



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

[fff@fff.org](mailto:fff@fff.org) [www.fff.org](http://www.fff.org)

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**A Foreign-Policy Primer for Children:  
The Fable of the Hornets  
by Jacob G. Hornberger**

Once upon a time in a faraway land there was a happy and prosperous village filled with industrious and fun-loving people. To protect the villagers from occasional thieves and marauders, the village council had hired a policeman named Oscar.

One day Oscar got bored and took a long walk into the woods, where he discovered some of the biggest hornets' nests he had ever seen. The next day and every day thereafter, Oscar returned to the nests and took to poking at them with a big stick. That angered the hornets and caused them to attack Oscar, but their stingers could not penetrate the brand new suit of armor that he was now wearing.

A few days later, however, a terrible thing happened. Several hornets flew into the village and stung some of the villagers, who were understandably outraged. The village council immediately called an emergency meeting. "The hornets have attacked us," one man cried. "We must destroy them all!" After several hours of discussion, everyone agreed that the village had no choice but to wage war on the hornets.

At that point, however, a young boy arose and said, "Maybe if Oscar stops poking the hornets' nests, the hornets will no longer attack the village."

A gasp and a hush immediately swept across the room. Suddenly, one man screamed, "The boy is supporting the hornets!" Another yelled, "He's saying that they were justified in attacking the village." A woman weighed in: "He's suggesting that we got what we deserved!" "Unpatriotic!" "Treason!"

The boy slunk down into his seat and did not say another word, and the villagers turned their attention back to the upcoming war on hornets.

The next day, Oscar and several big deputies, all fully suited in brand new suits of armor, headed into the woods. With several big sticks, they began hitting and beating the big hornets' nests. The hornets were furious, and immediately attacked Oscar and his men, but to no avail

because their stingers could not penetrate the brand new suits of armor. After several hours, all the hornets' nests had come crashing down.

When the news reached the village, everyone roared his approval and began celebrating. All of a sudden, however, hundreds of hornets swarmed around the villagers and went on the attack. Later, when Oscar returned to the woods, he noticed something foreboding -- dozens of new, smaller hornets' nests were now under construction throughout the woods.

Under siege, the village council enacted the Anti-Hornet Patriot Act, which established the new Anti-Hornet Security Police, whose job it was to peer into everyone's windows day and night for the purpose of searching for hornets. When one villager expressed misgivings, the village council responded, "If you're not doing anything wrong, you shouldn't care."

One year later, the village council called a meeting to give a report on the war on the hornets. Everyone wore a suit of armor, which had become normal attire. The council advised the villagers that the war was not going well: that it seems that each dead hornet had been replaced by five new ones, which continued attacking the village.

At that point, the young boy again arose and said, "Maybe if Oscar stops poking the hornets' nests, the hornets will no longer attack the village." A gasp and a hush again swept across the room. But this time, one man said, "Maybe the boy's got a point!" Another joined in: "Yes, what do we have to lose?"

Oscar exclaimed, "If we stop poking the hornets' nests, hornets everywhere will think we're weak. Anyway, they hate us so much by now that they'll attack the village anyway. We've got to continue waging the war on the hornets until we kill them all."

But under pressure from the villagers, the village council voted to end the war on the hornets and ordered Oscar to stop poking their nests and to limit himself to protecting the village from thieves and marauders.

After a time, a remarkable thing happened: the hornets stopped attacking the village, and they never again returned. And so it was that the village in that faraway land once again became happy and prosperous, filled with industrious and fun-loving people who lived happily ever after.

*Mr. Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.*

**This article was originally published in December of 2001.**