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Speaking of Lies

by Jacob G. Hornberger

Speaking of lies, we might want to remind ourselves of the one that was issued after the September 11 attacks — that those attacks were motivated by hatred for America’s “freedom and values” rather than by hatred for U.S. foreign policy. The lie is likely to become of renewed importance now that al-Qaeda is promising new attacks if the feds follow through with their plan to employ military tribunals against its detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

After the 1993 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, al-Qaeda repeatedly warned U.S. officials that it would launch new terrorist attacks against Americans unless (1) the U.S. government removed its troops from Islamic holy lands in Saudi Arabia; (2) the economic sanctions imposed against Iraq, which were killing thousands of Iraqi children, were lifted; and (3) U.S. aid to Israel was ended.

As the recently released congressional report on September 11 points out, U.S. officials obviously did not take those threats very seriously. They certainly did not express any great concern to the American people prior to September 11.

What business did the United States have in keeping troops for more than a decade in Saudi Arabia (the country whose connections to September 11 are being kept secret from the American people)? After all, what did those troops accomplish except to enforce the so-called no-fly zones over Iraq, which had never been approved by either the United Nations or the U.S. Congress, and to serve as base for ultimately invading Iraq (which, contrary to federal representations, had no connection to September 11)?

What business did the United States have in enforcing the sanctions against the Iraqi people, especially once it became clear that they were contributing to the deaths of multitudes of innocent children?

What business does the United States have taxing the American people in order to send the money to foreign government officials, including Israel?

The problem, of course, is that we’ve become so accustomed to an interventionist foreign policy that many Americans have unfortunately come to accept it as part of America’s “freedom

and values.” But, as our Founders and ancestors understood, such a foreign policy — along with all of the infringements on liberty that come with it — actually constitutes an abandonment of our freedom and values.

If federal officials proceed with their plans to employ military tribunals against the detainees at Guantanamo Bay and if al-Qaeda proceeds with its plan to retaliate by initiating new terrorist attacks against Americans, the lie we heard after September 11 will almost certainly be repeated: “They’ve attacked us for our freedom and values.”

But make no mistake about it: Just like the people who died on September 11, the people who are killed in those new terrorist attacks will have died not because of America’s “freedom and values” but because of a morally bankrupt foreign policy.

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