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News Flash

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USA/Iraq : Not in the name of human rights

In his speech to the UN General Assembly today, President George Bush made reference to the serious human rights violations perpetrated upon the Iraqi people by their government. In the background paper distributed to the media, several references were made to Amnesty International's reports published over the years on the human rights situation in Iraq.

" Once again, the human rights record of a country is used selectively to legitimize military actions." Amnesty International said.

" The US and other Western governments turned a blind eye to Amnesty International reports of widespread human rights violations in Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, and ignored Amnesty International's campaign on behalf of the thousands of unarmed Kurdish civilians killed in the 1988 attacks on Halabja.'

" As the debate on whether to use military force against Iraq escalates, the human rights of the Iraqi people, as a direct consequence of any potential military action, is sorely missing from the equation."

" Life, safety and security of civilians must be the paramount consideration in any action taken to resolve the current human rights and humanitarian crisis. The experience of previous armed intervention in the Gulf has shown that, all too often, civilians become the acceptable casualties of war."

" In the event of military action there is a serious possibility of large flows of refugees and the internal displacement of thousands of people. A humanitarian crisis can emerge caused by difficult or impossible delivery of basic supplies leaving shortages in food, medicine and the destruction of civilian infrastructure and institutions."

Public Document

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