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No WMD but Plenty of Death and Destruction

by Jacob G. Hornberger

President George W. Bush's handpicked investigator charged with investigating whether there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq has now rendered his [final report](#): There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Period. No stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons. No nuclear weapons. No factories to produce them. No air-conditioned, modernistic labs hidden under the sand. Nada. It turns out that Saddam Hussein had disarmed many years before President Bush had repeatedly said that the United States needed to invade Iraq to "disarm Saddam." In the pre-war debate between Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, there is now no doubt as to who was telling the truth and who was not.

That means that all the fear that was instilled in the American people by Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleeza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz was ill-founded. The horrible thoughts that pervaded people's minds that Saddam Hussein's terrorists would break into their homes and spray chemical and biological weapons in their faces were groundless. Hundreds of yards of duct tape wasted. All the gas masks people bought during those scary times unnecessary. The horrible thoughts of Saddam's mushroom clouds rising above American cities that kept people awake at night — all baseless.

As The Future of Freedom Foundation repeatedly pointed out before the war, Saddam Hussein and the nation of Iraq never posed any danger to the United States. None. After all, don't forget that Saddam was once ranked among the close [dictatorial allies](#) of the U.S. government. In fact, U.S. officials trusted Saddam Hussein so much that they even authorized the delivery to him of the WMD about which they later complained. (See: "[Where Did Iraq Get Its Weapons of Mass Destruction?](#)" and "[Reagan's WMD Connection to Saddam Hussein.](#)") Moreover, it is now clear that despite all the hullabaloo about needing to "disarm" Saddam of the WMD that the United States and other Western countries had delivered to him, Saddam had in fact disarmed after the Persian Gulf War.

More important, as FFF repeatedly emphasized before the war, the nation of Iraq never attacked the United States or even threatened to attack the United States. That makes the U.S. attack on Iraq a war of aggression, a war that was termed a war crime by the Nuremberg War

Crimes Tribunal and which has long been banned by the UN Charter, to which the United States is a signatory. It also makes the continued occupation of Iraq a legal and moral travesty.

The responsibility for all this lies jointly with Bush and John Kerry. Bush went to war without the constitutionally required congressional declaration of war, and Kerry and his congressional cohorts permitted him to do so by means of an unconstitutional and cowardly delegation to the president of Congress's power to declare war.

As it has become increasingly clear that the obsessive ruminations of U.S. officials regarding Iraq's WMDs lacked reality, U.S. officials have returned to "regime change" to justify their invasion and war of aggression against Iraq. "Isn't the world better off without Saddam Hussein?" they repeatedly challenge people who challenge what they have done.

The correlative question, however, which they have never answered is, "Is the world better off without the tens of thousands of innocent people you have killed in this invasion and war of aggression and with the tens of thousands of innocent people who are now maimed or impoverished as a consequence?" Didn't they have a right to live? Didn't they have a right to seek happiness in their own way, albeit under tyranny, without losing their lives, eyesight, arms, legs, or other body parts? The uncomfortable truth that we can only hope will begin to seep into the conscience of every single American is that an estimated 10,000–30,000 innocent people, including both American and Iraqi soldiers and civilians, are now dead — 3–10 times the number of innocent people killed at the World Trade Center. (Note: The Pentagon doesn't keep count of Iraqi [dead](#) and [maimed](#) because they are foreigners, not Americans.)

While U.S. officials people blithely cast off the Iraqi dead and wounded as "casualties of war" and "collateral damage," every single one of these tens of thousands of dead and maimed people were as innocent as the victims in the World Trade Center, given that none of them had anything to do with the 9/11 attacks on the American people. No matter how tragic were the deaths, injuries, and destruction on 9/11, those attacks cannot morally justify the death, injuries, and destruction wreaked by the Pentagon and the CIA on tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi people.

When there is terrorist retaliation on Americans for the deaths and maiming of these innocent people, U.S. officials, including those in the Pentagon, will respond the same way they responded after 9/11: "They have attacked us because they hate our 'freedom.'" What they will actually be referring to is the "freedom" of the U.S. government to kill innocent people abroad, just as they did with the brutal [sanctions regime](#) that contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children under the rationale of "regime change" and just as they did with the invasion and war of aggression against Iraq that is now being justified under that same morally bankrupt rationale of "regime change." After all, let's not forget the brutally callous statement by former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright, who in response to a question from "60 Minutes" as to whether the deaths of half-a-million Iraqi children had been worth the attempt to oust Saddam from power, [said](#): "I think that is a very hard choice, but the price, we think, the price is worth it." In other words, in the minds of U.S. officials "regime change" was worth the

lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis during the 1990s and it was worth the lives of tens of thousands more in 2003.

Just think, after the presidential election U.S. officials will be “free” to invade other countries where people are suffering under dictatorships for the purpose of “regime change” so that they can challenge people with, “Isn’t the world better off without those dictators?” You know, places like Pakistan, Vietnam, North Korea, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Syria, and Burma. At an average of 20,000 dead per country, that would mean only 200,000 more innocent people killed for purposes of “regime change.” Would the world be better off without them? Who cares? Wouldn’t the world would be better off without their dictators? And after all, let’s not forget that the dead and maimed will only be foreigners and will just be considered “casualties of war” or “collateral damage.” Moreover, since the Pentagon doesn’t count foreigners it kills and maims anyway, we won’t really have to concern ourselves with accurate numbers.

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