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Sic the IRS on Saddam

by Jacob G. Hornberger

President Bush made a grievous mistake by relying on a UN weapons report to go after Saddam Hussein. He should have instead required Saddam to file a federal income-tax return. It would have been a much more effective and less costly way to get rid of the man.

Look at the disadvantages that the UN weapons report has presented to Bush.

It has certainly put our president in the odd position of pleading with the United Nations for authority for the United States to defend itself from an imminent Iraqi attack on our country. Does that mean that whenever a foreign enemy is about to attack our nation, our president must now seek permission from the UN Security Council before we can defend ourselves? What if the nation that is attacking us has veto power on the UN Security Council?

Since the UN weapons inspectors have failed as of yet to discover any weapons of mass destruction, Bush is relegated to going to war on the basis that Saddam has committed a “material breach” of a UN resolution for filing what Bush claims is a false UN weapons report. That sounds a lot like breach of contract, which is usually a civil, rather than a criminal, offense. That wouldn’t be the case with a fraudulent federal income-tax return — everyone knows that that’s a criminal offense!

Moreover, since the resolution was enacted by the United Nations, rather than the U.S. government, what authority does an individual member of the United Nations (e.g., the United States) have to declare such a breach and then respond to it? Isn’t it only the organization, rather than each member of the organization, that has the authority to interpret the organization’s resolutions and to enforce them? Or does this now mean that each member of the UN Security Council, including China and Russia, have the right to declare breaches of UN resolutions and respond to them? Does that apply to all UN resolutions?

Saddam’s UN weapons report has also put the U.S. government in the embarrassing position of allowing the world to discover that it was U.S. officials who furnished Saddam biological, chemical, and nuclear components in the first place. Keep in mind what U.S. officials have continually claimed for more than a decade: that Saddam is an “evil Hitler” who hates America for its “freedom and values.”

That obviously raises troubling questions that unfortunately the mainstream press, which seems to be horribly afflicted with a bad case of war fever, has so far been quite reluctant to ask: Since Saddam Hussein is an “evil Hitler,” why did U.S. officials furnish him with biological, chemical, and nuclear weaponry? Did they know that he was an “evil Hitler” when they furnished him weapons of mass destruction? Did they know that he hated America for its “freedom and values” when they helped him to employ those weapons against the Iranian people? If so, why aren’t those U.S. officials being indicted for war crimes, trading with the enemy, and treason?

So, you see, Bush should never have relied on a UN weapons report to get Saddam. The whole process has proven messy and embarrassing. A much better route would have been a federal income-tax return. What better way to have gotten Saddam than to sic the IRS on him?

Everyone knows that whenever the U.S. government has no other way get a person it has targeted, it always has its golden standby: the false federal income-tax return. That's the way they got Al Capone. It's the way they got Leona Helmsley. As everyone knows, the list of people they've gone after for income-tax violations goes on and on. Nothing can beat the federal income-tax return for going after our enemies.

The reason, as everyone knows, especially those in the government, is that no one can ever be in full compliance with all the rules and regulations associated with federal income-tax returns. It's just not possible, given the multiplicity of rules and regulations and the subjective manner in which each of them can be interpreted. Anyone who files a federal income-tax return is inevitably going to screw up in some way, and then, if the IRS chooses, it's "Gotcha!" He's history! And the beauty of it is that everyone approves of the IRS's going after the tax cheat because he's making everyone else pay more taxes!

All the U.S. government would have had to do is require that Saddam file a federal income-tax return disclosing his income. That's all. End of story. They would have had him regardless of what he declared. And no one would have questioned it because the federal income-tax return has become such a standard part of everyone's everyday lives.

For example, suppose Saddam failed to disclose the biological, chemical, and nuclear weaponry that he received from the U.S. government as income, later claiming that the weaponry was intended as a gift. All the IRS would have had to say was, "Wrong, bozo! That's income, not a gift, because you agreed to pay subservience and loyalty to the United States in return for the weaponry." Boom. They would have had him. And no one would have questioned the matter.

Or suppose Saddam honestly reported the U.S. government's furnishing of that weaponry as his income. They would have still been able to get him. How? By claiming that he hadn't reported the full value of the weaponry. In other words, it wouldn't matter how much Saddam reported as value — the IRS could always claim it's too low, especially compared to what the U.S. government is secretly getting on sales of such weaponry to others. Boom. They would have had him — a false federal income-tax return.

Another advantage of having relied on the federal income-tax return pertains to the presumption of guilt. President Bush continues to claim that Saddam has filed a false weapons report but refuses to furnish any supporting evidence, claiming that Saddam is presumed guilty until he proves his innocence. Thus, many people outside the mainstream press are asking the obvious questions: Why does the accused, rather than the accuser, bear the burden of proof, and how is Saddam supposed to prove a negative? Those questions would never have arisen with respect to the IRS and a federal income-tax return because no one questions that people are presumed guilty and expected to prove their innocence when it comes to that part of their lives.

What if Saddam had claimed that he wasn't required to file a U.S. tax return? All the IRS would have had to do is reject the claim. That's the beauty of it, because as everyone knows, the IRS is a law unto itself. It darned sure doesn't have to go the United Nations to enforce its rulings. It has the power to enforce them all by itself, without even having to go to court. Isn't that great? Think what our American IRS could have done to Saddam compared with those weenies at the United Nations.

Perhaps the best part of relying on a federal income-tax return is that it would have gotten rid of Saddam in an efficient and cost-effective manner. All the IRS would have had to do is begin harassing him interminably with notices, levies, liens, and audits, and that would have been the end of it. Because the IRS would surely have accomplished what it's done to so many Americans — drive Saddam to committing suicide! Who would have complained about that? Everyone would have been rid of the man — and without having to risk the lives of U.S. soldiers and

without having to kill thousands of Iraqis, including troops, women, and children, with the objective of getting just one man for supposedly committing breach of resolution.

Isn't it a shame that in his quest to slay a foreign dragon, President Bush has utilized a poor, dirty, primitive weapon — a UN weapons report — when he could have used one of the most powerful, clean, and civilized weapons in the American arsenal — the IRS and the federal income-tax return?

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