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## **It Was About “Regime Change” from the Get-Go**

**by Jacob G. Hornberger**

Spain has now completed the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. Other countries that are following suit include the Dominican Republic and Honduras; El Salvador and Poland are contemplating doing the same. Unlike the United States, which is determined to continue its indefinite occupation of Iraq, it is these countries that are actually “supporting their troops” by removing them from Iraq.

After all, what are American troops fighting and dying for? From the beginning, U.S. officials have provided an ever-changing, constantly rotating panoply of reasons. Initially, we were told that the troops had to be sent to Iraq to protect the United States from an imminent attack from Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction.” When those weapons failed to materialize after the war was won, the rationale for the invasion shifted to “liberation” and “democracy.” Today, we’re told that U.S. soldiers in Iraq are dying in the “war on terrorism.”

Actually, the real reason for the invasion and occupation of Iraq from the get-go has been “regime change” — that is, the installation of a U.S.-approved regime that would do the bidding of U.S. officials, which obviously required, as a necessary step, the ouster of Saddam Hussein from power. That is what American GIs have been dying for and continue to die for — a U.S.-friendly puppet regime. All the other rationales for the invasion and occupation of Iraq have been fake and false.

Ask yourself: If U.S. officials had truly been concerned about an imminent attack on the United States, would they really have bothered trying to secure a resolution from the United Nations seeking approval to attack Iraq?

Obviously, the idea was that upon invading Iraq, U.S. troops would promptly find some caches of WMDs, enabling U.S. officials to make dramatic and somber announcements to the world about how the invasion had just saved the United States and the world from Saddam Hussein and his WMDs. A new regime acceptable to U.S. officials would have been quickly installed, and no one would have been in a position to complain. After all, at that point, the U.S. government would have been considered the self-proclaimed savior of the world.

That is undoubtedly why CIA officials [hid the locations](#) of suspected WMD sites in Iraq from the UN inspectors prior to the invasion. They had to ensure that some WMDs remained undestroyed in order to prove that only U.S. troops, not incompetent, hapless UN inspectors, could save the world.

Thus, it's not that Bush and his associates intentionally lied about the existence of Saddam Hussein's WMDs. They obviously believed that they were going to find some WMDs after U.S. troops had taken over the country. That is exactly why they used the WMDs as the cover for the real purpose of invading, which, again, was the installation of the puppet regime. The primary lie was in misrepresenting the real reason for the invasion; the subsidiary lie was in misrepresenting their *belief* that Saddam still had WMD as a *certainty* that he still had them.

Once it became clear that Saddam and his associates had been telling the truth about not possessing any more WMDs, U.S. officials shifted the reasons that U.S. troops were fighting and dying to the benefits of "liberating" Iraq and establishing democracy there. Once again, these were lies designed to cover up the real reason that U.S. soldiers were being sacrificed — the installation of a puppet regime. Thus, while U.S. officials love to pronounce that they've "liberated" the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein, the fact is that the ouster of Saddam Hussein, a ruler who [refused to follow orders](#) from U.S. officials, was simply a necessary step in attaining the real goal — the installation of a new regime that would [do the bidding](#) of U.S. officials.

After all, doesn't liberation connote a concern for the well-being of the Iraqi people? But when have U.S. officials were ever shown any concern for the Iraqi people?

- Not during the 1980s, when it was supporting Saddam Hussein and delivering weapons of mass destruction to him;
- Not when U.S. ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie failed to take a firm stand against Saddam's threat to invade Kuwait;
- Not during the Gulf War, when the Pentagon bombed Baghdad and massacred tens of thousands of ordinary Iraqi soldiers;
- Not when Pentagon officials deliberately targeted water- and sewage-treatment facilities in Iraq for the purpose of spreading infection and disease among the Iraqi people;
- Not when U.S. officials encouraged Iraqis to rise up and rebel against Saddam and then stood aside and watched as Saddam's forces massacred them;
- Not when U.S. officials enforced one of the cruelest and most brutal

embargoes in history for more than 10 years, knowing that it was contributing to the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqi children, year after year;

- Not when U.S. officials refused to condemn and disavow the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, when she told *60 Minutes* that the deaths of half a million Iraqi children from the Iraq embargo had been worth the attempt to oust Saddam from power;
- Not when the U.S. military killed untold thousands of Iraqi people in the recent invasion to “disarm” Saddam of the weapons of mass destruction that the United States had furnished him during the 1980s and then steadfastly refused to keep count of the Iraqi dead;
- Not when thousands of Iraqi people were rounded up and incarcerated without being charged or given a trial during the occupation of Iraq;
- And, of course, not when Iraqi detainees were subjected to sex abuse, rape, torture, and murder by U.S. military personnel.

Moreover, if U.S. troops are dying for “democracy” in Iraq, then why is it that U.S. officials have devoted all their efforts during the occupation period to establishing the U.S.-approved Iraqi Governing Council and virtually no efforts organizing a nationwide election? Could it be that they fear that democracy might truly prevail — that the Shi’ite majority in Iraq will win such elections, establish an independent regime, and promptly boot the United States out of Iraq? Indeed, if democracy is now so important to U.S. officials, why have they aligned themselves with the ruler of Pakistan, one of the most brutal, nondemocratically elected dictators in the world, an army man who took power in a coup?

The newest reason that U.S. officials are giving that U.S. soldiers are dying in Iraq is to fight terrorists as part of the U.S. government’s “war on terrorism.” The problem with that rationale, however, is that it is such policies as the invasion and occupation of Iraq that gave rise to the anger and hatred that motivated the terrorists in the first place.

Contrary to what U.S. officials often claim, the 9/11 attacks and, for that matter, the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center were not motivated by hatred for America’s “freedom and values.” Instead, they were motivated by anger and hatred for U.S. foreign policy, including the U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf War, the deliberate destruction of Iraq’s water and sewage facilities with the intent of spreading infections and disease among the Iraqi people, the brutal 10-

year embargo that contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children, the illegal no-fly zones that also killed many Iraqis, the arrogant and pompous stationing of U.S. troops on Islamic holy lands, and the unconditional financial and military support of the Israeli government. And future terrorist attacks might well be motivated by anger and hatred generated by the sex-abuse, torture, rape, and murder scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, which, as President Bush has observed, is also not part of the “freedom and values” of the American people.

The invasion and the occupation of Iraq — and all the consequences that are flowing from them — are simply a continuation of the very policies that are responsible for producing the anger and hatred that drive the terrorists to retaliate. That means that while U.S. troops are taught to believe that they are dying to stop terrorism in Iraq, the truth is that they are dying for a policy that produces terrorism.

The only way to support the troops — the only way to support our country — is to support an end to the U.S. government’s foreign policy of empire and intervention. That means no more invasions, embargoes, occupations, or installation of puppet regimes. That means bringing the troops home and discharging them into the private sector.

Why not simply tell the truth from the very beginning regarding the true rationale for the invasion and occupation of Iraq? Because U.S. soldiers would obviously be more willing to fight and die for such things as protecting their country from imminent attack, liberating people, establishing democracy, and fighting terrorists than they would be for the installation of a U.S.-approved puppet regime in a foreign country. And the same holds true for Americans who have an honest desire to “support the troops.”

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