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Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Saddam?

by Jacob G. Hornberger

I have a confession to make: I'm not afraid of Saddam Hussein. Not a bit. I have absolutely no fear that the man is going to come and get me or that he is going to spray biological or chemical weapons on me or that he will send someone to do the dirty deed for him. I don't even fear the possibility that Saddam will nuke me.

After all, think about it:

(1) Saddam was once a friend of both the president's father and current secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, during the 1980s, when the U.S. government was furnishing biological and chemical weapons to him. Would Bush Sr. have permitted the delivery of those weapons to Saddam if he had been afraid of him? Not very likely. That's one thing that the president's father and I have in common: Neither of us is afraid of Saddam Hussein.

(2) From the time that U.S. officials delivered those weapons of mass destruction to Saddam in the 1980s through the present date, Saddam has not used them against the United States, American troops, or American civilians. He didn't even use them against U.S. troops during the Persian Gulf War.

(3) Saddam's armed forces are significantly weaker than they were during the Persian Gulf War, when they succeeded in killing only 148 American troops, compared with the estimated 150,000 Iraqis, both military and civilian, killed by U.S. forces in that war.

(4) Iraq has not invaded any country for the past 12 years.

(5) Iraq's neighbors apparently have no fear of Saddam. If they did, they'd be paying us to defend them rather than the other way around.

(6) Hundreds of UN weapons inspectors currently have free rein in Iraq to inspect any Iraqi property without notice and without the need to secure a warrant, including sites identified by the CIA and other intelligence services, and to immediately destroy any weapons of mass destruction they find.

(7) Iraq is being monitored by the most advanced technological means of intelligence ever devised, including satellites and U-2 spy planes that are free to fly anywhere over the nation.

(8) Iraq is besieged by 250,000 U.S. troops, who compose the most powerful military force in history, possessing total air and naval superiority.

I repeat: I have absolutely no fear of Saddam Hussein ...

... unless the U.S. government follows through with its plan to invade Iraq. Because when someone such as Saddam Hussein is cornered and knows that enemy forces are targeting him and his family for death, he has no incentive to refrain from doing whatever is necessary to destroy as many of the enemy as possible.

Moreover, as we learned in both the 1993 and 2001 terrorist attacks, there are people from around the world who will make it their mission in life to avenge the deaths of Iraqis killed by U.S. forces.

Why are so many Americans terrified of Saddam Hussein? There is one — and only one — reason: U.S. government propaganda. Day after day, U.S. officials, from the president on down, have pounded a deep and abiding fear of Saddam into the minds of the American people.

The fact that I have absolutely no fear of Saddam Hussein frees me from the need to support the killing of tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi people, including ordinary soldiers, civilians, and children, who will die and be maimed in the military attempt to “disarm Saddam” or to effect a “regime change” in Iraq.

Of course, if the U.S. government had succeeded in instilling a deep and abiding fear of Saddam Hussein within me, the fact that such a fear would be irrational would not relieve me of the moral responsibility for supporting the killing and maiming of those tens of thousands of innocent people.

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