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A Terrorist-Producing Machine

by Jacob G. Hornberger

The following is a modified version of the opening statement FFF president Jacob Hornberger delivered at a recent debate in New York City on Afghanistan sponsored by the Donald and Paula Smith Foundation.

With the possible exception of the war on drugs, it would be difficult to find a greater terrorist-producing machine than the U.S. government's occupation of Afghanistan. Think about it: For almost 8 years, they've been killing terrorists in that country, fulltime. Yet, today there are more terrorists than ever before. From the standpoint of a lover of big government, this is a dream come true. They kill one terrorist, they get 10 more, which means ever-increasing federal power and budgets.

Let me tell you what they're going to say if one of those terrorists — say, a father who lost his daughter in one of those periodic bombing raids on Afghan wedding parties — comes over here and commits another act of terrorism on American soil. They're going to say the same thing they said after 9/11 — that the anger and rage that drove that father to blow up that building had nothing to do with the fact that his daughter was killed by American bombs. No, he doesn't care about that, they'll say. It's all because he hates America for its freedom and values.

And that's not all they'll do after the next terrorist attack here in the United States. They'll run to a couple of their lackey attorneys in the Justice Department — those that will say whatever they're expected to say — who will give them a legal opinion that the president and the Pentagon no longer need to comply with no stinking Constitution. Since the terrorist attack will confirm that we're still at war against the terrorists, the president and the Pentagon will continue to be empowered to do everything here at home that they're doing in Afghanistan and Iraq — busting down doors without warrants, unlimited searches and seizures, indefinite incarcerations, extraordinary renditions, torture and sex abuse, and denial of trial by jury and due process of law. After all, as everyone knows, war means dictatorial power, even if the war is perpetual.

It's important that we put the occupation of Afghanistan in the larger context of U.S. foreign policy, a policy of empire and intervention — a corrupt, crooked, hypocritical, sordid, and morally degenerate policy.

How else can one describe a foreign policy in which the U.S. government ardently supports a dictator like Saddam Hussein? In fact, the reason that they were so convinced that Saddam had those weapons of mass destruction is that they had the receipts — they were the ones who delivered them to him.

Or that supports a dictator like the Shah of Iran, who they installed into power and then supported as he tortured his own people for some 25 years. And then when the blowback occurred with the taking of U.S. diplomats as hostages, U.S. officials innocently exclaimed that they just hate us for our freedom and values. Never mind that the U.S. government ousted the democratically elected prime minister of the country when it installed the Shah into power.

More recently has been the U.S. government's support of a brutal military general in Pakistan, who took power in a coup and who refused to permit elections, factors that have contributed to the chaos in Pakistan today.

At the same time, the U.S. government has been killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people under the rubric of bringing democracy to them.

Like I say, a morally degenerate foreign policy.

There is only one solution to all this, and it lies with the dismantling of the U.S. government's overseas military empire. Close all the bases and bring all the troops home and discharge them, not only from Afghanistan and Iraq, but also from Latin America, where their war on drugs is producing nothing but more chaos and violence, Germany, where they're still fighting the Soviet communists, Korea, and everywhere else.

At the same time, end the policy of isolationism on America's private sector. Lift all the embargoes and sanctions, including those against Cuba, Iran, and everywhere else, which impose harsh criminal and civil penalties on the American people for exercising such fundamental rights as freedom of travel, freedom of trade, and the freedom to do what you want with your own money.

By their fruits you will know them. Their fruits are death, destruction, and monetary debauchery.

It's time to return to first principles and restore a constitutional republic to our land and economic liberty to the American people. That is the only way to get America back on the road to freedom, prosperity, morality, and harmony with the people of the world.

Jacob Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.