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Let's Restore the Republic

by Jacob G. Hornberger

The following is a transcript of a speech given at The Future of Freedom Foundation's June 2007 conference, "Restoring the Republic: Foreign Policy & Civil Liberties" held in Reston, Virginia.

Jacob Hornberger: It is impossible to overstate the fundamental differences between the way our American ancestors viewed foreign policy and the foreign policy philosophy that guides America today. The philosophy of our ancestors was nicely summed up in the Fourth of July Address that John Quincy Adams made to the United States Congress in 1821. Adams said, in essence, Look. There are a lot of bad things that happen all over the world. There are dictatorships, tyranny, starvation, famine, economic oppression. But he said, "What's special about this country, the United States of America, is that the government of this country does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy." The words he used. He said, "Instead, the American people would spend their lives and their efforts and their fortunes developing a free and a prosperous society right here at home, for the whole world to emulate."

But he didn't just leave it there. He provided an escape valve for people suffering these horrific conditions in other countries. He said, "Let the word go forth all over the world, to people in dungeons starving to death, that while this government will not come with its bombs and missiles and soldiers to free you from these conditions, that if you have the will and you have the means to escape your condition. While every other nation on earth might reject you and send you back to those conditions, you need to know that there's, at least, one country in this world that you can come to, virtually no questions asked, along with your family, your friends, for the rest of your life."

In the process of developing this free society, nothing mattered more to our American ancestors than the idea of individual freedom. They brought into existence this government, but they didn't trust this government. They didn't trust the likes of George Washington, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson. They didn't think anyone could be trusted with power. So they bring into

existence this national government, but say, “These are your powers. They’re limited. They’re enumerated. If your power doesn’t exist here, you cannot exercise it.” Imagine that. People telling government officials what they could and could not do. And even that wasn’t enough. Because the American people, our ancestors, people just like you and me, said, “We still don’t trust these people. We want a Bill of Rights that expressly enumerates fundamental rights that you cannot interfere with. Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, the Right to Assemble, the Right to Keep and Bear Arms.” But on top of those were the great civil liberties, the liberties that had been carved out through the efforts of men and women who had resisted government tyranny. That is, resisted the efforts of their own government to punish their own citizens. Rights that go all the way back to Magna Carta, when the great barons of England held King John at the point of a sword and made the King admit that his powers were limited, the great rights of Habeas Corpus, the lynchpin of a free society. You cannot have a free society without Habeas Corpus.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: Due process of law, a phrase that goes all the way back to the great Charter, the Magna Carta. Trial by Jury, Right to Counsel, Right to Confront Witnesses, Right to be Free from Unreasonable Searches and Seizures. Notice all these rights carved out in resistance to the government power to come after its own citizens in criminal prosecutions. John Quincy Adams told that Congress if the U.S. Government ever abandons this philosophy to the point where it goes abroad in search of monsters to destroy, America will become, in his words, “a dictatress of the world.” And that in fact, the spirit and the qualities that characterize a free people will get damaged and, perhaps, even destroyed in that process.

And who can deny that the U.S. Government, having abandoned that philosophy of non-intervention, and having embraced the philosophy of empire and intervention, has indeed become the dictator of the world. What other regime has the power to go into any country on earth and kidnap its citizens, with impunity, through the power of the President’s private secret army, the CIA? And that’s what it is. It’s his army. It is not only above the law, it is the law. It can go into any country on earth and kidnap any foreign citizen and send him into the clutches of a monstrous regime for the express purpose of torturing him and, perhaps, even executing him. Or better yet, to send them into this chain of secret CIA prison camps, for the purpose of torture or, perhaps, extrajudicial execution, at least, disappearance. Camps whose location we the people are not permitted to know, and neither are our elected representatives in Congress.

Having abandoned this philosophy of non-intervention, the U.S. Government has become the International policeman, intervener, interloper, invader, provider, sanctioner, embargoer. And it is now we, us, who are reaping the whirlwind. Because everything that we’re talking about here revolves around one subject, U.S. foreign policy. We know live in a country in which the President, on his own initiative, can send the entire nation into war, on his own. He doesn’t have to comply with a constitutional restriction requiring a Congressional Declaration of War before

doing so. He can ignore that provision of the Constitution. As a matter of fact, under his theory and under the theory of many in Washington, he has the power as a Commander in Chief, to ignore all provisions of the Constitution. He's a Commander in Chief. He's like Napoleon. He's like Santa Ana. He wields all those dictatorial powers that a Commander in Chief wields, including the power to ignore restraints on his power. He can sign statements, when Congress sends him laws limiting his power, signing a statement that he's not going to comply with that law. Thank you very much. Thank you for sending it to me. He has the power to spy on citizens through his agencies, monitoring e-mail, telephone calls.

Perhaps most significant of all, since 9/11, has been this tremendous inversion of the relationship between the military and the civilian. Imagine the military now has the omnipotent power to take any citizen and any foreigner into custody, as an enemy combatant, simply by labeling him that. And deny him these rights, Due Process of Law, Trial by Jury, Right to Counsel. And certainly, for foreigners to deny them Habeas Corpus. So far, Americans are still accorded that right. That's the power the military now has over the American people, thanks to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which upheld the Enemy Combatant Doctrine. Is it being exercised widely? Of course not. But given the right circumstances, another major terrorist attack, they now have in their hip pocket the power to pick up any citizen, cart him away, torture him and keep him in detention for the rest of his life. No Trial by Jury.

They told us that 9/11 changed the world. It didn't change anything. This is a bald-faced lie; 9/11 was simply a continuation of what had gone before, and it provided the excuse to continue the same sorts of things that had been going on before. Iran, 1953, the President's private army, the CIA, goes into an independent country and ousts, secretly and surreptitiously, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iraq, a man much beloved by the Iranian people, Mohammed Mosaddeq. This is a man who had been selected *Time* magazine's Man of the Year. The CIA gets him out of power, reinstalls the Shah, proceeds to assist him in setting up his own domestic CIA that proceeds to torture his own people, terrorizing his own people for the next 30 years, with the full support of the U.S. Government and the CIA.

Did you hear any talk there about Muslims hating America for their freedom and values? That we were having a war against the Islamofascists? Of course not. Because their brutal dictator was our partner. And while the American people were not aware of what the CIA had done, the Iranian people were aware. They gradually figured it out. And the anger and the rage were percolating through that society until it culminated in the Iranian Revolution. And when they took those U.S. officials hostage, all you could see is U.S. officials saying, "They hate us for our freedom and values. We just don't understand this."

Guatemala, a year later, the CIA goes in there and ousts the democratically elected President of the country. Now, imagine if some foreigner writes a check today, as a campaign contribution to some American politician, man, you will see the Justice Department going

bananas. You'll see Grand Juries being convened. There are foreign influences trying to influence our elections. Here's the CIA ousting the President of a country. Never mind that it threw Guatemala into 30 years of civil war, killing hundreds of thousands of people. They're just Guatemalans. They're just Latin Americans. They're just like Vietnamese. They're just like Iraqis. They don't have a real value in human life like Americans do.

Sure, there were some failures. You know, the Bay of Pigs regime change in Cuba, with a man that they're more obsessed with than they were with Saddam Hussein, Fidel Castro. They're still obsessed with regime change there. There was the famous partnership with the CIA and the Mafia, where the President's private army entered into a partnership with Mafioso assassins, murderers, narcotraffickers, in order to assassinate Fidel Castro, with no moral reservations about that partnership. There were some success stories, Grenada, Panama. And then, there was, of course, the support of brutal dictatorships. Saddam Hussein, the man who they called the new Hitler. They entered into a partnership with the new Hitler. Google it online, "Rumsfeld shaking hands," and you'll see the famous photograph of Donald Rumsfeld shaking hands with the new Hitler, Saddam Hussein, setting their partnership up. In which Saddam Hussein gets those infamous chemical and biological weapons from the United States and other western countries. That's how they were sure they were still there, that they'd be left over from the time the United States furnished him those weapons of mass destruction. And why did they furnish them to him? So that he could use them against the Iranian people, who are now our enemies, who hated us for our freedom and values, when before that when the Shah was in power, they supposedly loved us. This is the moral bankruptcy of U.S. foreign policy.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: And when they turn on Saddam, he becomes the new Hitler. In the Persian Gulf intervention, you've got the Pentagon sitting up there doing some studying and some reports. And they figure out that if you destroy the water and sewage facilities of Iraq, that there's all kinds of infectious diseases that are going to spread, illnesses that are going to spread among the Iraqi people. And they report that. They put that in a report. And after studying and analyzing and reporting on it, they say -- they issue the order, "Destroy the water and sewage facilities." And they proceeded to do that with full knowledge that the same thing would happen there as they were saying would happen in New Orleans. Remember, with the dirty water and all that telling people not to drink it? They did this intentionally.

And then, they imposed this brutal sanctions regime that prevented the water and sewage facilities from being repaired. Year after year, tens of thousands of children are dying. High UN officials are resigning in protest to this genocide. There's this sense of helplessness. They couldn't do anything to break out of these sanctions. Tens of thousands of children are dying of disease and malnutrition and infectious diseases every year. Tremendous grieving across the country, but most of all, anger and rage boiling, boiling in this cauldron of anger and hatred, all through the

Middle East. Then, you've got the UN Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, expresses the entire philosophy of the U.S. Government toward the Iraqi people when she says, in response to a question from 60 Minutes, "Are the deaths of those half a million children worth it?" And she says, "Well, it's a difficult issue, but yes, they are worth it. They're just Iraqis, you see." And while Americans were not aware of that statement, that statement reverberated all across the Middle East to every Muslim in the Middle East. And the anger and the rage are boiling.

You had the stationing of troops on Islamic Holy Lands, knowing exactly what that was going to do to Muslim sensibilities, in Mecca and Medina. It was like rubbing their noses in it. It's like poking hornet's nests. I mean, every school kid knows what happens when you poke hornet's nests. And that's what they were doing throughout the '90s, just poking those hornet's nests. The No Fly Zones, illegal No Fly Zones. They never got permission of Congress. They never got permission of the UN. They just imposed them unilaterally through Presidential decree. And they enforced them with bombs and missiles, in which Iraqis were getting killed every year, including a 13-year-old kid whose head was blown off by an errant missile, enforcing the No Fly Zones, as he was tending his sheep.

The cauldron was boiling and boiling and boiling. We were saying, the Future of Freedom Foundation, in the late 1990s, check it out on our Web site. Sheldon was writing about this, Sheldon Richmond. I was writing about this. If you continue doing this, the poking of the hornet's nests, you're going to reap what you sow. You're going to see terrorism on American soil. Because these people are getting angry and they have no way of striking back against the most powerful empire, the most powerful military in the history of the world. When 9/11 hit, we weren't surprised. We didn't predict, of course, the means that they were doing it or the devastation that they would do. But we weren't surprised, at all. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to have predicted this. In 1993, you know how they tell us, "This is the first instance of terrorism on American soil." It's just a bald-faced lie. It's a denial of reality. In 1993, the terrorists attacked the very same target that they targeted in 2001, the World Trade Center.

And Ramsey Yusef, one of the terrorists, appears before the Federal Judge at his sentencing, because terrorism was treated as a crime, which it always has been, which it should be, rather than an act of war. He appears before the Federal Judge, and go read it online. You can Google "Ramsey Yusef's sentencing hearing," and you can see the anger and the rage. Now, you won't agree with everything this guy's saying. But what will seep through is the anger and the rage as he exclaims against U.S. Foreign Policy. You had the terrorist attacks against the USS Cole, the terrorist attacks against the U.S. Embassy's in Tanzania and Kenya. And all the while, this callous indifference, 9/11 comes along. It's just a continuation of the terrorist blowback, the anger and rage that was being produced in the Middle East, in response to U.S. foreign policy. And the terrorists are simply saying, "Stop doing what you're doing. Leave us alone. Stop killing people over here. Just go home."

But that's not what the U.S. did after 9/11. Not only are we not going to go home, we're going to teach you a very brutal lesson. We're going to continue doing more of what we've been doing. We're going to continue putting your nose into it. We're going to continue engaging in regime change, just like in Iran, just like in Guatemala, just like in Grenada, Panama. We go into Afghanistan. We drop bombs on a few weddings. We kill several thousand people. We don't capture the malefactor, the supposed malefactor of 9/11. But we accomplish something more important, in the eyes of Washington. We accomplish a regime change. Ousting the Taliban, a recalcitrant regime, with a puppet regime that now fits within the U.S. Empire.

More significantly, they decide that this is the perfect ambience to achieve what the sanctions had not been able to achieve for some 11 or 12 years, regime change in Iraq. Here's the perfect opportunity. So they invade this country, with the support of a society that's filled with fear, filled with hysteria. They kill countless people. We don't know how many more Iraqis have died. Because, you see, the Pentagon doesn't keep count of those people. They don't count. You only keep count of American dead. That sends a signal. The estimates range from 60,000 to 600,000. But again, you see, the mindset is it's worth it. That even though we didn't find those infamous weapons of mass destruction, we're here to liberate you. We're here to bring democracy to you. And the fact that we have killed your mother and your father, your daughters, your spouses, your relatives, your friends, that's worth it to you.

Is there any doubt as to why people are so angry and rageful against this country? And the irony of it is, that if there is another terrorist attack on American soil, say from an Iraqi, from a country that had never, ever done anything against the United States, no attacks on the United States, no terrorism against the United States. Wouldn't it be ironic if that terrorist says, "The reason I'm doing this is because you invaded my country, when my country had never done anything to your country." Because that's what they're doing with this occupation. This is the world's greatest terrorist-producing machine. The more they occupy, the more they kill, the more anger, the more helplessness, the more rage, they are producing their own supply of terrorists. And in the process of doing this, post-9/11, they use this as the excuse to come after us to take away our freedoms. Unfortunately, with the support of people who have lost the concept of these rights that go back to Magna Carta, Trial by Jury, Due Process of Law. They use that as the excuse to suspend, cancel Habeas Corpus.

And that's why it's all rooted in U.S. foreign policy. Now, what's the answer to all this? The answer is truth and ideas on freedom. Because you see, if people have this concept that they hate us for our freedom and values, which is just a direct lie and a denial of reality, but if they believe that, if their minds are encrusted with falsehood and denials of reality, they're going to sit there and say, "Hey, I'm not going to give up my freedom to the terrorists. They're trying to take away my right to go to church every Sunday. And by golly, I'm going to fight here. I'm going to fight the terrorists. I'm going to fight the Muslims. I'm ready to go to war and all this."

But if you're able to strip away those falsehoods and those deceptions, that denial of reality, and you say, "Look. What this is about is this. You are giving up centuries of rights that have been carved out by men and women that have given their very lives for these rights and liberties, in return for a foreign policy that violates the very principles on which this country was founded. A foreign policy of empire and intervention." Now, all of a sudden, things change. Because you see, now people are faced with a choice. And when people are faced with a choice, they start thinking. And they start saying, "Well, now, wait a minute. You're saying that if I give up this foreign policy of empire and intervention that's involved with regime change and torturing people and invading countries and assassination, that we can now then, once again, have a society that's healthy and normal and well balanced. We don't have all these color-coded terrorist things. And where we've got freedom and peace and prosperity. You got it. That's your choice."

And you see, once people are faced with that choice, then we've got a shot. Because I have a hunch that as people start realizing that that's the true choice, and you see that's why they don't want us thinking about why they hate us, that's why they immediately go on attack. Because the last thing they want people to be thinking about is the conduct and misconduct of the U.S. Government in overseas affairs. Once people start focusing on that, they know the jig might be up on big government in overseas affairs. And that's why it's imperative that everyone in this room, everyone that attended this conference, the Libertarians, Conservatives, Liberals, has broken through to this reality. That the root of the problem is the U.S. Government that the problem is in Washington, DC. That we continue speaking the truth. And we continue spreading these sound ideas on liberty, because the truth and ideas on liberty can cut through falsehood, deception, and denial of reality, like a knife through butter.

If we continue spreading these ideas and talking about the truth about U.S. foreign policy, then, people are going to start reflecting on John Quincy Adams' address to the U.S. Congress. They're going to start reflecting about what ordinary people were doing in 1787 and 1791. Ordinary people just like all of us in this room. And when they start reflecting on that I have no doubts they're going to come to the conclusion that our American ancestors were right and their successors today are wrong. And then, by restoring a foreign policy of non-intervention, of non-empire, we can restore the type of society that our ancestors envisioned for us. In fact, we can do more than that. We can build on the principles of freedom that they were establishing, so that we can build a society, the model society, for the whole world to emulate. In which we reach the highest reaches of freedom that mankind has ever seen. What greater gift could we bequeath to ourselves and to our children? Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. I've got to tell y'all that -- just take five more minutes here. This has been one of the real

highlights of my life. We dreamed about this conference almost a year ago. And we are just so ecstatic. I want to do some thank you's. I want to thank all of you for coming. I mean, the scary thing about putting on a very expensive conference is that, my gosh, what if nobody comes, you know? And thank you for attending this, for supporting us. I've got to tell you, now, you know, I know it's not a cheap price, \$500. We're a non-profit foundation. That \$500, I want you to know, essentially, covers the meal costs for this conference. As you know, this is the Hyatt Regency. You know you got some good food here. So we weren't making any big profits on this registration fee, which means that we had a lot of additional expenses. We got speakers' expenses and hotel expenses and promotional advertising and so forth, Web site. And I want to give a special thanks to our sponsors for helping us out. I mean, we couldn't have done it.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: I learned a long time ago in this movement there's certain people that have the ability and the commitment to help all these free market organizations. And man, I tell you, we are very, very grateful. And we're grateful for the \$25 donations. We're really grateful for the \$100,000 donations. There's no way I could have done this without the help I got. Would y'all call Cindy in, also, please? I am just so blessed to have four of the greatest people. We're a small organization. And those of you that send us donations, I want you to know we watch our costs very carefully. And we pack a little bit of a wallop with just the few of us that are here. But there's no way I could've done this. First of all, Alicia Cannon's been with me since, gosh, 1993, I think. And she's in charge of all our donor relationship, our subscriber stuff. And I mean, she's just been fantastic. All of these.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: Fantastic. And then, Bart, of course, couldn't do with Bart. He's been absolutely fantastic.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: And then, let me move over to Cindy, now. I'll give you the deep dark secret here that y'all don't know. But Cindy is, actually, Alicia's sister. So we've got two Greek girls here helping us out.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: All these people are the kind of people that are cursed with the feeling that if they're given a job they can't help themselves, they have to do it. Which is just great for someone like me, because I just watch them in awe. Because I don't have to say, "Did you do this and this and this?" And the one that just ranks at the top there is Stephanie. And Stephanie's been our conference coordinator.

[Applause]

Jacob Hornberger: Thank y'all very much. Now, some of you who are not familiar with the Future of Freedom Foundation, we have a free FFF e-mail update. It goes out every day, six days a

week. We're trying to make it, we have for some four or five years, the finest libertarian free market editorial page on the Internet. That's free for the asking. *Freedom Daily*, our journal, is \$25 a year, or \$15 e-mail. We encourage you to subscribe. Those of you who have been donating, thank you so much. Couldn't do it without you. Those of you who are not, love to have your support. We really need it. And I think that's it. Thank you so much for coming. Have a safe trip home. Hope to see you again.

[Applause]