war on terrorism. A U.S.-educated Yemeni lawyer says "if violence escalates, you bring seeds and water for terrorism. You kill someone's brother or mother, and you will just get more crazy people." The Prime Minister of Lebanon warned, "launching a war is in the hands of the Americans, but winning it needs everybody." The Gallup Poll attached to the article shows only 3 of 15 countries supporting an attack on a country where terrorists are based vs. trying to extradite the terrorists. In Mexico 2% supported attack.

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3 The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) commissioned a poll in six Iraqi cities over May 14-23, 2004; the poll results were kept secret but leaked to the press. When Iraqis were asked how do you view Coalition Forces, 92% said "as occupiers" and only 2% said "as liberators." The poll is on the Associated Press web site at [http://www.associatedpress.com/iraq/cpapoll\\_files/frame.htm](http://www.associatedpress.com/iraq/cpapoll_files/frame.htm) with these results on slide #35.

A key element of practical nonviolence might be called empathetic listening. If we listen, deeply and honestly – especially to those seen as "the enemy" – then we are much more likely to develop skillful and successful nonviolent responses. Even if we don't win an "enemy" over, our action based on listening creates the understanding and attitudes needed for peaceful change.

And this stopped us from cultivating the understanding needed to create more successful, nonviolent responses (e.g., a legal, political and police response to capture those responsible for September 11th – and actions based on knowing that only 2% of Iraqis would come to see us as "liberators").<sup>3</sup> Nonviolence is often mistaken for passivity – doing nothing – and is often judged solely by the physical action involved. But great practitioners of nonviolence, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, stress that