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## **Big Government at Home and Abroad, Part 2**

**by Jacob G. Hornberger**

No matter how much we address the socialism and interventionism that pervade our nation on a domestic level, it will all be for naught if we fail to address the great big elephant in the room — U.S. foreign policy, including the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. For unless we dismantle the U.S. government's pro-empire, pro-interventionist foreign policy, Americans will continue to suffer a loss of liberty that arguably is greater than that lost as a result of socialism and interventionism under which we suffer at home.

For the last six years, we have been told ad infinitum, ad nauseam that 9/11 changed the world. That's just plain nonsense. The 9/11 attacks didn't change anything. On the contrary, they continued that which had been going on for many years.

Long before 9/11, we at The Future of Freedom Foundation were saying that unless there was a dramatic change in U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, Americans would continue to suffer terrorist attacks, including attacks on American soil. That's not to say that we were brilliant predictors. After all, it didn't take a rocket scientist to predict that U.S. foreign policy would continue to produce terrorist blowback.

Let's not forget that 9/11 wasn't the first time terrorists had struck at the World Trade Center. There was the 1993 terrorist attack on the WTC, the same target that was struck on 9/11. When Ramzi Yousef, one of the 1993 co-conspirators was brought before a New York federal judge for sentencing, he railed not against Americans' "freedom and values" but rather against the U.S. government's foreign policy, especially in the Middle East. The reason that Yousef was hauled into federal court was that U.S. officials recognized, properly so, that terrorism is a crime, not an act of war.

The 1993 attack on the WTC was followed by the terrorist attacks on the USS *Cole* and against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. All these attacks were committed with the intention of stopping U.S. meddling in the Middle East. The 9/11 attacks, although producing more death and destruction, were simply a continuation of those previous terrorist attacks.

U.S. foreign policy is guided by the same federal mindset that guides domestic policy. U.S. officials are intent on fixing other people's problems, especially people who the officials think are unable or unwilling to fix the problems themselves. Whether it's the drug addict who can't kick his addiction or the Iraqi people who are unable to oust their dictator, U.S. officials are there to fix the problem, whether people want the problem fixed or not. And no price is too high to pay, not even in terms of the lives and well-being of those whose problems are being fixed without their consent.

The prime factors in U.S. foreign policy are control and regime change. Those Third World regimes that comply with U.S. directives are permitted to remain in power. Those that choose to go an independent route are subject to regime change.

The quest for control is akin to that which exists in domestic politics. Notice that federal politicians in Washington, from the president on down, are never satisfied with simply winning office. They immediately want control of Congress and the federal judiciary. But even that isn't enough. They go out campaigning for members of their party at the state and local level, thirsting for more and more control, over governorships, state legislatures, and state judiciaries, as well as local and county offices.

The quest for control over foreign regimes is simply an extension of that insatiable quest for control on a domestic level.

### **The CIA, Iran, and Guatemala**

Iran, 1953. The CIA surreptitiously ousts the democratically elected prime minister of Iran, a man named Mohammed Mossadegh. He was a man who was highly respected by the Iranian people and beloved by many of them. He was also *Time* magazine's Man of the Year. Because he would not kowtow to British and American officials, who feared he was pro-Soviet, he was targeted for regime change.

The CIA replaced Mossadegh with the shah of Iran, a cruel and brutal dictator who was more than willing to do the bidding of U.S. officials. The CIA helped the shah establish a domestic version of the CIA, which proceeded to terrorize and torture Iranians until the Iranian people rose up in revolution in 1979 and ousted the shah from power.

When Iranian students took hostages at the U.S. embassy during the revolution, most Americans had no idea of the depth of anger and rage within the Iranian people. Unlike Iranians, who were aware of the regime change that the CIA had effected in Iran in 1953, Americans had no clue what the CIA had done.

Suppose it was discovered that a U.S. congressman accepted a campaign contribution from the Venezuelan government. Wouldn't the U.S. Justice Department go bananas? Wouldn't federal attorneys immediately convene a federal grand jury to investigate and prosecute foreign meddling in U.S. elections?

Well, in Iran it wasn't even a case of the CIA's giving U.S. taxpayer money to a favored candidate (which it often does as part of U.S. foreign policy). It was a case in which an elected prime minister was actually ousted from office in a CIA-induced coup and in which a brutal U.S. puppet was installed in his stead.

Of course, when the Iranian revolution occurred and the hostages were taken in the U.S. embassy, the response of U.S. officials was predictable: We're innocent! We haven't done anything wrong. We were just minding our own business.

Guatemala, 1954. The CIA ousts the democratically elected president of the country, Jacobo Arbenz, claiming that he is too socialistic, notwithstanding the fact that his economic philosophy is no different from that of Franklin D. Roosevelt's. The problem, again, was that Arbenz was too independent and, therefore, had to be replaced with a military dictator who would follow orders from Washington. Never mind that the CIA-induced coup ignited a civil war that would last for decades and that would ultimately result in the deaths of more than a million people.

### **Meddling in the Middle East**

There is also the support of brutal dictators that is a core element of U.S. foreign policy. The shah was one example. Pervez Musharraf, the unelected military dictator of Pakistan, is another. An old friend of the Taliban, Musharraf took power in a coup against elected officials. He is another example of a U.S.-supported dictator. There are also the many dictators in the Middle East, as well as those in Latin America, who are recipients of U.S.-taxpayer aid, in return for which U.S. officials expect loyalty and allegiance.

Among the major U.S.-supported dictators in recent times was the man whom many would come to recognize by the title "the new Hitler." Google "Rumsfeld shaking hands" and you will see the famous photograph in which Donald Rumsfeld is shaking hands with Saddam Hussein, sealing a deal in which the United States would furnish aid to Saddam, including the delivery to him of weapons of mass destruction. (See [www.fff.org/comment/com0304p.asp](http://www.fff.org/comment/com0304p.asp)). Yes, that's right — U.S. officials knowingly and intentionally entered into a partnership with "the new Hitler," furnishing him WMDs, with the intention that "the new Hitler" would use such weapons against the Iranian people during the Iran-Iraq War. Of course, at that time Saddam wasn't known as "the new Hitler" because U.S. officials considered him a loyal member of the U.S. empire. It was only later, when U.S. officials turned against their old partner, that they began referring to him as "the new Hitler."

When Saddam invaded Kuwait without U.S. permission, U.S. officials turned on their former partner, but the Iraqi people bore the brunt of the U.S. reaction. Countless Iraqis died during the course of U.S. military attacks on Iraq. Unfortunately, it didn't stop there. During the war, the Pentagon knowingly and intentionally destroyed Iraq's water and sewage facilities,

knowing that such action would result in infectious illnesses and diseases among the civilian population. Compounding the problem, following the war the U.S. government enforced some of the most brutal economic sanctions in history, which prevented the Iraqi people from repairing those bombed-out water and sewage facilities.

As the Pentagon had predicted, the death toll from dirty water, infectious illnesses, diseases, and malnutrition skyrocketed, especially among Iraqi children.

The anger and rage in the Middle East were boiling because there was no way to break the iron grip of the sanctions. High UN officials resigned as a result of what they called genocide.

After several years of the sanctions, UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright was asked by *60 Minutes* whether the deaths of half a million Iraqi children from the sanctions had been worth it. She responded that while the matter had been difficult, yes, the deaths of those children had indeed been “worth it.” What she was saying was that the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children were worth trying to get rid of Saddam and replacing him with a ruler whose loyalties would lie with the United States. How cavalier is that? Not a single U.S. official condemned her callousness and, for that matter, not one U.S. senator asked her about her statement at her confirmation hearing for secretary of state, undoubtedly because they all shared her sentiment.

Albright’s answer reverberated all over the Middle East. I doubt whether more than 1 percent of Americans knew or cared about it. Her statement added further heat to the cauldron of anger and rage that was boiling over in the Middle East.

The no-fly zones over Iraq brought more bombs and missiles onto the country. One of them killed a 13-year-old Iraqi boy who was tending his sheep. Neither Congress nor the UN had ever approved the establishment of the no-fly zones.

There was also the stationing of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, home to the holiest sites in the Muslim religion — Mecca and Medina. Never mind that this added fuel to the fire that was burning within many Muslims in the Middle East.

The attitude among U.S. officials was: “We can humiliate you and harm you, and your job is simply to accept it. As soon as Iraqis get rid of their dictator, Saddam Hussein, and replace him with someone to our liking, we will stop killing them and molesting them. Until then, get used to our actions. And don’t even think about doing anything bad to us in retaliation if you know what’s good for you.”

The fact was that U.S. officials were poking lots of hornets’ nests in the Middle East, and they knew it. What they apparently didn’t know is what every American schoolchild knows: If you poke hornets’ nests, sometimes the hornets will come out and sting you.

On top of all this, of course, was the unconditional military and foreign aid that the U.S. government has been providing the Israeli government (along with Arab governments) for many years.

## **Unforeseen consequences**

Most Americans had no idea what their government officials had been doing in the Middle East, especially after the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the longtime official enemy that had been used to justify the enormous Cold War military-industrial complex. Thus, when 9/11 hit, most Americans immediately accepted the official story issued by U.S. officials before they even knew the identity of the hijackers: “They hate us for our ‘freedom and values.’”

U.S. officials then used the 9/11 attacks to do what they had been doing for decades. First, there was a regime-change operation in Afghanistan, which ousted the anti-American Taliban from power and replaced them with a U.S.-installed regime. Once that was accomplished, U.S. officials turned their attention away from Osama bin Laden and toward their next regime-change operation, the one that had bedeviled them for more than 10 years — Iraq. The 9/11 attacks enabled U.S. officials to accomplish with one invasion what more than 10 years of brutal sanctions had not been able to accomplish.

What they failed to realize, of course, was that in the process of getting Saddam, they themselves would get mired in Iraqi quicksand. The fact is that U.S. troops are now trapped in Iraq. There is no way out because above all else President Bush must protect his presidential legacy. He is not about to “cut and run” from an occupation that resulted from a war of aggression that he himself started. Moreover, given the position of most of the Democratic Party’s presidential candidates, it is likely that U.S. troops will remain in Iraq for several more years, killing and dying for nothing.

The irony is that the invasion, while successful in securing the ouster of Saddam Hussein, had a perverse outcome, at least from the standpoint of the U.S. regime-change goal. Rather than installing a U.S. puppet in power, the U.S. invasion succeeded in installing a radical Islamic regime that has actually aligned itself with Iran, which U.S. officials still resent for ousting the shah from power and replacing him with a regime that was independent of Washington control.

## **The fall of empires**

On top of the socialism and interventionism at home and the empire and interventionism abroad is the threat of severe financial crisis. For the past several years, federal spending has been out of control. Much of the money for the spending spree has been borrowed. That’s why the Chinese communists now own so many U.S. debt instruments.

Ultimately, the Federal Reserve must print the money to pay off all that debt because there is no way that federal politicians are going to raise income taxes to do it. Instead, they’ll resort to the inflation tax because they know that most people will never be able to figure out that federal officials are behind the ever-rising prices that come with the debasement of the currency. We can already get a glimpse of what is likely to be ahead, with prices rising at the grocery store, the

dollar at an all-time low in international markets, and the Chinese communists threatening to dump their dollar holdings all at once.

This is what always happens to empires. Do you recall what conservatives used to say about how they brought down the Soviet Union? They said that they made the Soviets spend their way into national bankruptcy. They're not talking like that now because they realize that the principle is a universal one.

In a Fourth of July speech to Congress, John Quincy Adams summed up the foreign-policy philosophy of our American ancestors. There have always been monsters in the world — tyranny, dictatorships, oppression, and starvation. But America does not go abroad “in search of monsters to destroy,” he told the Congress.

Instead, the idea was that America would bring into existence the freest society in history — one to which the rest of the world could come, no questions asked. That's what open immigration was all about. We won't come and help you with troops, bombs, and missiles, but we will leave our door open for you should you escape your situation.

Unfortunately, that limited-government foreign policy was ultimately abandoned in favor of an extensive overseas empire, one which now stations U.S. troops in more than 120 countries and in which the federal Leviathan now serves as the world's international policeman, invader, occupier, torturer, and executioner.

Equally tragic is how U.S. officials, with the support of many Americans, have used the blowback from U.S. foreign policy to suspend the freedoms of the American people. There is spying on Americans, including monitoring of phone calls and email. There are secret courts and secret judicial proceedings. There are “signing statements,” which enable the president to ignore laws enacted by Congress. There are “executive orders,” which enable him to rule by decree.

Worst of all, there is the “enemy-combatant” doctrine, which now authorizes the military to take any American into custody, torture him, and keep him incarcerated for the rest of his life, despite what the Bill of Rights says about due process of law and trial by jury. With its direct military power to arrest, torture, and detain indefinitely, the enemy-combatant doctrine easily constitutes the most direct assault on American liberty in our lifetime.

Is there a way out of all this? Yes, but it involves a return to the founding principles of our nation, not just in domestic affairs but in foreign affairs as well. Private property. Individual liberty. A limited-government republic. The Constitution. The Bill of Rights. Due process of law. Habeas corpus. Trial by jury. Such principles constitute our heritage. Herein lies the key to extricating ourselves from the morass into which we have been plunged.

Out of chaos comes opportunity. We have the opportunity to lead the world out of the chaos and toward the highest reaches of freedom ever witnessed by man. What greater gift could we bequeath to ourselves, our children, and those coming after us?

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