



An Open Letter to the People of Iraq

Cochabamba, Bolivia
May 30, 2003

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Iraq,

We have watched carefully in recent weeks and months as you have suffered under the pains of war and its chaotic and unstable aftermath. Our hearts are with you and your families.

We write to you now because we fear that you might be made victims of additional suffering, at the hands of a multinational corporation - Bechtel - an evil business that the people of Bolivia know all too well. This Bechtel Corporation, the company that has been awarded a massive contract by the US government to rebuild infrastructure in your country, is the same one that took over the public water system of our city, Cochabamba, three years ago.

Bechtel's evil deeds in Bolivia include:

- 1) Within weeks of taking control of our water Bechtel raised water rates for the poor by more than 50% and in many cases by double, far beyond what families here could afford to pay. As a result of Bechtel's greed families were forced to choose between water and food.
- 2) When popular protest erupted to challenge Bechtel the company's local managers sat contently in their luxury hotels and watched on television as the Bolivian government brutally repressed the people of Cochabamba in order to protect Bechtel's contract.
- 3) When popular protest finally succeeded in kicking Bechtel out of Bolivia, Bechtel's managers sacked the water company's offices, taking computers, personnel records, ratepayer monies, and leaving behind an unpaid electric bill for \$90,000.
- 4) To defend themselves, Bechtel's senior managers continue to publicly lie about the severity of their rate increases.

5) Bechtel is now seeking to sue the people of Cochabamba for \$25 million in a secret World Bank trade court, demanding a share of the huge profits that they expected to make from the Bolivian people and were not allowed to.

Bechtel's actions in Bolivia and elsewhere demonstrate that it is a company without morals, only greed. What it sought to do to the people of Bolivia it will surely try to do to the people of Iraq as well.

We support you in any action to remove Bechtel from your country and to protect yourselves from the abuse they are likely to bring with them.

In solidarity,

Luis Choquetijlla
Executive Secretary, Central Obrera Departamental

Oscar Olivera
Executive Secretary, Federación de Trabajadores Fabriles de Cochabamba

Evo Morales
President, Seis Federaciones del Trópico Cochabambino
National Deputy

Omar Fernández
President, Local Federation of Irrigators

Wilfredo Portugal
President, Workers without Retirement

Luis Sánchez-Gomez
Director, Pro Life Social Committee
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Alex Galvez
Executive Secretary, Confederación de Fabriles de Bolivia

Rene Cardona
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Jorge Ortiz
Workers Union from Municipal Water Service from Cochabamba (SEMAPA)

Ramiro Bolanos
President, National Federation of Award Housing Social Interest

Harry Mondaca, Popular Civic Committee

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