

The War Racket

The Lies, Myths, Promises, & Propaganda
that Have Lured Americans into War after War after War

By Harry Browne

The WAR RACKET©

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Dedicated
to
Charles Beard, Harry Elmer Barnes,
Murray Rothbard, Ralph Raico, Thomas Fleming,
Gabriel Kolko, John V. Denson, Robert Higgs,
Gar Alperovitz, Phillip Knightley,
and the many other historians
who discovered the truth
and kept it alive

&
to
Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., Margelus Burga
and the others
who have disseminated the truth

&
to
my beloved Pamela
who has rewarded me
for speaking the truth

Also by Harry Browne

How You Can Profit from the Coming Devaluation (1970)
How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World (1973, 1998, 2008)
You Can Profit from a Monetary Crisis (1974)
The Complete Guide to Swiss Banks (1976)
New Profits from a Monetary Crisis (1978)
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The War Racket, Part I (2008)

Table of Contents

Introduction	8
Epigraph	9

Part II: The Perpetual War

1 Déjà Vu, Déjà Vu.....	10
2 World War II	13
3 The Atomic Bomb	38
4 The Cold War	56
5 The Korean War	72
6 The Vietnam War	100
7 The Gulf War	104
8 America After The Cold War	105
9 The War on Terrorism	109
10 The Second Iraqi War	121
11 Déjà Vu Again	140

Epilogue

12 The Meaning of America	151
----------------------------------------	-----

Epigram	187
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Appendices

A Indian & Mexican Wars	189
B The Spanish-American War	190
C The Civil War	191
D The Myths of War	200
E Selling War	207

Table of Contents (continued)

F The Recurring Lies	209
G Power	211
H Miscellaneous Notes	213
I Recommended Reading	221
J War Articles.....	222
1 What is War?	223
2 American Foreign Policy Hasn't Changed in 25 Years (10-20-1976)	225
3 Was The Gulf War a Just War (2-20-1991)	227
4 Top 10 Reasons To Get The U.S. Out of Yugoslavia (5-2-1999)	244
5 Murdering for Morality (6-3-1999)	246
6 Who Gave the OK on Kosovo (7-6-1999)	250
7 Missing the Point in the Kerrey Controversy (5-4-2001)	252
8 When Will We Learn?, Part 1 (9-12-2001)	255
9 When Will We Learn?, Part 2 (9-12-2001)	257
10 When Will We Learn?, Part 3 (9-12-2001)	263
11 When Will We Learn?, Part 4 (9-12-2001)	268
12 What Can We Do About Terrorism, Part I (10-4-2001).....	271
13 What Can We Do About Terrorism, Part II (10-15-2001).....	274
14 What Can We Do About Terrorism, Part III (10-31-2001).....	277
15 Isn't It Time For The Truth? (11-13-2001)	281
16 I Love America - Do You? (11-19-2001)	283
17 Who Gave Your Rights Away (11-27-2001)	286
18 Brute Force Not A Solution (12-6-2001)	289
19 The Bush Coup d'Etat (12-20-2001)	292
20 What Has "Victory" Achieved (1-10-2002)	295
21 Ignorance Is Dangerous (1-17-2002)	299
22 Libertarians And Civil Liberties (3-9-2002)	303
23 This Just In: Bin Laden Wins The War in Afghanistan (3-14-02)	310
24 How Terrorists Profit From Drugs (3-21-2002)	314
25 The Myths Of World War II (3-25-2002)	317
26 A Solution For The Middle East (4-11-2002).....	320
27 Leave Iraq alone! (5-09-2002)	323
28 Defending our "Freedoms" (5-23-2002)	326
29 National Defense vs. National Offense (5-30-2002)	329
30 Welcome To The War on Terrorism, Comrade (7-18-2002)	332
31 Who Cares About the Civil War? (7-31-2002).....	335
32 How to destroy America in one easy lesson (8-15-2002)	339
33 How To Oppose Terrorism (8-22-2002)	342
34 Should We Trust George W. Bush (8-29-2002)	345

Table of Contents (continued)

35 America, Meet Your Leaders (9-19-2002)	348
36 Iraq: 'A War Waiting For A Pretext' (10-10-2002)	351
37 An Anniversary Worth Celebrating (10-24-2002)	354
38 "If You Aren't Guilty, What Are You Afraid Of" (11-28-2002).....	356
39 What We Can Learn From World War II (11-14-2002)	359
40 I Want My Country Back (12-5-2002)	362
41 A Little History Can Be A Dangerous Thing (2-12-2003)	366
42 What Can I Do To Stop The War? (2-13-2003)	371
43 Bring Back America (3-13-03)	374
44 Support Our Boys in Uniform (3-18-2003)	377
45 Rule the World Productions Proudly Presents (3-31-2003)	379
46 Libertarians & War (5-3-2003)	382
47 Is The World A Better Place With Hussein Gone? (8-8-2003)	387
48 What Liberals Can Learn from the War (10-11-2003)	391
49 A Forgotten Day & A Forgotten Country (10-18-2003)	400
50 Lying For a Living (1-7-2004)	403
51 Is War Necessary? (1-16-2004).....	408
52 Is War Necessary, Part II (1-16-2004)	411
53 George Bush, Lying & the Dogs of War (3-26-2004)	416
54 As Usual, The Wrong Question is Being Asked (4-9-2004)	421
55 Who's Responsible for the Iraqi Prisoner Abuse? (5-7-2004).....	425
56 How Much Is Hussein's Departure Worth? (5-27-2004)	428
57 Can George Bush Be Americanized? (6-26-2004).....	430
58 Death (8-21-2004)	433
59 Death Again (8-21-2004)	435
60 Eternal Siege (8-31-2004)	437
61 Winning The War On Terrorism (9-2-2004)	438
62 The Cost Of War (9-12-2004)	439
63 An Iraq Strategy to Reelect George Bush (9-17-2004)	440
64 Can America Bring Peace to the World? (10-5-2004)	445
65 Fighting Communism (10-19-2004)	450
66 Fighting Communism, Part II (10-22-2004).....	451
67 Libertarians For Bush (10-26-2004)	454
68 Why We Must stay In Iraq (or Not) (12-24-2004)	456
69 Why I am Obsessed with War (1-28-2005)	458
70 Should The U.S. Military Be Allowed To Use Torture? (1-11-2005).....	463
71 The War Against Strawmen (12-13-2005)	465
72 A Foreign Policy For America	468

K About the Author	481
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Introduction

September 23, 2008

Dear Reader,

Prior to Harry Browne's death on March 1, 2006, he was writing *The War Racket ~ The Lies, Myths, Promises, & Propaganda That Have Lured Americans into War after War*. He completed Part I: World War I, and it was released as an eBook in August, 2008. However, he passed on before he finished Part II: The Perpetual War.

Although *The War Racket*, Part II is incomplete, a couple of chapters *are* complete and there are extensive notes for the remaining chapters. Also included in the eBook are a number of appendices (i.e. The Myths of War, Selling War, The Recurring Lies, Power, and Miscellaneous Notes) that Harry had planned to integrate into Part II.

In addition, I've included 72 war articles at the end of the eBook that Harry wrote between the years of 1999 to 2005 ~ although one dates as early as 1976 and another in 1991. Please note that the articles are listed in chronological order.

A week ago I found a note in Harry's war book files. It states, "**Book Objective:** I hope this book will encourage a restoration of the America of peace and liberty that once existed, but has been overwhelmed by the relentless political push for "national greatness."

I, too, hope this eBook will encourage a restoration of America. And I also hope that many folks will take time to learn more about how Americans have been lured into previous wars so in the future we'll be very suspicious of any promise made by *any* President or Congress.

Best Wishes,
Pamela Wolfe Browne

PART II: THE PERPETUAL WAR

Epigraph

If any question why we died
Tell them, because our fathers lied.

Rudyard Kipling

1

Déjà Vu, Déjà Vu

It isn't just that wars require lies, myths, promises, and propaganda.

What is surprising is that every war runs on so many of *the same* lies, myths, promises, and propaganda.

As we examine the wars after 1918, you'll find the very tales told to lure Americans into World War I recycled again and again — and always as though they had never been told before.

Here are some of the claims made to get Americans to fight and keep fighting . . .

- The President has kept us out of war, and must remain in office to continue keeping us out of war.
- The U.S. government has been patient and explored all diplomatic possibilities, but the enemy leader has dragged his feet and made accommodation impossible.
- America has been surprised by an unprovoked attack.
- The President did everything possible to avoid war, and we are fighting now because an evil dictator doubted our strength, our resolve, and our devotion to freedom.
- A madman is loose who intends to enslave the entire world.
- If we don't fight now in a foreign land, someday we'll have to fight in American cities.
- We are going to liberate foreign people from their tyrannical rulers.
- Out of the war will emerge a New World order where further war will be impossible.
- We will bring democracy to countries that don't now have it.
- The enemy isn't just a country whose interests conflict with ours; it is a nation run by inhuman butchers.
- The enemy commits unspeakable atrocities.

- Ignoring the Bill of Rights during wartime is a necessary cost of preserving our freedom.
- During wartime, we must all unite behind the President; voicing dissent would only aid the enemy.
- Opponents of the war are [choose one or more]:
 - (a) soft-headed,
 - (b) the same people who opposed peace through strength,
 - (c) unpatriotic,
 - (d) anti-American,
 - (e) the blame-America crowd,
 - (f) enemy sympathizers, or
 - (g) enemy agents.
- To criticize the war is to criticize the brave men who are fighting it.
- Weakness invites war; military strength keeps us out of war.
- Everything the U.S. government does in waging the war has been carefully thought out.
- To end the war without destroying the enemy completely would break faith with our fallen heroes.
- The firm peace imposed on the enemy will discourage future wars.

Patterns

Those slogans are almost always false. But while the deceptions are flowing, so are a number of patterns of activity that are all too real . . .

- The President has made up his mind to go to war long before he makes his decision public.
- The nation's leaders have little understanding of the history and cultures of the countries involved, so they can't imagine the evils they're unleashing on the postwar world.
- The enemy's sins are made to seem unique, ignoring countries in the world where conditions are as bad or worse.
- Regimes that recently had been viewed with suspicion suddenly become allies and are treated as defenders of freedom, while former allies and trading partners are demonized.
- Because of censorship and poor education in history, Americans accept comic-book explanations for the cause of the war, fairy tales about

what's happening during the war, and happy talk about the results of the war.

- The President is isolated and unaware of much of what he should know to make proper decisions.
- The President may be so mentally or physically incapacitated that he can't function well.
- Bad news about the war is kept from the public.
- American deaths are sanitized. The public rarely sees pictures of dead American soldiers — unless they're pictures of enemy atrocities.
- Death is trivialized. So long as enemy casualties are larger, any number of American deaths is considered a price worth paying.
- The reason for going to war keeps changing. If a particular justification is refuted, or if a promise is shown to be unfulfilled, war advocates simply skip to another reason — from imminent danger, to liberation, to a new world of peace, to spreading democracy, to whatever sounds best at the moment. Anyone contending that America shouldn't have gone to war has to chase the war advocate around the barn from one justification to another.

We'll see now how these patterns recur in the wars after World War I.

2

World War II**Liberation**

Begin and end the chapter with liberation.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the propaganda, some wars have remained controversial. The promises made for World War I were so thoroughly refuted by events that the war doesn't stand as a shining moment in American history. The Vietnam War has a very poor reputation. Even the Gulf War of 1991 has received a great deal of criticism.

But one war has stood the test of time. No matter how much cynicism prevails about American wars in general, World War II maintains its reputation as the one "just war."

So it's fitting that we take a closer look at the big one — WWII — because such a look reveals that it was sold to the American people as deceptively as any other war.

THE GERMANS IN THE SUDETENLAND

At the end of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles had created the new nation of Czechoslovakia out of a piece of the prewar Austria-Hungary empire and a section of Germany, the Sudetenland.

The title of the country was a misnomer. There were more Germans than Slovaks in the country, and the Czechs oppressed both groups. It wasn't surprising that the Sudeten Germans wanted to reunite with Germany.¹

¹ *Leftism Revisited* by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, page 220

NAZIS WANTED RETRIBUTION

When Hitler came to power in 1933, it had been only 14 years since the Treaty of Versailles had been imposed upon Germany. And when Germany invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938 to retake the Sudetenland, it had been only 19 years since the Allies had taken the territory from the Germans.

Thus the humiliation caused by the treaty was in 1938 as recent as an event of 1985 would be in 2004. Not only Nazi officers and soldiers were eager for revenge, but virtually the entire German population was aware of the starvation, the assigning of all the war guilt to Germany, and the other devastation and indignities imposed on the German people so few years before.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, POLAND, & THE GERMANS

Woodrow Wilson had said in 1919 that the League of Nations would rectify any injustices caused by the rearranging of boundaries in the Treaty of Versailles. But that wasn't the case.

The Sudetenland, the part of Germany given to Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I, contained 1.6 million Germans. They, as well as the Slovaks, were mistreated by the Czechs. Civil liberties were curtailed; peaceful dissent was outlawed. No complaints by the German government were heeded at the League of Nations.²

The situation was similar in Poland.³ In 1931, the League accepted a report accusing the Poles of oppressing the Germans inside Poland. But nothing was done to correct the situation.⁴

² *Czecho-Slovakia: A Critical History* by Kurt Glazer, pages 13-33; cited in "World War I: The Turning Point" by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, page 244.

³ *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in West Poland* by Richard Blanke, pages 21, 29, and 236-237; cited in "World War I: The Turning Point" by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, pages 244-245.

⁴ *The Making of Adolf Hitler* by Eugene Davidson, page 289; cited in "World War I: The Turning Point" by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, page 246.

The basic attitude in the League concerning the mistreatment of German minorities was that this was an internal matter and the League dealt only with disputes between nations.⁵

POLAND & BRITISH MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY

Winston Churchill said of the defense treaty signed by Neville Chamberlain with the Poles in March 1939: “Here was decision at last, taken at the worst possible moment and on the least satisfactory ground which must surely lead to the slaughter of tens of millions of people.”

He went on to say in reference to Poland “which with hyena appetite had only six months before joined in the pillage and destruction of the Czechoslovak State.”⁶

Historian Ralph Raico says that Churchill actually supported the treaty at the time it was signed.⁷

Relationship with Stalin

When Germany invaded Poland, the British government immediately declared war on Germany, in accordance with its mutual-defense treaty with Poland.

But when the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the other side, the British didn’t say a word.

Through a large part of the war, Poland was occupied in the west by the Germans and in the east by the Soviets. During that time, the British cooperated with Polish flyers and Polish refugees in fighting the Germans. But at the same time, the British treated the Soviets as allies — even though the Soviets were occupying half of the homeland of the Brits’ Polish allies.

⁵ *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in West Poland* by Richard Blanke, pages 132, 136-137; cited in “World War I: The Turning Point” by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, pages 246.

⁶ *The Gathering Storm*, page 347; cited in “Rethinking Churchill” by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, edited by John V. Denson, page 370.

⁷ “Rethinking Churchill” by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, edited by John V. Denson, page 370.

Even before the U.S. entered the war, the American government treated the Soviets as allies. While America was still officially neutral, Roosevelt was sending money and war materials to the Soviets. That was accelerated once America was officially in the war.

By 1941 the Soviet Union had compiled a long history of oppression. For example, millions of peasants died in the 1920s as the Soviets attempted to stamp out all forms of private agriculture. This was no secret. But the U.S. was lining up shoulder-to-shoulder with the oppressors, in order to fight the Nazis.

During the war, the American people might have understood if Roosevelt had said to them something like this:

“These are difficult times. The world is threatened by many forces. At this time, it’s important that we make common cause with one of those forces — the Soviet Union — in order to defeat what we think is a greater immediate threat, Nazi Germany.”

But he didn’t. He didn’t ignore the hypocrisy of joining forces with one tyrant, to defeat what was supposedly a greater tyrant.

Instead the government unleashed a propaganda campaign to convince the American people that the Russian people were our allies, and that Josef Stalin was a great leader. Hollywood was enlisted to produce movies suggesting that the Russians were the only thing standing between the Nazis and world domination.

Of course, once the war was over, everything changed. Now, suddenly, the Soviets were evil monsters about to devour the war — unless the U.S. maintained a huge military, intervened in local disputes all over the world, and took sides with other evil monsters.

This wouldn’t be the last time the U.S. government would take sides with a tyrant, only to point to that same tyrant later as a reason to go to war. Saddam Hussein in Iraq was our savior against Iran; Manuel Noriega in Panama, Diem in Vietnam, and Suharto in Indonesia were our saviors against the communists. And there were others. In all cases, eventually our politicians pointed to these men as evil monsters that our government had to destroy in order to keep the world safe.

ROOSEVELT HATES WAR

We shun political commitments which might entangle us in foreign wars; we avoid connection with the political activities of the League of Nations; . . .

We are no isolationists except in so far as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war. . . .

I have seen war. . . . I hate war. I have passed unnumbered hours, I shall pass unnumbered hours, thinking and planning how war can be kept from this nation. . . .

I wish I could keep war from all nations, but that is beyond my power. I can at least make certain that no act of the United States helps to produce or promote war.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Speech, Chautauqua, New York, August 14, 1936
Quoted by Charles Callan Tansill
“The United States and the Road to War in Europe”
Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, page 79.

REASONS FOR AMERICANS' ISOLATIONIST ATTITUDE

As we saw in Part I, Woodrow Wilson and other administration officials lied shamelessly before the U.S. entered World War I, claiming neutrality while doing everything to help Britain and draw America into the war.

During the 1920s and 1930s, various official documents were released that revealed these deceptions. When Americans became aware that America's entry into the war had been caused by lies, they were adamant about not getting into World War II. The idea that Americans were Nazi sympathizers or anti-Semitic is absurd; they were simply anti-war and determined not to be sucked into Europe's troubles once again.⁸

ROOSEVELT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE JAPANESE

He supported the 1924 legislation that excluded Asians. He said at the time:

⁸ “World War I: The Turning Point” by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, page 227.

Californians have properly objected [to Japanese immigration] on the sound basic ground . . . that the mingling of Asiatic blood with European or American blood produces, in nine cases out of ten, the most unfortunate results.⁹

THE MYTHS OF WHY WE WENT TO WAR

The question of war responsibility in relation to 1939 and 1941 is taken for granted as completely and forever settled. It is widely held that there can be no controversy this time. Since it is admitted by all reasonable persons that Hitler was a dangerous neurotic, who, with supreme folly, launched a war when he had everything to gain by peace, it is assumed that this takes care of the European aspects of the war-guilt controversy. With respect to the Far East, this is supposed to be settled with equal finality by asking the question: "Japan attacked us, didn't she?"

Harry Elmer Barnes
Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, page 9.

Roosevelt Running the War

The final authority for all military decisions by all the allies was FDR. He had no training in military strategy. See Roosevelt & Stalin for a list of all the disastrous things he did: unconditional surrender, aborting the Mediterranean landing, giving Eastern Europe to Stalin.

How many people died as a result of the decisions of this sick, pompous, arrogant individual?

How many people died as a result of Stalin having control of Eastern Europe?

How many Americans went without some of the necessities of life in order to finance a Cold War that probably would have been avoided if Roosevelt had not been cozying up to Stalin?

⁹ Win over Sand: The Diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt by Frederick W. Marks, III, page 8; cited in A Republic, Not An Empire by Patrick J. Buchanan, page 8.

Most historians claim that Harry Truman was more realistic than FDR, but his view of the atomic bomb indicates a collectivist mind. His unreality was simply of a different sort.

JAPANESE NOT EXPECTED TO REQUIRE MUCH ATTENTION

“He would lure Japan into an attack by cutting off their oil supplies, and use it as a pretext to declare war on both Germany and Japan, who had a treaty of alliance. The calculation was based on the racist assumption that the Japanese were inept pilots and mediocre sailors, because their eyesight was bad and they were not terribly bright. They could be contained by a modest defensive force of American ships and planes, letting us throw most of our military might into the European war.”

Thomas Fleming

<http://hnn.us/articles/1691.html>

History News Network, September 22, 2003

“In Nearly All of Our Wars We’ve Made Serious Mistakes”

PEARL HARBOR

December 8, 1941: Roosevelt addresses Congress to seek a declaration of war, saying . . .

“Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan.

“The United States was at peace with that nation, and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. . . .

“The Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.”

Options Available to Roosevelt Administration

Knowing that the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor, there were several things the Roosevelt administration could have done. But the value of those options depended on what Roosevelt wanted to achieve.

1. They could have announced to the world that they knew the Japanese fleet was headed for Pearl Harbor. This would have caused the fleet to turn around and go back to Japan.

If they wanted to save lives at Pearl Harbor, this was a good idea.

If they wanted to draw the Japanese into a war, it was a bad idea.

2. They could have informed the Pearl Harbor commanders of the approaching Japanese fleet. The commanders would have sent out patrol planes that would have determined the exact location of the fleet. This also would have caused the fleet to turn around and go back to Japan.

If they wanted to save lives at Pearl Harbor, this was a good idea.

If they wanted to draw the Japanese into a war, it was a bad idea.

3. They could withhold the information of the approaching Japanese fleet from the Pearl Harbor commanders and the public, and let the Japanese attack take place.

If they wanted to save lives at Pearl Harbor, this was a bad idea.

If they wanted to draw the Japanese into a war, it was a good idea.

They chose the third option, because drawing the Japanese into a war was more important to them than saving lives. In their eyes, the lives were expendable, but getting into the war with Japan firing the first shot was an opportunity too good to be passed up.

Opinions & Facts about Pearl Harbor

You may believe that Franklin Roosevelt was justified in lying to the American people in order to pull the U.S. into World War II — because you believe that otherwise Hitler would have eventually conquered America and the world.

You may believe that the Japanese truly were “yellow devils” who had to be wiped out, just as so many people today believe Islamic Fundamentalists are evil and must be wiped out.

You may believe that if the U.S. had pursued a peaceful course with the Japanese that the Japanese would have attacked the U.S. eventually.

You may believe these and other things justified Roosevelt’s actions. You’re certainly entitled to your opinions about what might have been. (I don’t happen to believe any of the above opinions, but this isn’t the place to challenge them.)

What you can’t believe, however, is that the attack was unprovoked, that the U.S. had no warning, that the U.S. was “looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific,” or that Roosevelt reluctantly took America into war.

You’re entitled to your own opinions, but not your own facts.

Politicians Running the War

Not only FDR making invasion and other decisions, but Truman dropping the A-bomb even though none of the top military people wanted it.

Why the Japanese Attacked

I was only 8 years old when the war started, and 12 when it ended. But I followed it very closely. I read the news in the daily paper and listened to reports on the radio. I studied the maps of the war zones. And, like many young boys, I reveled vicariously in the Allied victories — imagining myself to be a part of them.

I still remember a great deal of what was said during those days. But I do not recall anyone ever asking or answering what should have been the #1 question of the war:

Why did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor?

Already embroiled in a titanic struggle in China, concerned about the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, and afraid that the Soviets might take over Northern East Asia, why would they deliberately bring into the war against them the world's largest industrial power?

Did they just plain hate us for our freedoms, our democracy, and our prosperity (as in the current slogan about terrorists)?

Even those historians who still want to absolve Roosevelt from any responsibility for Pearl Harbor don't bother trying to answer that question — at least not any of the historians I've studied.

The answer to the question is obvious to anyone who has studied the diplomatic history of 1940-1941: U.S. negotiators made it very clear to the Japanese that if their military forces didn't retreat to the Japanese islands, there would be war between Japan and the United States — and, seeing the inevitability of war with America, the Japanese wanted to strike first and cripple the American fleet.

Negotiations Lie

“The Japanese deceived America by negotiating at the very time they were planning the Pearl Harbor attack.”

Truth: The Japanese were negotiating in hope that the Pearl Harbor attack would be unnecessary.

It was the Americans who were negotiating falsely, as Roosevelt had no intention of coming to any kind of agreement whatsoever with the Japanese. In fact, the negotiations were intended to serve one purpose only: to goad the Japanese into attacking.

ROOSEVELT'S GREATNESS

Communist spies in the administration.

FRENCH WEAKNESS

Myth: The French were weak and were no match for Hitler. The U.S. had to save them.

When the French fought, no one helped them. Not the British or the Russians. When the U.S. fought, they had the British, Russians, Free French, and eventually the Italians on its side.

POLITICS OF HATE & FEAR

Hitler & 1923. Explanation of how Germans came to accept Hitler; refutation of bad Germans idea.

JAPANESE & BRITISH CONQUESTS

It is not the duty of American youth to fight and die to protect the British, French, and Dutch conquests from Japanese takeovers.

It is not the duty of American taxpayers to pay to protect the British, French, and Dutch conquests from Japanese takeovers.

“Remember Pearl Harbor”

All during the war, throughout America there were signs everywhere saying, “Remember Pearl Harbor” — meaning remember that the Japanese are evil, sneaky, two-faced cretins; we mustn’t let up for a moment, lest they come over here and put us all in concentration camps.

Although the Japanese politicians weren’t freedom-loving leaders and the Japanese military commanders were no saints, the truth is that the Japanese people were largely like us. Those victorious bombing raids on Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki were killing innocent people with hopes and dreams similar to our own.

Now that you know what happened at Pearl Harbor, and why it happened, I’d be happy if you put a “Remember Pearl Harbor” sign in your home or office. Let it remind you of

how the politicians lied about the entire Pearl Harbor incident, from beginning to end, and let it remind you that the latest political show of indignation at what some foreigners are doing will probably turn out later to be grossly exaggerated.

And maybe a “Remember the Gulf War” sign would be appropriate as well. Let it remind you that the military briefing you see on television might be as phony as the TV military briefings General Schwarzkopf conducted during the Gulf War.

PEACE EVER AFTER

“The White Cliffs of Dover”:

There'll be blue birds over,
The white cliffs of Dover
Tomorrow, just you wait and see.
There'll be love and laughter,
And peace ever after,
Tomorrow, when the world is free.

MUNICH

Did it happen because FDR pressured the British?

Some historians think the British were smart to delay the war until they had a better chance.

As AJP Taylor caustically observes in *The Origins of the Second World War*: “In 1938 Czechoslovakia was betrayed. In 1939 Poland was saved. Less than one hundred thousand Czechs died during the war. Six-and-a-half million Poles were killed. Which was better — to be a betrayed Czech or a saved Pole?” — A.N. Wilson, *The UK Independent*, April 25, 1999.

Russia & Poland

Why didn't the British & French declare war on Russia after it invaded Poland?

Atlantic Charter

Compare the Atlantic Charter goals with the results.

SLANDER OF ANTI-WAR ACTIVISTS

Myth

One recurring myth that refuses to die is that most of the leading anti-war activists were either anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi. This myth has helped to encourage the idea that the American people by and large were eager before Pearl Harbor to help our Allies, and thus no deception by Franklin Roosevelt was necessary to get America into war.

This simply isn't true. A majority of Americans felt that American entry into World War I had been a mistake and were eager to see that it didn't happen again. The America First Committee led the struggle to make sure that the politicians didn't suck America into war again.

Anti-Semitism

It's easy to ascribe anti-Semitic motives to war opponents decades after the war. For heaven sake, everyone knows that Hitler killed six million Jews! Only an anti-Semite could view that without being outraged.

But what's wrong with that picture?

The error is in thinking that anyone in America knew about the Holocaust in 1940-1941. In fact, there was no Holocaust then. It didn't begin until the last half of 1941,¹⁰ there was no general inkling of the exterminations until 1944, and the Holocaust wasn't fully accepted by even American intelligence until American soldiers came upon the concentration camp at Buchenwald on April 11, 1945.

¹⁰ "Holocaust: VIII, Beginnings of the Extermination," *Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2003*.

Yes, Hitler was anti-Semitic. And so were millions of people in Europe at that time — as had been the case for hundreds of years — and continues to be the case today in many areas.

Jews in Germany were treated badly in the 1930s — as were peasants in Russia, businessmen in the United States, peons in banana republics, and slaves in many parts of the world.

But no one knew that Hitler planned to exterminate every Jew he could get his hands on. Contrary to other myths about Hitler, he didn't say in Mein Kampf that he planned to wipe out the Jewish race.

Fascism

Charles Lindbergh was probably the most prominent American opponent of the war, and he has been tarred — completely unfairly — by history as an anti-Semite.

{ give Lindbergh quote complimenting Hitler. }

That statement may seem to damn Lindbergh for eternity. But if it does, it should also damn Franklin Roosevelt.

Let me explain.

Enduring Myth

One enduring myth of World War II is the confusion of fascism with anti-Semitism. They are not the same thing, and in fact there is nothing in either philosophy that automatically calls forth the other.

Anti-Semitism is a racial philosophy. Fascism is an economic philosophy. Nazism (National Socialism) is a political philosophy.

Communism is an economic system in which all private property is abolished and everything is owned by “the people in common” (meaning by whoever gets to be the ruler).

Socialism is an economic system in which the government owns the principal means of production — the steel industry, the auto industry, the Post Office, electric power, health care, and such. But individuals are still able to own their own cars, their own homes — their own personal property, in other words.

Fascism is an economic system in which most means of production remains in private ownership. However, the state makes all the major economic decisions — how much can be produced, what prices should be, who should get access to the best resources, and so on.

Hitler was not an economist; he was a politician. He didn't invent fascism or even promote it as the salvation of the world. He simply adopted it.

Benito Mussolini was a fascist, as well as a politician. Mussolini promoted fascism before taking over Italy in 1921, and he immediately began reorganizing the Italian economy on a fascist basis.

When Hitler acquired the leadership of Germany in 1933 through parliamentary means, he immediately set about to acquire absolute power. Germany was economically devastated; not only was it in the midst of the same Great Depression as the rest of the world, it had already been ravaged by World War I reparations as well as socialism and hyper-inflation the 1920s.

Hitler saw fascism as a means to acquire the power he wanted, and most of the German people were so economically depressed they were willing to try anything.

While fascism is no more able to create wealth out of nothing than is socialism or communism, the sense of national pride, everyone working together (supposedly), and strong leadership affected the confidence of most Germans. They were willing to work harder, their spirits lifted, and they helped rebuild the German economy.

Many Americans saw the restoration of Germany during the mid-1930s as evidence that fascism works — that it could be applied in other countries with equal success. As it happens, they were wrong. You might increase the “Gross Domestic Product” of a country by building military equipment or reduce the unemployment rate by drafting young men, but you can't raise the standard of living of people that way. However, few people anywhere are economic experts. And so it was easy for some people to be attracted to the apparent gains being made in Germany.

Charles Lindbergh was one of them. He was not for mistreating Jews, he was not for German conquest. But he saw the apparent rebirth of Germany and congratulated Hitler on it.

Meanwhile, in the United States Franklin Roosevelt was doing a lot of the same things that Hitler was. He didn't call it fascism, and he might not even have known what the word meant.

But Mussolini should have been proud of him. The two cornerstones of Roosevelt's New Deal were the National Recovery Act (NRA) and the Agriculture Adjustment Act (AAA). Both were pure fascism.

In each case, the means of production remained in private hands, but the government made all the decisions. In the NRA, every company in a particular industry was herded into a single cartel in which all principal decisions were made by a Roosevelt-appointed administrator. Even shopkeepers were forced into similar cartels. "Free enterprise" was virtually non-existent.

The AAA was similar. Government "experts" determined how much corn could be planted, how much wheat, and so on.

There were many more programs that mixed fascism and socialism, but the NRA and the AAA were the leading edge of the New Deal.

The NRA was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1935. The AAA died more from public disgust, but its central idea — that government should determine how much of any commodity the country needs — lives on even today in the perennial farm programs decreed by Congress.

The New Deal was a failure. In 1938, five years after Roosevelt's inauguration, the unemployment rate was still 19%. But it set in place programs, powers, and responsibilities for the federal government that continue today. It was a revolution in America. But it isn't the subject of this book.

What we need to understand is that the people who opposed American entry into the European war were not pro-Nazi, pro-Hitler, or anti-American. They wanted Americans to be able to live in peace.

Incidentally, the day after Pearl Harbor, Charles Lindbergh tried to enlist in the Army Air Force, but was turned down because of his age.

Myth of Liberating Europe

“Americans fought and died to liberate France and the other European countries.”

This myth has always enjoyed some circulation, but it was trotted out in earnest in 2002 and 2003 for two purposes:

1. In order to condemn the French people as ungrateful when they refused to support George Bush’s plan to attack Iraq.
2. To support the notion that Americans have always fought to liberate oppressed people in other lands.

However, the myth is simply a myth — not reality.

Americans went to France to fight because they’d been told that if Hitler wasn’t stopped in Europe, his next step would be to invade America. Better to stop him on foreign soil than to have to fight for our homeland on our homeland.

I doubt that there was a single soldier fighting in Europe who believed he was fighting for the oppressed people of Europe. He was fighting because he believed the future of America was at stake.

The U.S. government and the entertainment industry cooperated in the making of numerous propaganda documentaries, exhortations, war-bond promotions, and other drum-beating productions. They stressed that all the freedoms we held dear were at stake.

As a boy, I followed the war closely in newspapers, in magazines, and at the movie theater. I never once heard or read anything implying that we were fighting the war to free the people of Europe.

Americans were told how heroic the Russians were and how much the English needed the “bundles for Britain” (donated clothing and food), but to the best of my recollection no one ever said that Americans were fighting and dying for foreign people.

There were all the promises about a postwar world in which everyone everywhere would be free — enjoying Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” (and free cable TV presumably) — and wars would be a thing of the past. But that was just a makeover of the World War I propaganda. Even the purpose of these pipe dreams was just to assure Americans that this

war would finally be the last war we'd have to fight. In other words, it was an appeal to our own self-interest more than to humanitarian instincts.

Of course, once the war was over, all the war themes were embellished — and embellished — and embellished. All sorts of noble sentiments were introduced retroactively into the story of the war.

And those retroactive motivations often were belied by current events. So if my boyhood recollections are unpersuasive to you, consider this: at the very time the myth of “fighting to liberate the oppressed European people” was beginning to flower, our government stood by and watched the peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Albania, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria disappear between the Iron Curtain.

Even though the Soviet Union was exhausted, devastated, and broke at the end of World War II, and the U.S. was powerful enough to impose its way on anyone, the U.S. government didn't use its power to “liberate” 100 million captive people.

And very few Americans raised any objection.

PROPAGANDA

Reich Marshall Hermann Goering at the Nuremberg trial:

"The people can always be brought to the bidding of leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

Fighting in the Pacific

35% of the American troops fighting on Okinawa were killed or wounded. 100,000 Japanese died.¹¹

Lying about Pearl Harbor Losses

A good example of the target of censorship was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The military immediately shut down the phone lines linking reporters in Hawaii with the American mainland.

An official U.S. military communiqué announced that one destroyer and one obsolete battleship had been sunk, with a few other ships damaged lightly, while the Japanese suffered huge losses.

A few weeks later, the Secretary of the Navy corrected the initial report, and said that one modern battleship had been sunk, while another had capsized but could be retrieved. He said the Pacific fleet was basically intact and was now sailing westward to encounter the enemy. The Secretary was applauded for being so open and honest about American losses.

On the one-year anniversary of the attack, the government issued new information on the Pearl Harbor losses. Now it was revealed that five battleships had been sunk or damaged — giving the impression that they hadn't all been sunk, only damaged and could be repaired.

In 1966, the figure was increased to eight battleships — again either sunk or damaged. In fact, it was known immediately in 1941 that five battleships — the Arizona, the Oklahoma, the California, the Nevada, and the West Virginia were all sunk and lost forever. But this information was never announced publicly — even though anyone in Honolulu at the time could have told you so.

Was this information withheld so the enemy wouldn't know how vulnerable the American fleet was at the time?

No. In fact, the Japanese pilots could see the battleships sinking and knew what they had achieved. The next day Tokyo newspapers carried a full account of the American losses. Since the American embassy staff in Japan could see what the Japanese knew, the

¹¹ "Slouching Toward Catastrophe" by George H. Nash, *Imprimis*, April 1992, page 6.

American government was well aware that its dishonesty wasn't hiding anything from the enemy.¹²

The false reports had only one purpose: to keep the truth about the Japanese victory at Pearl Harbor from the American people.

We might wonder whether it could have been to the government's advantage to let Americans know the full extent of the losses immediately. It might have made Americans even more determined to gain revenge on the Japanese — the way the World Trade Center disaster in 2001 caused Americans to write a blank check to the government to do anything it wanted, presumably to in some way exact revenge for what happened.

But whether the government was right or wrong in assessing the public's mood in 1941 is irrelevant. The essential point is that the government lied to its own people. The politicians decided for themselves what the American people should be allowed to know. The "public servants" were not our servants, they were our masters.

WAR CRIMES TRIALS

Nuremburg Trials

"Nuremburg trials established principles of war crimes."

Russians scot-free. Bombing of Dresden.

The victors get to write the history.

At the end of the war, the American, British, Soviet, and French governments jointly staged a series of "war crimes" trials — sometimes known as "the Nuremberg trials."

In these trials, leading Nazi officials were aggressing on other countries, "crimes against humanity," forced labor, and crimes against the German people.

Because only the victors are allowed to express indignation or write the history, none of the Allies' crimes — such as the firebombing of Dresden or the forced labor of Nazi

¹² This entire incident is described in more detail in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 296–298.

soldiers in American prisoner-of-war camps — were allowed to be mentioned in the courtroom.

The trials were quite different from American courtroom trials. A couple of dozen defendants were on trial at one time, collectively charged with broad crimes committed by the Nazi leadership. The premise was that anyone who did not resist the Nazi leadership was guilty of whatever the Nazis did.

In many cases, decisions were rendered on the basis of hearsay evidence — affidavits or other third-party accounts, with the defendants having no ability to cross-examine those who supposedly made the statements being used as evidence.

Another drawback of the trials was that foreign powers were trying Nazi officials for crimes against the German people. Logic dictates that trials for such crimes should be conducted by Germans.

The great lie of the war crimes trials was that they would deter future aggressors — that they would set an example that would prevent wars in the future.

As we've seen in the 58 years since then, they have done no such thing.

But they did do one thing to make wars much worse than they had been previously. Now that government leaders knew that they could be tried and hanged if they lost a war, they had a strong incentive to resist surrendering even when a war was lost — causing additional deaths — and they had a strong incentive to commit additional barbarities in order to avoid winding up in the dock and facing victors' justice. The Nuremberg and Tokyo trials have made it certain that the third world war will be waged with unprecedented savagery.

Harry Elmer Barnes
Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, page 10.

Since the second World War the “aggressor” has become the nation or coalition that is defeated in war, whatever the responsibility for starting hostilities. Being defeated, it must be punished and its leaders exterminated. Driven home by the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, this subterfuge has given advance notice to leaders in any future wars that they must not take the risk of being defeated, no matter what horrors they have to unleash to assure victory. In this way the internationalists who falsely pose as protagonists of peace have not only produced a condition of more or less permanent war but

have also made it certain that future wars will become ever more savage and devastating. No possible means of destruction can be spared to assure victory.

Harry Elmer Barnes

Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, page 64.

HISTORIANS KNOW THE TRUTH

Although most historians idolize Franklin Roosevelt, most of them acknowledge what he did and claim that he had to lie to the American people for our own good.

Harry Elmer Barnes wrote about one historian reviewing an anti-Roosevelt book:

. . . he expressed himself as in almost complete agreement with [Frederic R.] Sanborn's account of the crucial Japanese-American negotiations in 1941 [Design for War]: "It is perfectly true — as Dr. Sanborn proves — that in 1941 the Japanese seriously wanted peace and that Roosevelt and Hull used every possible device to forestall it, and to provoke an open attack by Japan." He even admits that Roosevelt and Hull anticipated this attack. He excuses all this on the ground that our entry into the war was obligatory for American security from Nazi invasion and for the salvation of humanity, and that the provocation of the Japanese was only "penetrating foresight," because Hitler and Mussolini were just mean enough not to rise to Roosevelt's war bait in the Atlantic. Hence, we had to incite Japan to attack us in order to get into the war through the Pacific back door.¹³

Wagner

Just as Brahms and Beethoven were banned in World War I, the music of Richard Wagner was identified as a source of evil in World War II.

¹³ "Revisionism and the Historical Blackout" by Harry Elmer Barnes in Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, pages 43-44.

It was known that Wagner was Adolf Hitler's favorite composer, and that was enough to make Wagner persona non grata.

It was many years after World War II before American symphony orchestras could safely schedule Wagner pieces. And as late as 2001, a Wagner piece had to be scrapped from the schedule of the Israel Music Festival because Wagner's "name and creations are closely associated with the Nazi regime."¹⁴

During and for years after World War II, the only time an American was likely to hear Wagner's music was when it was used to accompany Nazi scenes in a World War II movie.

It is true that Wagner was somewhat anti-Semitic, but he was far from a racist — and his views on any "master race" were light years apart from Hitler's. As with many people, his anti-Jewish attitude was mostly an emotional reaction to his own anecdotal experiences and didn't reflect a theory of racial superiority or inferiority.

Wagner was perhaps the most intellectual of classical composers. Unlike other composers, he wrote the words to his operas, he wrote books on philosophy, and every bit of his music emanated from both musical inspiration and philosophical beliefs.

He changed his mind about many things over the years. But one constant attitude throughout his adult life was his opposition to the state. And the two most dominant themes in his writings and his operas were the pointlessness of life and redemption through love. Neither of these could be considered, by any stretch of the imagination, to be a glorification of the state, of racial superiority, of war, or of conquest.

Some of Wagner's music is triumphant — for example, the overtures to *Meistersinger*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Rienzi*. But music alone can't express an intellectual concept; it can portray only an emotion or a feeling. So, without words, an instrumental piece might express triumph, but it can't tell you what has triumphed. It might be the triumph of a police state or it might be the triumph of individual liberty.

Hitler may have spoken of Wagner's "heroes," but he neglected to mention that Wagner's heroes almost all die prematurely in his operas. Hitler may not have known what he was talking about, but people have used his tastes as justification to deny music-goers elsewhere the opportunity to hear some glorious music.

¹⁴ http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/about_yad/press_room/in_the_news/wagner.html

If I were to quit listening to music that I knew was enjoyed by someone I didn't like, I would soon be deprived of all good music. What would that achieve? And who would be the loser?

KIMMEL MADE THE SCAPEGOAT

Admiral Kimmel, at the time of Pearl Harbor, had been in the navy for more than 40 years. he had graduated from the Academy in 1904 and gone round the world with the "white fleet" in 1907-09, served honorably during the First World War, and in the inter-war years risen to a position of very high responsibility.

On December 8, 1941, his court martial was demanded on the floor of the House of Representatives. In following weeks and months, after summary relief from his command, he was deluged with insulting letters. In the spring of 1942 the chairman of the military affairs committee of the House, Andrew Jackson May, suggested in at least one public speech that Kimmel and Short should be shot.¹⁵

ESPIONAGE ACT

The 1940 revision of the Espionage Act increased its penalties. The application of the law to mere propaganda was limited by a Supreme Court decision in 1944. During World War II about 160 people were convicted under the Espionage Act. Also under this act, the American Communists Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of spying and executed in 1953.¹⁶

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED

World War II had been initiated in 1939 to save Poland and in 1941 to save China. In

¹⁵ "Pearl Harbor and the Revisionists" by Robert H. Ferrell [Professor of History at Indiana University] in *The Origins of the Second World War*, edited by Esmonde M. Robertson; page 286 of the paperback edition.

¹⁶ "Espionage Act of 1917, *Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2003*.

both cases, the countries involved were in the end delivered over to totalitarian slavery.¹⁷

HITLER'S PLAN FOR WORLD DOMINATION

But some who are pressed for an explanation will allege that we had to fight to save the world from domination by Hitler, forgetting General George C. Marshall's report that Hitler, far from having any plan for world domination, did not even have any well-worked-out plan for collaborating with his Axis Allies in limited wars, to say nothing of the gigantic task of conquering Russia. Surely, after June 22, 1941, nearly six months before Pearl Harbor, there was no further need to fear any world conquest by Hitler.

Harry Elmer Barnes
Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, page 9.

QUOTATION

“And how shall we name those who, with victory fully in hand, dispatched a two-day wave of fighter bombers to reduce to ashes beautiful Dresden, a civilian city teeming with refugees? The death toll was not far below Hiroshima, and two orders of magnitude greater than at [the German bombing of] Coventry. The Coventry bombing, however, was condemned in [the Nuremburg war crimes] trial, while the Air Marshal who directed the bombing of Dresden was not only spared the brand of “war criminal,” but towers over the British capital in a monument, as a national hero.”

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
“The March of the Hypocrites”
The Times of London, 21 August 1997¹⁸

¹⁷ *Leftism Revisited* by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, page 417.

¹⁸ http://www.suc.org/news/world_articles/times082197

3

The Atomic Bomb

On August 6, 1945 the U.S. Air Force dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima — killing somewhere in the neighborhood of 70,000 people. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. It is estimated that 20,000 people were killed there.

Probably no instrument of war in the history of the world was as devastating as the dropping of those bombs. In addition to the immediate death toll, hundreds of thousands of survivors suffered radiation poisoning and died slow, agonizing deaths.

In John Hersey's book Hiroshima, published in 1946, he relates the story of one of the survivors of the first bombing:

Mr. Tanimoto found about twenty men and women on the sandpit. He drove the boat onto the bank and urged them to get aboard. They did not move and he realized that they were too weak to lift themselves. He reached down and took a woman by the hands, but her skin slipped off in huge glove-like pieces. He was so sickened by this that he had to sit down for a second. . . . he had to keep consciously repeating to himself, "These are human beings."¹⁹

There's another good description in one of the other reference books.

People were burned as though they had been placed in microwave ovens.

Many of the people died instantly.

But many of them died lingering deaths — suffering unimaginable burning and other effects of the radiation. Some of those died within an hour, some within a day, and some took days to die. It was as gruesome as though they'd been tortured to death. Had their deaths taken place in torture chambers, we rightly would have condemned their killers as war criminals. But because their gruesome deaths occurred as the result of a bombing, we treat their killers — not just the airmen, but the politicians who ordered the killing — as heroes.

¹⁹ Quoted in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 444.

Atomic Bomb Lie

“Necessary to save 100,000 lives.”

Such an assault on over 100,000 human beings could be justified only in extreme conditions — in a situation where many more lives were saved by sacrificing those who died. Not just a “might have” or “could have” — but absolute evidence that nothing less than this horrific act could have saved the lives of far more people.

Killing Civilians

“The U.S. never intentionally kills civilians.” Dresden, Hiroshima, Tokyo bombing after Hiroshima.

Maybe you or I wouldn’t kill civilians, but politicians always find a good reason to do so.

The justification came in an article by Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of War at the time of the bombing) in Harper’s magazine in February 1947. In that article, Stimson laid out the entire case to support dropping the bomb. At the heart of that case was the contention that the only alternative to dropping the bomb was an American invasion of Japan that could have cost a million American lives or casualties. He repeated that estimate in his autobiography, On Active Service:

We estimated that if we should be forced to carry this plan to its conclusion, the major fighting would not end until the latter part of 1946, at the earliest. I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties to American forces along.

Ever since then most Americans have assumed that dropping the atomic bomb was the only alternative to a costly invasion of the Japanese homeland.

The estimated number of casualties has varied with the telling — generally anywhere from 250,000 to a full million. President Harry Truman on several occasions referred to the American lives saved by the dropping of the bomb, using various figures for the number of lives saved. . . .

“It occurred to me that a quarter of a million of the flower of our young manhood was worth a couple of Japanese cities, and I still think they were and are.”

“A year less of war will mean life for 300,000 — maybe a half million — of America’s finest youth. Not only that, but it will mean life to untold numbers of Russians, of Chinese, of Japanese.”²¹

“I thought 200,000 of our young men would be saved by making that decision, and some 3 or 400,000 of the enemy would be saved by making that decision.”²²

“I asked General Marshall what it would cost in lives to land on the Tokyo plain and other places in Japan. It was his opinion that such an invasion would cost at a minimum one quarter of a million casualties, and might cost as much as a million, on the American side alone, with an equal number of the enemy. The other military and naval men present agreed.”²³

“The dropping of the bombs stopped the war, saved millions of lives.”²⁴

However when Truman was writing his own memoirs, it was pointed out to him that Henry Stimson had used an estimate of a million casualties. To be consistent, Truman adopted that figure. Why not? It’s just a number that can’t be proven or disproved — and the bigger, the better.

The Myths

Most Americans believe three things about the dropping of the atomic bomb, based on what they’ve heard over the past half-century:

1. Only two alternatives were available to the United States in 1945 to force the Japanese to surrender and end the war: invade Japan with

²¹ Scene from the movie *The Beginning or the End*, with Truman’s dialog approved by Truman.

²² Statement to Democratic senators and Congressmen, April 6, 1949, in *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman*, 1949, page 200.

²³ Letter to Professor James L. Cate, January 12, 1953.

²⁴ Speech at Columbia University, April 28, 1959.

ground troops or use the atomic bomb.

2. An invasion would have cost hundreds of thousands of American lives.
3. To avoid an invasion, the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on military targets.

Given this understanding, it's not surprising that most Americans believe the dropping of the bomb was justified.

Unfortunately, the common wisdom is incomplete.

In the summer of 1945 There actually were five alternatives, not two, being considered — each of which was assumed would end the war:

1. An invasion of Japan.
2. A continuation of the blockade of the Japanese islands, already in progress.
3. A declaration of war against Japan by the Soviet Union.
4. Use of the atomic bomb.
5. Modification of the surrender terms the Allies were demanding of Japan.

Because so many world events of the half-century have flowed from the use of the A-bomb, it's important to be aware of how the events of 1945 differ so significantly from the common understanding. The fact is that the President and several top officials lied to the American people about the use of the bomb.

So let's look at each of the five alternatives.

The Invasion of Japan

An invasion of Japan was an obvious possibility.

The American forces had been capturing Pacific islands in hard-fought battles with heavy casualties. In June of 1945, American troops completed the capture of Okinawa, the last major island south of Japan proper.

It is easy to assume that the war wouldn't end until the islands of Japan itself had been captured. The fall of Germany had occurred only a few months before — and it came about because of Allied ground forces converging on Germany from the East and West.

However, the idea of invading Japan is clouded by three retrospective misconceptions:

- that an invasion was necessary,
- that it was imminent, and
- that it would cost many American lives.

In truth, almost no one in the American high command expected an invasion to take place. There were too many other alternatives available that wouldn't cost American lives.

Some quotes

Secondly, although the American military was planning an invasion, just in case it proved to be necessary, the invasion wasn't imminent. The general plan was that the first landing would take place in November 1945 at Kyushu near the southern tip of the Japanese islands. A second invasion would occur at Honshu in the Japanese heartland the following May.

And, third, the American high command made various estimates of the expected casualties. General Marshall the American Chief of Staff estimated that the invasion would cost about 31,000 American lives. Other estimates in the same range were made by others in the know. None of them came anywhere near the figures tossed around by politicians in later years to justify the bombings.²⁵

The Blockade

One reason that no one seriously expected an invasion to be necessary was that the Japanese were slowing starving to death. All the Americans had to do was to wait until the Japanese surrendered as a matter of mere survival.

²⁵ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 518.

Called Operation Starvation.

Japan is an island nation with virtually no natural resources. Even rice, the basic staple of the Japanese diet, is imported. The Japanese had to import most of the food and raw materials for manufacturing that they needed. When imported rice was no longer available, the government undertook a program to process acorns as a rice substitute.²⁶

But by early 1945 the Japanese navy had been destroyed. American ships could roam the Pacific Ocean without fear of encountering enemy forces.

A naval blockade of the Japanese islands was established. The Japanese couldn't obtain the resources necessary for survival, let alone to wage war.

The lack of coal meant an end of much of Japan's industry. And the lack of basic industrial salts made it difficult to produce light metals, synthetic oil, or explosives. The shortage of products threatened to ignite a terrible inflation.²⁷

Most people in the American high command assumed the Japanese would surrender, merely to survive, long before the invasions were scheduled.

The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union had remained neutral throughout the Japanese-American war. However, Josef Stalin had promised the Americans that the Soviets would enter the war against Japan once the Germans were defeated. And in early April 1945, the Soviet Union gave notice to the Japanese that it would not honor its Neutrality Pact between them.²⁸

It was assumed that once the Soviets declared war on Japan, the Japanese military would give up.

History of changing American attitudes.

The Atomic Bomb

²⁶ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Aperovitz, page 22.

²⁷ *The Decision to Use the atomic Bomb* by Gar Aperovitz, page 21.

²⁸ *The Decision to Use the atomic Bomb* by Gar Aperovitz, page 19.

As we can see, there already are two non-atomic alternatives available to force the Japanese to surrender.

It was assumed that once the Soviets entered the war, the Japanese would give up. But even if they didn't, it was only necessary to wait out the blockade until the Japanese would have to surrender merely to survive.

Lie #1: The atomic bomb was the only way to spare American lives.

Lie #2: The atomic bomb had been dropped on a military target. In announcing to the American people that the bomb had been dropped, President Harry Truman referred to Hiroshima as "an important Japanese Army base."²⁹

And then on August 9, the day of the Nagasaki bombing, he stated:

The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, in so far as possible, the killing of civilians.³⁰

In fact, neither Hiroshima nor Nagasaki had any military significance. The two cities were on a list of four cities that almost certainly were chosen simply because they were the only major cities still intact. If they had served any military purpose, they would have been bombed into ashes long before.

{Background on firebombing of Tokyo and other cities.}

It might be said that all factories could be considered military targets, because even those producing consumer goods free up other factories to produce war materials. But the only factories in Hiroshima were on the outskirts of the city, and the bomb was deliberately aimed at the center of the city in order to create the maximum damage possible.³¹

Truman continued for the rest of his life to maintain the fiction that the cities were military targets.

²⁹ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1945*, page 212; quoted in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 197.

³⁰ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1945*, page 212; quoted in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 521.

³¹ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 523.

In his 1955 memoir, Year of Decisions, he stated:

Four cities were finally recommended as targets: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata, and Nagasaki. They were listed in that order as targets for the first attack. The order of selection was in accordance with the military importance of these cities, but allowance would be given for weather conditions at the time of the bombing. Before the selected targets were approved as proper for military purposes, I personally went over them in detail with [Secretary of War Henry] Stimson, [Chief of Staff General George] Marshall, and [Chief of the Air Force General Henry] Arnold, and we discussed the matter of timing and the final choice of the first target.³²

{No such meeting of military and naval men as Truman mentions above ever took place.}

Even if the bomb were to be dropped, the military chiefs wanted to give the Japanese warning of the attack and an opportunity to surrender. And most of the scientists who worked on the bomb didn't want it to be dropped on a city until after it had been demonstrated to the Japanese first, giving them a chance to surrender.

Why the second bomb on Nagasaki, before the Japanese had a chance to surrender?

Surrender Possibilities

The war could have ended at least six months sooner if the U.S. had been willing to accept the Japanese desire for reassurance that their Emperor would not be removed or prosecuted.

It may be difficult for us to understand, but the Japanese considered their Emperor to be more than just a King; he was a deity, the "Son of Heaven." Hirohito was a direct descendant of the first Japanese Emperor, Jimmu in 660 B.C., who was considered to be a descendant of the goddess Amaterasu. To the Japanese, unseating the Emperor amounted to far more than just a "regime change;" it was sacrilege.³³

The Japanese also feared that the Emperor might be tried and hanged as a war criminal — which, at that time, was the widely expected fate for Nazi leaders. American officials

³² *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 526.

³³ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 35.

assumed that Japanese soldiers would fight to the death if there were no assurances given for the Emperor's safety. Also, it was understood that many Japanese soldiers would stop fighting only if the Emperor himself commanded them to do so — which meant that the fighting could end only if he remained in authority when surrender took place.³⁴

In January 1943 at the Casablanca conference of Allied leaders, Franklin Roosevelt casually mentioned at a press conference that the Allies would accept nothing less than “unconditional surrender.” The statement surprised Winston Churchill and members of the State Department in his entourage.³⁵

Roosevelt apparently thought it was a good idea because he had read that Ulysses S. Grant had pronounced it in one of his Civil War campaigns.

The following month in a speech he repeated his new policy, saying, “We mean no harm to the common people of the Axis nations. But we do mean to impose punishment and retribution in full upon their guilty, barbaric leaders.”³⁶

These statements inspired the Japanese to fight to the death, and just may have been the principal inspiration for the Kamikaze pilots who, starting in 1944, were willing to die by crashing their planes into American ships, rather than let their Emperor be captured.³⁷

Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. Harry S. Truman replaced him and assured America that he would continue all of Roosevelt's policies — including the demand for unconditional surrender.

However, almost immediately the leading military authorities and diplomats began suggesting that the war could end sooner if America would reassure the Japanese that there was no intention to remove the Emperor from his throne or prosecute him.

U.S. officials knew that this was the critical issue for the Japanese government, and they knew the Japanese were eager to explore surrender opportunities because they were intercepting and decoding all the messages between Tokyo and every diplomatic outpost

³⁴ The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb by Gar Alperovitz, page 36.

³⁵ *Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Volume II, pages 1570,; cited in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 36.

³⁶ *Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Volume II, pages 1570,; cited in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 37.

³⁷ “Kamikaze,” *Britannica* 2001.

worldwide. As we saw in the preceding chapter, they had broken the Japanese code before Pearl Harbor.³⁸

In August 11, 1944, a year before the atomic bomb was dropped, the U.S. War Department reported to the President, "Foreign minister Shigemitsu has instructed Ambassador Sato [in Moscow] to find out whether Russia is willing to assist in bringing about a negotiated peace."³⁹

Throughout the rest of 1944 and into 1945, the intercepted messages made it clear that the Japanese wanted to end the war, but they were determined that Emperor Hirohito must remain on the throne. In addition, various Japanese officials sent out peace feelers to the Americans and British through the Russian, Portuguese, Swedish, and Swiss governments. The overtures requested meetings with Allied representatives, but the overtures were rebuffed.⁴⁰

On May 28, 1945, Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew (who had been the U.S. Ambassador to Japan before the war) recorded a memo reporting on a meeting with President Truman: "The greatest obstacle to unconditional surrender by the Japanese is their belief that this would entail the destruction of permanent removal of the Emperor and the institution of the Throne. If some indication can now be given the Japanese that they themselves, when once thoroughly defeated and rendered impotent to wage war in the future, will be permitted to determine their own future political structure, they will be afforded a method of saving face without which surrender will be highly unlikely . . . The President said that he was interested in what I said because his own thoughts had been following the same line."

Virtually every member of Truman's cabinet, as well as Winston Churchill, urged Truman to modify and clarify the surrender terms. The advisors also urged him to allow the Japanese at least five weeks from the time of modifying the surrender terms before dropping the A-bomb. Truman himself said to associates on several occasions that he thought all this made sense. But he never did anything about it.⁴¹

On July 12, 1945, the U.S. intercepted this message from Foreign Minister Togo to Ambassador Sato in Moscow: "His Majesty the Emperor, mindful of the fact that the

³⁸ The Forrestal Diaries by James V. Forrestal, page 74; cited in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 29.

³⁹ The U.S. government's intercepted Japanese messages, #869, August 11, 1944; RG 457, N.A.; quoted in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 23.

⁴⁰ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, pages 25-27.

⁴¹ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, pages 34-35.

present war daily brings greater evil and sacrifice upon the peoples of all belligerent powers, desires from his heart that it may be quickly terminated.”⁴²

POTSDAM EVENTS

Go over the Potsdam events

SUMMARY

Some things can now be known for certain; other possibilities are still speculative.

We now know without question that:

- Any invasion of Japan would have cost in the neighborhood of 10,000 - 30,000 lives — not the 250,000 - 1,000,000 bandied about by the politicians.
- An invasion of Japan was very unlikely, given that the Japanese already were asking to surrender, given that the Soviets were about to enter the war, and given that the Japanese people were slowly starving to death because of the sea blockade.
- The planning for a possible invasion envisioned a small invasion at Kyoto that wasn't even due to start until three months after the atomic bombs were dropped, and a larger invasion nine months after the bombs were dropped.
- Before the first bomb was dropped, the Japanese had made it clear that they were willing to surrender on the same terms that were eventually imposed when the surrender took place, but Harry Truman rejected the offer.
- The Japanese intention to surrender was known because American cryptanalysts had broken the Japanese code over a year before Pearl Harbor, and were monitoring Japanese messages throughout the entire

⁴² The U.S. government's intercepted Japanese messages, \$1205, July 13, 1945: RG 457, N.A; quoted in *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 23.

war. In addition, on August 2, 1945 at the Potsdam conference, Truman reviewed and rejected an open surrender offer made through the Soviets.

- Contrary to what Truman said when announcing the event and in numerous statements thereafter, neither bomb was dropped on a military center. The cities were most likely chosen because they were about the only two large cities that hadn't already been devastated by American bombing.
- Almost every top official — military or civilian — in the American war council was opposed to dropping the bomb without giving warning to the civilians in the target cities, without offering to avoid using the bomb if the Japanese would surrender, and without waiting to see what other means might end the war first. The only exceptions were Secretary of State James Byrnes and President Harry Truman.
- A majority of the scientists who worked on the bomb tried to petition the President to abstain from dropping the bomb on a populated city without first demonstrating it to the Japanese.
- An overwhelming number of American military leaders and statesmen condemned the act of dropping the bomb as soon as they heard about it, in most cases saying it was totally unnecessary.

IS THIS ALL HINDSIGHT?

“We believe that a considerable portion of the Japanese population now consider absolute military defeat to be probable. The increasing effects of sea blockade and the cumulative devastation wrought by strategic bombing, which has already rendered millions homeless and has destroyed from 25% to 50% of the built-up area of Japan's most important cities, should make this realization increasingly general.”

Combined U.S.-British Intelligence Committee
July 8, 1945⁴³

⁴³ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 17.

REASON THE BOMB WAS DROPPED

Trying to end war before Russians came in, and Churchill's belief that the bomb was dropped to scare Russia.

This government program turned out to be just as successful as all the others — meaning the result was far different from the expectations. The Soviets were obviously undeterred in their determination to gain control of most of eastern Europe.

But, then, to a politician, results are never important. The promises are that matter. If one can claim good intentions, one can't be faulted.

Why?

What we don't know for certain, and might never know, is why Harry Truman decided to drop the bomb. Because he told so many different stories at different times, it is unlikely that anything he said at any time could be taken as authoritative proof of his thinking.

Here are the possibilities, as I see them:

- Although he had previously wanted the Soviets to join the war against Japan, the successful testing of the bomb meant that the Soviets were no longer needed — and he wanted to end the war before the Soviets entered it. (As it turned out, the bomb was dropped but the Soviets did enter the war anyway, and they got part of the booty.)
- He wanted to show the Soviets the awesome power of the bomb, thinking that would make them more pliable in the postwar world. (Churchill later said he believed this is the reason the bomb was dropped.)
- There was a great deal of pressure from the military people working on the development of the bomb to actually use it — in order to justify the tremendous amount of money spent on the project. (Major General Leslie Groves, in charge of the project, suppressed the petition by the atomic scientists so that Truman didn't see it before the bomb was dropped.)

- Truman believed that the dropping of the bomb would scare people worldwide into avoiding future wars.
- Truman actually believed what he said many times — that dropping the bomb was justified as an attack of revenge for the attack on Pearl Harbor and because of the atrocities committed against American soldiers — even though the people killed by the bomb weren't the people responsible for those crimes.

You may agree with one or more of these potential reasons. But we still have to face the fact that the politicians never offered any of these reasons to the American people. Had any of them been true, the politicians could have used them and avoided having to issue justifications that were demonstrably untrue.

So what was the reason that the bomb was dropped?

We probably will never know for sure.

I have only my own opinion, one that I can't prove is correct.

Virtually everyone in the decision-making picture in the U.S., civilian or military, agreed that guaranteeing the survival of the emperor would bring the war to a halt quickly. It was the obvious answer to end the hostilities immediately — with no further loss of American lives, no further loss of Japanese lives, no worries over the consequences of bringing the Russians into the war, and no moral agony over dropping the atomic bomb.

Save The Emperor

So why wasn't the save-the-emperor alternative chosen?

We can't find the answer in any of Truman's statements. He contradicted himself so often that any statement you find can be offset by some other statement he made.

My guess is that it was because Harry Truman was a hothead. Egged on by Secretary of State Byrnes, who wanted to have the A-bomb "in his pocket" when dealing with the Russians, Truman decided to end the war in a very dramatic and ill-thought-out way.

If that seems a harsh judgment on Truman, we should consider some of the other things he did in his nearly eight years as President — which we will do in chapter 5.

Despite his reputation as an honest, plain-spoken man of the people, he was a political animal, a product of the Pendergast machine in Kansas City, a man who was virtually an inveterate liar who made Bill Clinton seem like George Washington.

Consider, for example, some of the statements he made later to justify his decision to drop the bomb:

1. Number lives saved from not invading
2. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were military targets.
3. Sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and the concentration camps.

REBUTTAL

Yes, it's possible that the Japanese might have found a way around the sea blockade.

Yes, it's possible that the Soviet entry into the war wouldn't have been sufficient to scare the Japanese into surrendering.

Yes, it's possible that, despite the indications in the intercepted Japanese cables, surrender terms couldn't have been worked out prior to the bomb being dropped.

Yes, it's possible that all other alternatives could have turned out to be fruitless — leaving the U.S. with only the choices of dropping the bomb or undertaking a land invasion of Japan.

All these things are possible, but we'll never know how realistic those possibilities were because the bombs were dropped without waiting to find out.

No warning was given to the Japanese. No modification of the surrender terms were ever offered. The bombs were simply dropped.

A-bomb No More Savage Than Blockade or Bombings

Some historians have maintained, and reasonably so, that the A-bomb was no more destructive or savage than the firebombing of Japanese cities and the blockade that was slowly starving the Japanese to death.

This is undoubtedly true. Most likely, more people died from the firebombing and blockade than from the A-bombs. And I certainly don't agree wholeheartedly with any of these policies.

But we're dealing here with the truth or falsity of the politicians' statements about the atomic bomb. And one thing is clear: by the time the A-bomb was dropped, there was no more need for any such destructive approach. The Japanese had made it clear they were ready to surrender on the very terms the U.S. imposed upon them.

Happy the U.S. Had the Bomb

Some supporters of the U.S. dropping the A-bomb have taken the attitude that we are fortunate that it was America that developed and used the bomb first — that America had the power possession of the bomb endowed.

If by that they mean this meant the next bomb was more likely to be dropped on Moscow than Chicago, they're most likely right.

But if they believe the power that bomb-possession provided was used more benevolently because it was the U.S. that had it, they're probably wrong. As we'll see in the following chapters, the U.S. government has not used its power benevolently on behalf of individual liberty and peace.

EVEN IF YOU BELIEVE IT WAS JUSTIFIED . . .

Even if you think the dropping of the bomb was justified, for whatever reason, don't ignore the fact that on this matter — as on so many other war matters — the politicians lied about their reasons and their actions.

The atomic bomb is one more important example of why we shouldn't believe politicians when they talk about war.

Realize, too, that if Harry Truman had believed he was justified in dropping the bomb, he wouldn't have needed to lie about what he did — lie long after the war was over.

Recognize, too, that if Harry Truman wasn't guilty of a war crime in dropping the atomic bomb on a civilian target, solely to frighten the Japanese (or the Soviets), then neither

were Herman Goering, Rudolf Hess, or Hideki Tojo guilty as convicted in their war crimes trials.

What has been called the “Nuremberg Consensus” is the practice of considering only crimes against civilians that were committed by the Germans and Japanese, ignoring those committed by the British and Americans.

TRUMAN’S LATER STATEMENT ON THE A-BOMB

"You have got to understand that [the atomic bomb] isn't a military weapon. It is used to wipe out women and children and unarmed people, and not for military uses."

Harry S Truman, discussing the atomic bomb during a July 21, 1948, National Security Council meeting on the Berlin Blockade, as recorded in *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal, 1945-1950* (1964)⁴⁴

TOKYO BOMBING

On March 9-10, 1945, the sustained firebombing of Tokyo destroyed 16 square miles of dense residential districts and killed at least 84,000 people directly.

The capture of Iwo Jima later in March put fighter planes within range of anywhere in Japan, allowing cover for massive bombing missions.⁴⁵

INTERNET SOURCES

<http://www.nuclearfiles.org/hiatomicbomb/manhattan.html>
has documents involved in the production of the atomic bomb. Some may be useful as references whereby people can get data from the web.

⁴⁴ Quoted by Philip Nobile, *Truman on Trial*, History News Network, August 3, 2001; <http://hnn.us/articles/187.html>.

⁴⁵ *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, page 18.

COMPARING ATROCITIES

We've heard so often about terrible atrocities — such as the Nazis' mass killing of Jews, Poles, and Gypsies, and of Saddam Hussein gassing Iranians and Kurds.

But did those people die any worse a death than those who perished in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Or than the people who died in the firebombing of Tokyo or Dresden?

What is done on our side is always excused by the exigencies of war. In other words, the ends do justify the means. But what is done by our enemies is inexcusable and becomes the focus of war crimes trials.

If America is ever to become the symbol of peace and liberty to the world — as it once was — if America is ever again to be the moral paragon that allows it to be the neutral judge of world affairs, our politicians will have to forgo the idea that America's power permits it to do whatever it wants while condemning the actions of others.

A BEAUTIFUL MIND

From the movie, discussing the A-bomb:

“Well, you ended the war.”

“We incinerated 150,000 people in a heartbeat.”

“Well, great deeds come at great costs, Mr. Parcher.”

“Conviction, it turns out, is a luxury of those on the sidelines, Mr. Nash.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ *A Beautiful Mind* by Akiva Goldsman.

4

The Cold War Prelude to the War on Terrorism

Perhaps have two chapters on the Cold War:

1. Show how it began and how it ended.
2. The various U.S. interventions that led to terrorism.

The first would come right after World War II. The second would come after The Dangerous World Continues, if that chapter is necessary; otherwise, after the Gulf War.

I was 12 years old when World War II ended and the Cold War began. I was old enough to be interested in world events that were reported on evening radio news broadcasts and in the daily newspaper. I was aware of President Truman's condemnation of the Soviet Union's actions in the late 1940s.

Like most Americans of my generation, I spent 45 years living in fear — fear of a nuclear war, fear of communist subversion, fear that the “free world” was gradually shrinking.

Introduction

The Soviet Union was a ruthless, brutal nation in which millions of people were killed by their own government.

But while it served the purposes of the Soviet leaders, it also served the purposes of American politicians.

The overriding lie about the Cold War was in exaggerating the threat that the Soviets posed to America:

- At the end of World War II, a time when the Soviet Union was so devastated it couldn't possibly wage war against any major power, U.S. politicians scared Americans into believing that the Soviets were planning to attack Europe. It is quite likely that the Cold War might have been much less heated if our politicians hadn't done so much to fan the flames.

- Throughout the Cold War, U.S. politicians constantly exaggerated both the economic strength and the military might of the Soviet Union.
- Although we were warned repeatedly that the communists were engaging in subversive activities aimed at the overthrow of the U.S. government, our own government was engaging in subversive activities in dozens of countries around the world — attempting to influence elections, overthrow elected governments, or stave off rebellions.

Inefficiency

Foreign aid didn't help Cuba, China, Vietnam, etc.

Origins of Cold War

See “Ideas\Communism” articles — particularly Rockwell's article on Truman.

Marshall Plan

“The Marshall Plan saved Western Europe from communism.”

U2 Flights

Eisenhower denied that they were spy flights. U.S. eventually repatriated Rudolf Abel in exchange for Gary Powers.

Subversion Works Both Ways

Anti-communists in the U.S. condemned alleged communist subversion. And yet, at the same time the U.S. government was trying to rig elections in places like Italy and France, helping to overthrow governments in countries like Iran and Panama, and intervening militarily in nations like Greece and Vietnam.

Of course, only rarely did the politicians tell us about these activities; most of the time it was the CIA or another government agency working in secret.

CIA's Role

It would be easy to assume that the only role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would be to gather intelligence — engage in espionage, analyze activities in foreign countries, and such.

But the Agency's charter authorizes it, in addition to gathering intelligence, to perform "such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct."

In practice this has been taken to authorize the CIA to engage in secret operations, both civilian and paramilitary, to influence the outcome of foreign elections, to overthrow foreign rulers, to help put down rebellions in other countries, and to do virtually anything the President of the United States thinks might be to America's benefit.

The CIA also bought or started newspapers, wire services, and other news organizations around the world — to be used to spread American propaganda covertly. It even had American journalists on its payroll; the journalists weren't paid to gather intelligence (as in "Central Intelligence Agency"), but to print news reports that the CIA wanted disseminated. All this despite the fact that the CIA's charter clearly prohibited it from engaging in activities within the U.S.⁴⁷

One of its goals was to create the illusion that any organization promoting "peace" was subversive. I can remember myself how successful this was. In the 1950s and 1960s we automatically assumed that any organization with the word "peace" or "disarmament" in its name was a communist front.

Behind the Iron Curtain

We are privy to much that went on in the secret councils of the American government, because of the Freedom of Information Act and the memoirs of various participants. Thus there is a great deal of information available about operations by the CIA and other government agencies that were secret at the time they were carried out. We even know what the goals of such operations were and who favored them.

⁴⁷ Rothbard-Rockwell Report in *War - Cold War*.

Unfortunately, we don't have the same kind of information about the Soviet Union. We know of some of its activities that were public at the time and some that are reported in U.S. government files. But we can only speculate concerning the motives and concerns of Soviet leaders — although some Soviet files have been opened in recent years.

However, it is generally assumed that at the end of World War II Josef Stalin was feeling somewhat insecure about the future of the Soviet Union. The country had been invaded by the Nazis, devastated by World War II, and now had to divert an enormous amount of resources to reconstruction.

Stalin's hope apparently was to create a buffer zone in front of the USSR — so that a future invading army would encounter massive resistance before reaching the Soviet border.

The last thing he wanted at the end of World War II was to go to war again. Their country was devastated, and Stalin instructed the Communist Parties around the world to help the Soviet Union rebuild, rather than push to take over other countries.

He especially wanted to cooperate with the Allies in order to get reparations from the Germans.

Afghan War, 1980s

See article in \Afghanistan\Bad consequences . . .

Greece Covert Action

See article in \Foreign Countries\Greece

War Scare by Truman

Truman used the war scare as a justification for more government, not as a reason to step up security procedures within his own government.

Truman Attitude toward the Soviets

When the Russians missed a deadline to withdraw their troops from Iran in early 1946, Truman bullied them into hurrying up — telling his Secretary of State James Byrnes, “I’m tired of babying the Soviets.”⁴⁸

German Zones & Soviet Occupation

At the end of World War II, Germany was divided into four occupation zones — administered by the American, British, French, and Soviet authorities.

In July 1946 the Americans offered to combine their zone with that of any of the other three governments. Only the British agreed and a combined zone, called Bizonia, was created.

The Soviets considered this the first step to creating a powerful new German state. This may have been the final motivation for the Soviets to remain in Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, rather than withdrawing as originally planned.⁴⁹

The Truman Doctrine & Greece

In 1947 the Greek government faced the possibility of a civil war with communist insurgents, many of whom had been part of the Greek resistance against the Nazis.

Truman decided to send money and weapons to the Greek government, and the Truman Doctrine was born. It was a policy of aiding anyone fighting against a communist insurrection.

Whitewashing Dictators

One of the recurring lies of the Cold War was the practice of painting anyone who opposed the communists as a great leader of a free country — no matter how oppressed the people in his country were.

Thus we were given such contrasts as:

⁴⁸ Letter from Truman to Byrnes, reprinted in *Memoirs: Year of Decisions* by Harry S. Truman, pages 604–606; quoted in *President’s Secret Wars* by John Prados, page 22.

⁴⁹ *Presidents’ Secret Wars* by John Prados, page 24.

- Free South Korea vs. Communist North Korea
- Free China vs. Red China
- Free South Vietnam vs. Communist North Vietnam
- The Mujahadeen in Afghanistan, who were called “Freedom Fighters.”

In fact, South Korea was an absolute dictatorship under Syghman Rhee, China under Chang Kai-Shek was a corrupt nation run pretty much entirely by warlords, and South Vietnam was in the grip of an authoritarian dictator. The Mujahadeen were essentially a group of warlords and terrorists, who fought among themselves until the Taliban came to power and united the country.

That doesn't mean their communist enemies ran Paradises. It simply means that the black-and-white pictures painted by our government — holding up dictators as great Freedom Fighters — was misleading and led to great public confusion in the U.S. when the true natures of those regimes began to surface.

In addition, the U.S. supported dozens of dictators in hopes of keeping them out of the Soviet bloc or, in some cases, weaning them away from the Soviet bloc.

A few of the more egregious examples include:

- The Shah of Iran, whom the U.S. helped to overthrow the democratic government of Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953.
- Antonio Somoza in Nicaragua.
- Manuel Noriega in Panama.
- Fulgencio Batista in Cuba.
- Ahkmed Suharto in Indonesia.
- Tito in Yugoslavia.
- Saddam Hussein in Iraq.
- Guatemala
- Pinochet in Chile.
- Joseph Mobuto in the Congo.

In the post-Cold-War world, this practice has continued — supporting such dictatorships as the Saud family in Saudi Arabia, the XXX dynasty in Kuwait, Mussaref in Pakistan.

Cold War Myth

The over-riding myth of the Cold War was the belief in an international communist conspiracy comprised of dedicated, disciplined agents who slavishly followed orders dictated from Moscow — orders given as part of a plot to take over the world.

The liberals believed that communist discipline was exercised over communist governments that would invade non-communist countries and thereby expand the communist empire.

The conservatives believed that communist discipline was exercised within “free” countries by subversives who would work to overthrow the governments of those countries and replace them with communist governments.

Both were mistaken. This can be demonstrated both theoretically and factually.

An international conspiracy requires that millions of people subordinate their own desires and needs for the benefit of some far-off dictator. But human beings aren’t made that way.

For example, after 1949, Mao-Tse Tung was the virtual emperor of China. He had totalitarian control over the largest population in the world. Why would he sacrifice his own desires and ambitions so that the world might be ruled from Moscow eventually?

The same would be true for the ruler of any third-world country. His first consideration would be the wealth, perks, and power afforded him by his position — not the eventual triumph of communism worldwide.

Of course, many of these rulers would support the Soviet Union and cooperate with it — in exchange for money or protection against foreign and domestic enemies. But that didn’t make them dedicated agents of a conspiracy to bring about a communist world.

And the same is true of pro-communist individuals in non-communist countries. Many of them become petty rulers of their own groups and develop their own agendas.

Of course, there always will be fanatics who will sacrifice their own lives for a cause, hoping thereby to give meaning to an otherwise meaningless life, but such people are not likely to be very intelligent or efficient instruments of a master plan.

American Communists as Agents?

There is one example cited over and over again to prove the case that Communist Parties around the world were disciplined agents of the central conspiracy in Moscow. That example is the reaction of American communists to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1940.

In 1939 World War II began when the Germans and Soviets signed a non-aggression pact. Shortly afterward, the Germans invaded western Poland, and a few weeks later the Soviets invaded eastern Poland. Because Britain and France had mutual-defense treaties with Poland, they immediately declared war against Germany (but not against the Soviet Union).

Although no one knew that a Holocaust was coming, the Nazis' repressive policies against the Jews were already common knowledge. And so some people in the United States wanted America to intervene against the Nazis. But American Communists pushed adamantly for America to remain out of European affairs.

However, in August 1940 the Nazis turned on the Soviets and invaded Russia. Immediately, American Communists began pushing for the U.S. to enter the war against Germany.

This turnabout by American Communists is often cited as proof that they did whatever the Soviet Union ordered them to do.

But there's an enormous difference between such discipline and simply being sympathetic to and loyal to the Soviet Union. The American communists' attitude was no different from that of American Democrats or Republicans who will defend and promote anyone on their own side while attacking anyone in the other party.

For example, Republicans complained when Bill Clinton ordered the American military to bomb Serbia in 1999. Among other reasons for opposition, they cited the futility of intervening in foreign countries, the unconstitutionality of going to war without a declaration by Congress, and the possibility of political motives driving Clinton's decisions.

But when George Bush bombed Afghanistan and Iraq, Republicans cheered. They didn't bother to discuss the past futility of foreign intervention, or the constitutional requirement for a formal declaration of war by Congress, or how the attacks boosted George Bush's political popularity.

Do you think the Republicans were acting on orders from George Bush or the Republican National Committee?

It is a mistake to confuse sympathy and loyalty to some person or entity — even a foreign power — for disciplined obedience to orders.

As we'll see in this chapter, the Soviet rulers in Moscow weren't very successful in controlling the rulers in their satellite states or the local Communist parties in non-communist states.

TRUMAN'S WARNING

In January 1951, President Truman said publicly:

If Western Europe were to fall to Soviet Russia, it would double the Soviet supply of coal and triple the Soviet supply of steel. If the countries of Asia and Africa should fall to Soviet Russia, we would lose the sources of many of our raw materials, including uranium, which is the basis of our atomic power. And Soviet command of the free nations of Europe and Asia would confront us with military forces when we could never hope to equal. In such a situation the Soviet Union could impose its demands on the world, without resort to conflict, simply through the preponderance of its economic and military power.⁵⁰

Republican vs. Democratic Approach

Republicans stressed internal security problems, while the Democrats stressed threat of Soviets conquering countries and starting a war.

⁵⁰ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1951*, page 8; cited in *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 110.

Of course, when the Republicans took over in 1953, they stressed the foreign policy side as did the Democrats, because that's where you could make government bigger.

BRUTAL ALLIES & ENEMIES

It is hard for Americans to realize that people within many countries are raised in a culture of brutality — with the idea that enemies are evil, mercy is weakness, and brutality is perfectly justified against evil people.

We are fortunate that this culture hasn't predominated in America, although there are some people who practice it, and there have been some periods when politicians have been able to sell it.

Fortunately, America is a strong country, capable of defending itself without question. It can coexist in a world with cultures of all kinds. We don't have to make foreign brutality our problem.

But our foreign policy experts have decided to use that brutality to advance what they perceive as American interests. They align themselves with brutal leaders — against those leaders' internal enemies or against other nations. They finance and use those leaders for the purposes of American foreign policy. And when a leader's usefulness is ended, they use his brutality as justification to abandon him or depose him — and perhaps even kill him.

Here are some prominent examples:

Put in a summary of each one

- Saddam Hussein in Iraq
- Manuel Noriega in Panama
- Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic: From the 1920s to the 1950s the U.S. government supported the repressive Trujillo regime. But beginning in 1959, the U.S. turned against him and his family, placing warships off the coast of the Dominican Republic to intimidate and assure the regime change it wanted.⁵¹
- Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines

⁵¹ "The Dominican Republic, 1961-1966" by Jerome N. Slater, in *Force Without War*, edited by Barry M. Blechman & Stephen S. Kaplan, pages 289-299.

- Suharto in Indonesia
- Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam
- Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran. Irony of the current U.S. government saying it wants to bring democracy to the Middle East.
- Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan

MISSILE GAP

Try to get some information on this.

DISINFORMATION

Ho Chi Minh was no more subservient to Moscow than Diem of South Vietnam. And Diem was no more a democrat than Ho Chi Minh.

Chiang and Mao.
Suharto and Sukarno.
Etc.

KENNEDY

Kennedy pledged in his 1961 inaugural address to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

IRAN

Include a segment on the overthrow of Mossadegh. See Sheldon Richman's article in \Ideas\Middle East.

Middle East

It is easy to think that attributing U.S. involvement in the Middle East to the desire for oil is simply a fantasy of anti-business leftists. But there really has been no other reason for the U.S. government to throw its weight around there.

Outside of its oil supply, the Middle East had no strategic importance during the Cold War, and has no strategic importance today.

The only alternative explanation for American involvement is the protection of Israel. But it hardly seems likely that the U.S. would have taken part in the overthrow of so many Middle Eastern governments merely to make Israel more secure — since very few of the allies the U.S. has courted have been friends of Israel.

NORWAY

The British intended to invade Norway, but the Nazis beat them to it. After the war Admiral Raeder was given a life sentence at Nuremberg because of the German invasion of Norway.⁵²

FLIP-FLOPS

Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. government kept changing the cast of characters — allies became enemies and enemies became allies.

Example of China and Russia. No explanation.

1984 Story

Background: Oceania, Eastasia (ally), Eurasia.

Hate: Two minutes of hate every day. Goldstein. Hate Week. War criminals to be hanged as the finale.

“On the sixth day of Hate Week, after the processions, the speeches, the shouting, the singing, the banners, the posters, the films, the waxworks, the rolling of drums and squealing of trumpets, the tramp of marching feet, the grinding of the caterpillars of tanks, the roar of massed planes, the booming of guns — after six days of this, when the great orgasm was quivering to its climax and the general hatred of Eurasia had boiled up into such delirium that if the crowd could have got their hands on the 2,000 Eurasian war-criminals who were to be publicly hanged on the last day of the proceedings, they would unquestionably have torn them to

⁵² Revisionism and the Historical Blackout” by Harry Elmer Barnes in *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, page 75.

pieces — at just this moment it had been announced that Oceania was not after all at war with Eurasia. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Eurasia was an ally.”

George Orwell, 1984.⁵³

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0451524934/qid=1049506125/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/104-9134828-8371940

McCARTHY

Relatively few people were affected by McCarthy’s efforts. Most of them worked for the government and should have been expected not to be security risks. And most of them turned out to be security risks. And yet, Americans are reminded of McCarthy over and over — even 50 years after the fact.

On the other hand, historian Ralph Raico has pointed out that “few even among educated Americans have ever heard of the shredding of civil liberties under [Woodrow] Wilson’s regime . . . affected tens of thousands.” And those tens of thousands were not security risks.⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

For the past 55 years, the U.S. government has been interfering with countries all over the world — overthrowing governments, installing brutal dictators, supporting repressive regimes with money and the weapons of oppression.

U.S. Use of Force Abroad

See Navy History list of 234 instances, many during the Cold War.

<http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/index.html#anchor12529>

Cold War

Battle Streamer: Armed Forces Expeditionary Service, 1958-

Berlin Airlift: Naval Aviation’s Involvement in

Bibliography: Postwar Years, 1946-1991

Cordon of Steel: The U.S. Navy and the Cuban Missile Crisis

⁵³ <http://www.blancmange.net/tmh/books/1984/1984Ch2.9.html>

⁵⁴ World War I: The Turning Point” by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, page 236.

Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962
Dominican Republic Intervention, 1965
Grenada: Operation Urgent Fury, 1983
Medal for Humane Action-Berlin Airlift
Medal: Armed Forces Expeditionary
The U.S. Naval Research Laboratory: Fulfilling the Roosevelts' Vision for American Naval Power (1923-2005)
Nuclear Weapons: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
Operation Crossroads: Bikini Atoll
Pueblo, USS - Some Experiences Reported by Crew
“The Role of the United States Navy in the Formation and Development of the Federal German Navy, 1945”
U-2 and Aircraft Carrier Deployment
U.S. Navy in the Cold War Era, 1945-1991

Dictators Supported by the U.S.

Ngo Dinh Diem of Vietnam
Shah of Iran
Manuel Noriega in Panama
Saddam Hussein in Iraq
Mobuto Sese Seko in Zaire
Suharto in Indonesia
Syngman Rhee in South Korea
General Park Chung Hee in South Korea

U.S. Involvement

Most Americans have been unaware of these interventions. But many, many people in the countries affected are aware of the U.S. involvement. They see U.S. troops, they see the U.S. support given to an oppressive dictator. They're told of the public pronouncements made by U.S. Presidents that America stands by the man who has his boot on the necks of the people.

Is it any wonder that when thugs like Osama Bin Laden say they intend to avenge these wrongs, they find widespread support in the form of money, volunteers, connections, networking, and other resources?

5

**The Korean War
Stopping the Communist Threat**

{If I can find a map program, I intend to include a simple map showing Korea's position in Asia, and an inset showing where Seoul, Pyongyang, and the 38th parallel are.}

The Korean peninsula juts south from China, with the Sea of Japan and the Japanese islands to the east. At its northern tip, it shares a tiny strip of border with the Siberian Russia. Korea lies at about the same latitude as California, but it has a far colder climate.

Japan occupied Korea in 1905, declared it a colony in 1910, and kept it until closing days of World War II,⁵⁵ when the Russians invaded the northern part of the peninsula and the U.S. invaded the south. At the war's end, the two occupation zones were separated by the 38th parallel.⁵⁶

Syngman Rhee was a Korean who had spent World War II in the U.S. , lobbying for support for Korea's independence from Japan. He returned to South Korea after the war ended, and exploited his American connections to become the de facto leader in the South. His political party entered a coalition with other parties and won a majority of seats in South Korea's National Assembly in May 1948. The Assembly then chose Rhee as the official President of South Korea, and the U.S. military departed.⁵⁷

That same year the Soviets withdrew their troops from the Northern sector — turning control over to Kim Il Sung, a Korean Communist.

⁵⁵ *The Statesman's Yearbook*, 1973/74, page 1116.

⁵⁶ *The New York Times World Almanac*, 2002, pages 601–602.

⁵⁷ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 355.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WAR

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean army invaded the South and the Korean War began.

The South Korean army retreated in panic. The Northerners drove southward toward Seoul, the Southern capital, not far below the 38th parallel. Kim Il Sung expected that once his forces captured the capital, thousands of South Koreans would rise up in rebellion, the Rhee government would collapse, and Kim's army would unify all of Korea under Communist rule.

The American military was still in Japan, and President Harry Truman ordered General Douglas MacArthur, the U.S. Far Eastern commander, to send troops to Korea to repel the Northern invaders.

The following day, the United Nations Security Council passed a U.S. resolution calling on UN member states to assist South Korea.

The UN, in effect, delegated to the U.S. the United Nations response to the invasion. And the Americans controlled the UN forces throughout the entire war.

American Response

President Truman ordered the military to expel the North Korean army from the south, but not to cross the 38th parallel and not to bomb military targets in North Korea. Despite the President's order, General MacArthur on his own authorized air attacks against North Korea, and Truman relented and gave him the belated authorization.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, South Korean and American troops continued to retreat. And by the end of July, just one month into the war, the UN troops had been pushed all the way back to the port of Pusan at Korea's southern tip. There they were able to stop the North Korean advance.

The Tide Turns

On September 15, 1950, MacArthur engineered a daring sea landing by UN forces at Inchon, 180 miles behind the North Korean lines. From there, the UN troops retook Seoul — and by October they had pushed the North Koreans back to the 38th parallel.

⁵⁸ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, pages 374–375.

The war might have ended then. The UN resolution had authorized the U.S. only to drive the North Koreans out of South Korea. But on September 29, 1950, President Truman gave MacArthur the go-ahead to cross the 38th parallel, invade North Korea, and bring about the unification of Korea. A week later America secured belated UN approval for invading North Korea.⁵⁹

Truman's advisors were confident that neither the Soviets nor the Chinese would send troops to rescue North Korea's government. The Chinese had declared repeatedly that they wouldn't tolerate an anti-communist regime on their border, but the Americans assumed the Chinese were bluffing.⁶⁰

UN troops crossed the 38th parallel, and encountered little resistance. By October 19, 1950, they had captured Pyongyang, North Korea's capital.

When MacArthur's forces approached the Yalu River at the border between North Korea and China, they were surprised by Chinese troops on the Korean side of the border. The Chinese government claimed these were volunteers who had offered to help the North Koreans.

Still convinced that the Soviets wouldn't get involved and that there were too few Chinese to worry about, MacArthur convinced President Truman to continue supporting the drive to the Chinese border, to occupy all of North Korea, and to reunify Korea.⁶¹

The Tide Turns again

But, in fact, the American drive to the Yalu River was part of a trap the Chinese had been planning. The North Koreans and Chinese engulfed the Americans and drove them back down the Korean peninsula — quickly retaking Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. Within a week the Americans were back almost to the 38th parallel.⁶²

MacArthur was still as optimistic as ever, promising on November 24, 1950, that American troops would be home by Christmas.⁶³ But the Chinese and North Korean troops continued pushing the UN forces deep into South Korea again.

⁵⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica 2001*, CD-ROM edition, "Korea, History of."

⁶⁰ *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 105. *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, pages 387-388.

⁶¹ *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 108.

⁶² *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 108.

⁶³ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 396.

Eventually the Chinese drive was halted, and once again the Americans managed to push the North Korean forces back to the 38th parallel.

At that point Truman lowered his objective to simply keeping the North Koreans and Chinese out of South Korea. The war became stalemated, with both sides locked near the 38th parallel.

But General MacArthur still intended to unify Korea. He advocated blockading and bombing China and enlisting the Nationalist Chinese forces on Taiwan. He allowed his differences with President Truman to be made public, and Truman fired him on April 11, 1951.⁶⁴

Ending the War

Armistice talks began in July 1951.

The most contentious issue was whether prisoners of war should be returned by force to their home countries. A forced return was required by the Geneva Conventions on war, but the U.S. was opposed to the idea. The talks and the war dragged on for two more years.

Americans had supported the war at the outset, but by 1952 they had grown weary of it. When Dwight Eisenhower ran for President in 1952, he promised to go to Korea to find a way to end the war. He won the election and he kept his promise, but his trip to Korea achieved little.

On March 5, 1953, Josef Stalin died and was replaced by Georgi Malenkov, who wanted to end the war so that he could focus on domestic problems. By then, everyone seemed to want the war to end — the Eisenhower administration, the Soviets, the Chinese, and the North Koreans, everyone but Syngman Rhee. He threatened to release the 100,000 or so Communist POWs if the U.S. didn't keep fighting until Korea was unified.

Despite Rhee's objections, an armistice was finally signed on July 27, 1953. The war ended with the 38th parallel the border between the two Koreas, just as it had been before the war.

⁶⁴ *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 100.

Reestablishing the old border allowed both sides to claim victory, since each claimed that the other had started the war. But in truth, each side had fought the war to unify the country under its own rule, and both had failed.

More than two million Koreans died in the war, over 100,000 children were orphaned, millions of Koreans lost their homes, more than 300,000 UN soldiers were killed, wounded, or missing, over 33,000 Americans died, the U.S. government spent \$70 billion of American taxpayers' money (the equivalent of \$450 billion today) — and yet neither side achieved what it wanted.⁶⁵

Everything was back to 1950 conditions — the borders, the oppressive governments, and the poverty of the two Koreas. The one difference is there were far fewer Koreans alive than before the war.

The Lies

As with all wars, the lies proliferated. Here we will cover only the most prominent, oft-repeated deceptions told to the American people at the time, and some that have endured since then as myths.

THE RHEE GOVERNMENT

Lie #1, Good vs. Evil: South Korea was “Free Korea” and Syngman Rhee was the great democratic patriot who was trying to save his country from the evil communists.

Rhee was no democrat and no patriot. In fact, while U.S. officials were praising him in public, they privately considered him a dangerous liability — a loose cannon who had to be restrained. Near the end of the war, the U.S. government had contingency plans to attack South Korean military forces, depose Rhee, and assassinate him if necessary.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* by Walter G. Hermes, page 283; quoted in *Century of War* by Gabriel Kolko, page 404. Also *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 389. And *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 422.

⁶⁶ *Century of War* by Gabriel Kolko, page 399.

Although Rhee won several elections, they all were suspect, and Rhee ruled the country with an iron hand.⁶⁷ He had little popular support, and his party was swamped in the parliamentary elections just before the start of the war. He probably wouldn't have been reelected in 1952 if he hadn't imposed martial law and used the police to produce a victory.⁶⁸

Rhee's government included individuals who had collaborated with the Japanese occupiers, and his police executed political prisoners without trial.⁶⁹ It was even against the law for any South Korean to speak well of Communist North Korea.⁷⁰

Rhee's government had bloody hands. When the Japanese departed in 1945, the people of Cheju, an island off Korea's coast, set up their own government. On April 3, 1948, Rhee's South Korean police fired into a Cheju crowd rallying to commemorate the end of Japanese rule. The island rose in rebellion, and Rhee's police eventually slaughtered more than 30,000 people — about 10% of the island's population. Most of the island's villages were burned to the ground.

Until the late 1990s, it was against the law for any South Korean to even mention the Cheju massacre. In 1995 — almost 50 years after the fact — a government investigation publicized the bloody details.⁷¹

In 1960 a national rebellion overthrew the Rhee's government.⁷²

But all through the war, Rhee was characterized by the U.S. government and the American press as a great leader who was fighting for the freedom of the Korean people.

NO RECOGNITION OF HISTORY

Lie #2, No background: The North Korean attack was unprovoked, and was a surprise to South Korea and the U.S. military.

⁶⁷ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, pages 356–357.

⁶⁸ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, pages 412–413.

⁶⁹ *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 25.

⁷⁰ *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 100.

⁷¹ *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 99–100, relying on information at the Korea Web Weekly, www.kimself.com/1997/cheju.htm.

⁷² *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 25.

As is so often the case, the initial incident — in this case the North Korean invasion — portrayed out of context. There was virtually no recognition of the historical context in which the war occurred. It was simply assumed that an evil country had attacked a free country.

President Truman referred to it as “unprovoked aggression” and “lawless action.”⁷³

In truth, Syngman Rhee was just as determined to attack North Korea and reunite the country under his rule. Indeed Rhee was so belligerent prior to the war that American officials had refused to arm the South Koreans.⁷⁴

On May 3, 1949 (a year before the war began), North Korean military forces crossed the 38th parallel for the first time. The incident didn’t lead to much fighting, but it did inspire two battalions of unhappy South Korean soldiers to defect to the North.

Over the following year there was almost continual fighting of one sort or another along the North-South border. It was only a matter of time until full-scale war broke out. The North Korean invasion was no surprise to American officials. In fact, U.S military intelligence had seen the massing of North Korean troops on the 38th parallel. The U.S. could have rushed troops to South Korea to prevent the invasion, but chose not to.

On January 12, 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speech at the National Press Club in which he defined America’s defense perimeter. It excluded both Korea and Taiwan (the island home of the Nationalist Chinese government after it had lost the mainland to the communists).⁷⁵

General MacArthur also had left out Korea when he publicly defined America’s defense perimeter.⁷⁶

Syngman Rhee’s unpopularity and the Americans’ distrust of him gave Kim Il Sung good reason to believe he could win a war easily. He thought that once his forces invaded

⁷³ *Public Papers of Harry S. Truman, Volume VI*, pages 491–492; cited in *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 367.

⁷⁴ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 356.

⁷⁵ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 357.

⁷⁶ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 356.

South Korea, there would be a massive uprising in the South to overthrow the Rhee government.⁷⁷ He thought the war would be over in one month.⁷⁸

The American people weren't given any of this background. No politicians or journalists discussed it. It was simply assumed that the North Korean invasion was part of the evil Communists' plans to take over the world.

THE WORLD AT STAKE

Lie #3, The domino effect: If we don't stop the communists in Korea, other countries will fall and they'll take over most of the world — leaving the U.S. isolated and facing an overwhelming foe. As Truman said, "We are fighting in Korea so that we won't have to fight in Wichita."⁷⁹

Later Truman justified sending American troops to Korea:

Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war.⁸⁰

On June 27 Truman told some Congressmen, "If we let Korea down, the Soviets will keep right on going and swallow up one piece of Asia after another" — continuing on to the Middle East and Europe.⁸¹

He asserted that by fighting back, the U.S. not only would stop the dominos from falling, it would prove to the Soviets that further aggressions would be pointless. He said, "If we

⁷⁷ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 368.

⁷⁸ *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 97.

⁷⁹ Speech in Oakland, California, October 4, 1952, *The Public Papers of Harry S. Truman*, volume VIII, pages 708–709; cited in *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 415.

⁸⁰ Since 1945 by Robert A. Divine, page 35; quoted in *Promised Land, Crusader State* by Walter A. McDougall, page 165.

⁸¹ *The Press and the Cold War* by James Aronson, page 113; cited in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 390.

are tough enough now, if we stand up to them like we did in Greece three years ago, they won't take any next steps."⁸²

And when the Korean War ended, U.S. officials tried to picture the war as a victory for freedom — a monkey wrench in the Communist plans to take over the world. General James A. Van Fleet, the United Nations commander at the end of the war, said:

Korea has been a blessing. There had to be a Korea either here or some place in the world.⁸³

And Ambassador Charles Bohlen later said, "It was the Korean War and not World War II that made us a world political-military power."⁸⁴

Soviet Attitude

Historians are divided on how Stalin felt about North Korea's invasion of the South. There's evidence he tried to dissuade Kim Il Sung from invading, but that he wanted the Communist Chinese to help the North Koreans in any conflict with the South. Once the Korean War began, the Soviets provided military supplies and advisors.⁸⁵

But there are reasons to believe Stalin was opposed to the invasion — and probably was surprised at its timing.

In January 1950 the Soviets walked out of the United Nations Security Council to protest the UN's refusal to give Chiang Kai-shek's seat to the Communist Chinese government. Consequently, the Soviets weren't in the UN at the time of the Korean invasion — and so the U.S. was able to get the Security Council to approve UN action to repel the North Koreans.

Had the Soviets known of the invasion in advance, they would have stayed at the UN to use their veto to stop any plans for the UN to resist the North Koreans.

⁸² Notes of George Elsey, June 26, 1950, box 71 of the George M. Elsey papers at the Harry S. Truman Library; cited in *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 100.

⁸³ *The Press and the Cold War* by James Aronson, page 113; cited in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 390.

⁸⁴ *Witness to History*; quoted in *The Fifty-Year Wound* by Derek Leebaert, page 84.

⁸⁵ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 369.

Truman gave the order to intervene in Korea prior to securing the UN resolution. But there was no way for Stalin to anticipate that the U.S. was willing to go to war with or without a UN resolution. In fact, as we saw, American officials had stated publicly that they didn't consider Korea to be worth defending.

No matter how Stalin felt about the invasion, it's obvious that neither Kim Il Sung nor Mao Tse-tung was a puppet of Moscow — dancing to Stalin's orders.

Kim Il Sung cooperated with the Soviets to get military equipment and other support in fighting the South Koreans as well as his own political opponents in the North. But he wasn't on call to do Stalin's bidding.⁸⁶

In addition, the Soviets were still trying not to rock the boat — hoping that Truman's plan to greatly increase military spending would be rejected by Congress. They also didn't want to give the U.S. a pretext to attack the Soviet Union itself. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence agencies were well aware of the Soviet determination to avoid war with America.

As a result of the War Scare of the late 1940s, a majority of Americans believed Truman's pitch that America had to fight in Korea. If not, we'd eventually be left with no allies, and we'd have to surrender to Communist domination.

But whatever the Korean War was, there's no evidence that it was conceived as part of a Soviet master plan to take over the world.

POLICE ACTION

Lie #4, The Truman Administration acted Constitutionally: Everything Truman did was legal and constitutional.

President Truman sent American troops into battle without bothering to ask Congress for a declaration of war — merely reporting to Congress what he had done.

When confronted with this Constitutional point, he said the Korean conflict wasn't a war, it was a "police action" — coining an expression that has served war-fighting Presidents for the past half-century. No one believed him at the time, and the conflict has always been known as "The Korean War."

⁸⁶ *Century of War* by Gabriel Kolko, page 399.

Senator Robert A. Taft warned that if Truman were allowed to send American soldiers into battle without a declaration of war, future Presidents “could send troops to . . . Indo-China or anywhere else in the world, without the slightest voice of Congress in the matter.”⁸⁷ Few people took him seriously, although journalist James Reston called Truman’s bypassing of Congress a “transformation of the spirit of the United States government.”⁸⁸ How right he was.

Truman frequently justified the lack of a Congressional declaration of war by citing the United Nations Security Council vote as his authorization — even though he had ordered U.S. troops into battle before the UN resolution.⁸⁹

Even if he had waited for UN authorization, the U.S. Constitution gives Congress ~ not the UN ~ the power to commit the U.S. to a war. In fact, the United Nations Participation Act of 1945 included a requirement that Congress must approve any UN use of American forces (a provision that has been violated frequently). The UN Charter itself says that member nations can commit troops only consistently with their “respective constitutional processes.”⁹⁰

Truman’s actions were unconstitutional and authoritarian — no matter what he called them.

SAVING THE COUNTRY

Lie #5, America saved South Korea: By its intervention, the U.S. saved South Korea.

America did repel the Communist invaders. But it certainly didn’t save the country.

To save Korea from communism, the American military destroyed it. Both the North and South were devastated by the war — and especially by American air power.

⁸⁷ *The American Age* by Walter LaFeber, page 490; cited in *Promised Land, Crusader State* by Walter A. McDougall, page 166.

⁸⁸ *The American Style of Foreign Policy* by Robert Dallek, page 183; cited in *Promised Land, Crusader State* by Walter A. McDougall, pages 165-166.

⁸⁹ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 374.

⁹⁰ *War and Responsibility* by John Hart Ely, pages 151-152; cited in “Harry S. Truman: Advancing the Revolution” by Ralph Raico in *Reassessing the Presidency*, edited by John V. Denson, page 565.

General Curtis LeMay, commander of the Strategic Air Command, said, “We burned down just about every city in North and South Korea both . . . We killed off over a million civilian Koreans and drove several million more from their homes.”⁹¹

General William F. Dean, who was taken prisoner by the North Koreans, described what happened to the northern city of Huichon:

The city I’d seen before — two-storied buildings, a prominent main street — wasn’t there anymore . . . I think no important bridge between Pyongyang and Kanggye had been missed and most of the towns were just rubble or snowy open spaces where buildings had been . . . The little towns, once full of people, were unoccupied shells. The villagers lived in entirely new temporary villages, hidden in canyons.⁹²

Overwhelming U.S. air power devastated virtually everything. Power plants, irrigation dams, roads, bridges, railroads, and other civilian facilities were bombed, contrary to the accepted rules of war.⁹³

America’s allies complained vehemently about this destruction.⁹⁴

Many South Koreans were shot by American soldiers. As in later wars, the Americans feared guerrillas were masquerading as civilians, understandably, the Americans often shot first rather than chance being killed by a guerrilla.

No matter how harsh the Communist rule would have been, it’s hard to see how the South Koreans would have been any worse off than what they suffered through the war at the hands of the South Korean government and the American military.

⁹¹ *Korea: The War before Vietnam* by Callm A. MacDonald, page 235; cited in “Harry S. Truman: Advancing the Revolution” by Ralph Raico in *Reassessing the Presidency*, edited by John V. Denson, page 566.

⁹² Quoted in *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, page 628, cited in *Century of War* by Gabriel Kolko, page 405.

⁹³ *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, page 669, cited in *Century of War* by Gabriel Kolko, page 408. *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, pages 395, 413.

⁹⁴ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 413.

THE UNITED FRONT

Lie #6, The Coalition: The Allied side was a broad coalition of free-world nations fighting as the United Nations against communism. It showed that the free nations of the world, acting collectively, could thwart aggression.

Only fifteen nations sent troops,⁹⁵ and only Great Britain, Australia, Turkey, and the Philippines sent significant numbers.⁹⁶ Nearly 90% of the non-Korean troops and casualties were American.

Non-American UN troops suffered only 3,000 dead and 15,000 wounded, while over 33,000 Americans died.⁹⁷

Despite the term “United Nations Command,” the entire military operation was run by the United States. All major strategic and political decisions were made by U.S. officials, not the UN. The UN had no control over what its “Command” was doing.⁹⁸

Not only the war itself, but the armistice negotiations were conducted by the U.S. And the final agreement was signed by the United States, North Korea, and China — but not by South Korea (the country that was invaded) or by the United Nations (the entity supposedly resisting the North Korean invasion).⁹⁹

The concept of the broad coalition — a myth that’s reappeared frequently — was needed to secure popular support for the war in the U.S. Truman first assured Americans that South Koreans would do most of the ground fighting and that America’s primary role would be to supply weapons and air power.

When that didn’t pan out, the propaganda changed to Americans fighting alongside men from many nations — all determined to protect the free countries of the world.

⁹⁵ The Fifty-Year Wound by Derek Leebaert, page 93. *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 101.

⁹⁶ *A Basic History of the United States: The Welfare State, 1929–1985* by Clarence B. Carson, page 163.

⁹⁷ *The Fifty-Year Wound* by Derek Leebaert, page 148.

⁹⁸ *Delusions of Grandeur* by Ted Galen Carpenter, page 23. *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 101.

⁹⁹ *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, page 102.

MacARTHUR FIRING

Lie #7, MacArthur was reckless, and Truman couldn't tolerate that: Truman fired MacArthur for insubordination, for refusing to obey a Truman order to quit complaining publicly about the war strategy. But the implication — fed by administration officials was that what MacArthur wanted was reckless and could easily trigger a new world war.

Truman's public rationale for the firing — then and afterward — was that MacArthur was insubordinate and too aggressive. But Truman was just as reckless. Truman implemented several of MacArthur's plans after the firing.

It's true that MacArthur requested permission to drop 30 atomic bombs on North Korean and Chinese targets.¹⁰⁰ But it's just as true that Truman considered using atomic weapons.¹⁰¹ He even said publicly that every weapon in the American arsenal would be considered fair game in the war.¹⁰²

Truman's statements so alarmed British Prime Minister Clement Atlee, that Truman promised to consult him before dropping an A-bomb. Atlee asked Truman to put his promise in writing. Truman told him, "If a man's word isn't any good, it isn't made any better by writing it down" — the classic intimidation tactic of a con man.¹⁰³

Just prior to firing MacArthur, Truman had authorized the transfer of nine atomic bombs to Strategic Air Command planes on Guam and Okinawa.¹⁰⁴

And when Dwight Eisenhower became President in 1953, he also was prepared to use the atomic bomb if the North Koreans wouldn't sign an armistice.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ *Memorandum of Dean Rusk*, December 19, 1950; cited in *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 401.

¹⁰¹ *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 111.

¹⁰² *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 397.

¹⁰³ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 400.

¹⁰⁴ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 403.

¹⁰⁵ Truman's decision is from a memorandum by George Elsey, November 28, 1950, in box 72 of the George M. Elsey papers at the Harry S. Truman Library; cited in *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 109. Eisenhower's was revealed in a television interview he gave to ABC, September 18, 1966; cited in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 382.

Until he died, Truman maintained the fiction that MacArthur was a wild man who had to be fired, and that Truman never would have escalated the war. Because the atomic weapons weren't actually used, Truman rewrote his previous statements and denied that he had ever intended to use the bomb — saying in his farewell address, “We are not made that way; we are a moral people.”¹⁰⁶

And it wasn't just the bomb. Truman was as rabidly anti-communist as MacArthur. In his diary he fantasized about an “all out war” in which the U.S. wiped out every large Soviet and Chinese city.¹⁰⁷

If MacArthur was a loose cannon, Truman was a loose battleship.

BATTLE-READY TROOPS

Lie #8, The brave American troops: The American troops were well prepared and fought bravely against larger numbers.

The truth is that American troops were sent into battle ill-equipped and ill-prepared physically and mentally — a common occurrence in American wars.

The military draft (conscription) was terminated when World War II ended in 1945, but it was reinstated during Truman's War Scare in 1948.¹⁰⁸ The troops that went to Korea in 1950 were mostly draftees who in many cases had only eight weeks of basic training.

I was drafted in May 1953. Fortunately for me, the war ended just as I was coming out of basic training.

My training in no way prepared me for what I would have faced in Korea. During basic training I fired my rifle only twice. No preparation was given for fighting in a Korean winter. Basic training was more like a Boy Scout camp from Hell — with drill sergeants demeaning the troops but teaching them little that could help them win a war or even survive one.

¹⁰⁶ January 15, 1953; *The Public Papers of Harry S. Truman*, volume VIII, pages 1090–1201; cited in *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 417.

¹⁰⁷ Diary entry for January 27, 1952, *The Public Papers of Harry S. Truman*, box 333; cited in *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 410.

¹⁰⁸ Cold war book.

And this was three years after the war had started. The troops that went to Korea in 1950 would have been even less battle ready, and the evidence bears that out.

Brainwashing

One of the legends of the Korean War was “brainwashing.”

Lie #9, Brainwashing: Well-prepared American troops were staunchly anti-communist, but were subjected to diabolical brainwashing sessions.

It was said that the North Koreans applied psychological pressure on the American POWs (Prisoners of War) to convince them that the Communists were right and the Americans were wrong. But of the roughly 7,000 American prisoners, only a few of them were said to come back from Korea as communists.

However, what was not reported until long after the end of the war was the passivity of the American prisoners — who were utterly unprepared for the possibility of being taken prisoner.

American POW's were kept in what might be called “minimum security” facilities, but not a single UN prisoner bothered to escape. About 40% of the Americans died in captivity, mostly from despair — not from starvation or brutality. There seems little doubt that their despair was largely due to a lack of understanding of why they were fighting.

A majority of them collaborated in some way with the enemy — by sending letters home denouncing the United States or making broadcasts for the enemy. There was virtually no discipline in the chain of command among the prisoners.¹⁰⁹

When the war ended, the military censors forbade the returning POWs from talking privately to journalists about their experiences in captivity. Any interviews had to be conducted with a censor and counter-intelligence agent present.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Letter to the *London Times*, November 25, 1971, by C. Cunningham, former POW Intelligence psychologist; cited in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 383.

¹¹⁰ Article by Keyes Beech, *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 11, 1953; cited in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 384.

THE BATTLE PLAN

Lie #10, The plan: The U.S. high command knew what it was doing.

When the war began, it was assumed that Americans would fight as they had in World War II — with American ground troops advancing up the Korean peninsula until North Korea was conquered. But Korea isn't France, and fighting in a Third World country was something quite new for American military of the 1950s.

The Americans assumed that their superior firepower was sufficient for victory, that the South Koreans would do most of the actual fighting, that neither China nor the Soviet Union would enter the war, and that the North Koreans would welcome the American "liberators."

All these assumptions proved false.

CENSORSHIP

The lies were easy to sell to the American people because Americans heard very little that the Truman administration and the military didn't want them to hear.

There was no press censorship in the early days of the war, but the military asked reporters to adhere to a voluntary code. This was merely a request that reporters not reveal anything that might give useful information to the enemy — something no reporter was likely to do anyway.

With no formal censorship, early news reports told of panic-stricken young GIs who were out of their depth in Korea. Some reporters filed reports of American retreats that turned into routs, soldiers who couldn't bring themselves to fire their rifles, and severe shortages of equipment.

The Army didn't need censorship to keep the reporters in line. The newsmen were dependent upon the Army for transportation, housing, and even facilities for transmitting their reports home. Any reporter who displeased a field commander might find himself out of business.

And so the military in Korea barred reporters who filed negative reports. MacArthur's headquarters accused them of hurting troop morale and giving comfort to the enemy.

And on July 25, 1950, just one month after the start of the war, the Army amended the voluntary code to prohibit any criticism of decisions made by United Nations field commanders or of conduct by the soldiers.¹¹¹

Once MacArthur's drive to capture all of North Korea was halted by Chinese troops in November 1950, it became apparent that the war wasn't going to be short. And from that point on, U.S. forces strove to put a smiley face on the conflict.

MacArthur denied that the Chinese entry into the war was a problem. And the Army and Air Force began issuing bulletins that reported specific numbers of enemy casualties — something they couldn't possibly know with any precision. But lacking alternative information, the press reported the inflated figures to the public.

The war correspondents eventually became more aggressive. They began writing about the inability of the UN troops — the South Koreans in particular — to stand up to the North Korean and Chinese armies.

Korean Oppression

They also zeroed in on the corruption and repression of Syngman Rhee's government.

They wrote of the toxic black-market liquor sold to American troops, the alarming number of South Korean army deserters, and the summary execution of over 2,000 political prisoners shot by South Korean soldiers and police during the first few weeks of the war.¹¹²

Peter Webb of the United Press wrote:

White-helmeted military police — their nationality is not known — with orders to keep UN troops at a distance, stood guard today while a South Korean firing squad executed another batch of prisoners on Seoul's

¹¹¹ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, pages 366–367.

¹¹² *New York Times*, April 21, 2000, page A6; cited in *The Fifty-Year Wound* by Derek Leebaert, page 93.

“Execution Hill,” according to eye-witnesses. Women and children were among those shot in a previous mass execution. [A British soldier said] “It was just mass murder.”¹¹³

Other journalists began reporting about the atrocities they witnessed — and of seeing British troops intervening to stop South Korean soldiers from executing South Korean civilians.

Australian Alan Dower of The Melbourne Herald reported that in Seoul he came across a column of women, some carrying babies, being escorted by South Korean policemen. He asked what was going on and was told, “These Communists, they go to be shot, executed.” When asked how the police knew they were Communists, a policeman told Dower, “People say. People in street point and say that person Communist.”

Dower followed the column to a prison, where he stopped the executions by threatening the warden with a gun. He then pressured UN officials to stop the executions by promising that if they did, he’d withhold the story of what he’d seen.¹¹⁴

However, other correspondents were reporting the South Korean atrocities they’d seen. The reports created widespread revulsion in the U.S. and Britain, and support for the war in America began to erode rapidly.

Full Censorship

The military command reacted by silencing the messenger.

On December 21, 1950, MacArthur’s headquarters imposed full military censorship on the reporters. Everything — press reports, photographs, newsreel footage, broadcasts — had to be approved by the censors before it could be transmitted home. No “derogatory comments” could be made about the UN troops, the commanders, or the way the war was being conducted. The correspondents were now completely under the jurisdiction of the Army, and punishments — including the possibility of court-martial — were threatened for disobedience.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ *The Yorkshire Post*, December 18, 1950; cited in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, pages 374–375.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Alan Dower to Phillip Knightley, January 4, 1974, quoted in *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, pages 375–376.

¹¹⁵ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, pages 345–345.

The rationale, of course, was that a free press could unwittingly reveal information to the enemy. But no one had identified a single such slip.

From then on, the military not only fashioned the battle plans, but the news stories as well.¹¹⁶ The newspapers reported in general about specific battles, and the movement of the front up and down the peninsula — but problems with American troops or with American strategy went unpublicized.

Peter Webb, the UP reporter, was arrested merely for reporting that General Walton H. Walker had died in a jeep accident. Other correspondents were expelled from Korea when they wrote negatively about the American war effort.¹¹⁷

And so Americans at home heard no more about South Korean atrocities, about black-market rackets, about untrained and unprepared U.S. soldiers being routed, about the bad feeling among troops of the different nations fighting North Korea, about American soldiers getting hooked on drugs,¹¹⁸ about ill-treatment of refugees by South Koreans and Americans, or about American jets that bombed Greek or British troops by mistake.¹¹⁹

No articles were published in America questioning the strategic decisions of American commanders — such as MacArthur's march into the Chinese trap early in the war.

It was almost fifty years later that newly declassified military documents revealed that American officers had witnessed some of the executions of political prisoners by South Korean soldiers and police.¹²⁰

Napalm bombing, which later became infamous in Vietnam, was first used by the U.S. in Korea. Napalm destroys foliage and human beings through fire and intense heat. But napalm was seen as a horror during the Vietnam War partly because Americans thought its use was unprecedented. Military censorship had prevented them from knowing about its use in Korea.

The Press Helps the Cause

¹¹⁶ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 377; and *The Captive Press* by Ted Galen Carpenter, page 51.

¹¹⁷ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 376 and page 381.

¹¹⁸ *Korea: The War before Vietnam* by Callum A. MacDonald, page 224; cited in *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948* by Frank Kofsky, page 248.

¹¹⁹ *The Fifty-Year Wound* by Derek Leebaert, page 94.

¹²⁰ *New York Times*, April 21, 2000, page A6.

It wasn't just the censors that were keeping the truth from the American people.

Even when reports managed to get through to the home front, newspaper and broadcast editors in the U.S. and Britain often killed the stories. Either they thought they were doing their patriotic duty or they refused to issue negative reports on a war they unanimously supported.

For example, when BBC reporter Rene Curforth sent home a broadcast describing a napalm attack he had witnessed, the BBC refused to broadcast it.¹²¹

The situation was similar in America. General MacArthur remembered fondly a letter he received from the managing editor of the Chicago Tribune early in the war, saying that the paper had already imposed self-censorship and would not publish anything derogatory about the American effort. MacArthur — who apparently had strange ideas about the word “free” — wrote in his memoirs that the Tribune’s self-censorship demonstrated that “a free press exhibited its fullest commitment to the burdens of a free society.”¹²²

In addition, many of the reporters on the scene were unwilling to look too hard for the truth. They simply repackaged and sent home whatever the military authorities gave them. War by press release didn't start in the 21st century; it's almost as old as war itself.

United Press reporter Robert C. Miller said in a speech in 1952:

We are not giving them [the public] the true facts about Korea, we haven't been for the past sixteen months and there will be little improvement in the war coverage unless radical changes are made in the military censorship policy. . . .

There are certain facts and stories from Korea that editors and publishers have printed which were pure fabrication. . . . Many of us who sent the stories knew they were false, but we had to write them because they were official releases from responsible military headquarters and were released

¹²¹ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 378.

¹²² *Reminiscences* by Douglas MacArthur, page 339; quoted in *The Captive Press* by Ted Galen Carpenter, pages 49–50.

for publication even though the people responsible knew they were untrue.”¹²³

In many cases the reporters fancied themselves part of the military — carrying guns and wearing battle attire. They became buddies with the soldiers and were reluctant to report anything negativism about them.

Most soldiers looked down on the Koreans, and the reporters shared their attitude. The brutality of the South Korean police and soldiers caused the Americans to think of all Koreans — the “gooks” — as less than human.

Strict censorship was imposed during the lengthy armistice talks. Reporters weren’t allowed even to talk to the UN negotiators, and so no one really knew what each side was asking for. Thus it wasn’t revealed until after the war that negotiations had dragged on for so long because the UN negotiators had been demanding that the border be moved 32 miles north of the 38th parallel.

Instead, the negotiators posted a map falsely indicating that the North Koreans were delaying the armistice by making unrealistic demands.¹²⁴

JUSTIFYING GOVERNMENT EXPANSION

Although the war changed little in Korea, it changed much in the U.S.

The Truman administration profited handsomely from the war. It seized on the North Korean invasion in June 1950 to justify expanding the military budget and the federal government itself.

On September 8, 1950, Congress passed the Defense Production Act, giving the President authority over almost all economic resources in the country.¹²⁵

On December 15, Truman declared a national emergency — citing “the increasing menace of the forces of communist aggression.” This gave him dictatorial powers over

¹²³ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 386.

¹²⁴ *The First Casualty* by Phillip Knightley, page 386.

¹²⁵ “The Defense Production Act: by Leon N. Karadbil and Roderick L. Vawter in *Mobilization and the National Defense*, edited by Hardy L. Merritt and Luther F. Carter, pages 37-41; cited in *Crisis and Leviathan* by Robert Higgs, page 245.

the economy, and the authority to take over any radio station in the country. The “temporary” military draft was made permanent, the draft age was lowered from 19 to 18, and the term of service was extended to 24 months from 21. Truman asked that everyone in America sacrifice for the common good.¹²⁶

The government assumed dictatorial powers to control what companies could produce and what consumers could buy. You had to get permission from the government to get a car loan or a mortgage. And, of course, the politicians imposed wage and price controls.¹²⁷

Annual military spending had amounted to only \$13.7 billion before the war, but it was up to \$52.8 billion by the end of the war — and it never fell below \$42 billion again.

U.S. military production was seven fold from the start of the Korean War to 1953. But only a small part of that production went to Korea. The rest was used to enhance overt and covert military operations in other parts of the world.¹²⁸

The overall federal budget rose from \$42.6 billion to \$76.1 billion, and spending thereafter never fell below \$68 billion.¹²⁹

HARRY S. TRUMAN

Follow the career of Harry Truman and you find the dropping of the atomic bomb, the origin of the Cold War, and the Korean War. You also find the enduring myths.

- He always told the truth. (“I never did give them hell. I just told the truth, and they thought it was hell.”)
- He took responsibility for everything he did. (“The buck stops here.”)
- He was a brave fighter. (“If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.”)
- He was an avid student of history. (“There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know.”)

¹²⁶ *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 400. *The Fifty-Year Wound* by Derek Leebaert, page 96. *Crisis and Leviathan* by Robert Higgs, page 245.

¹²⁷ *Crisis and Leviathan* by Robert Higgs, page 245.

¹²⁸ *The Specter of Communism* by Melvyn P. Leffler, page 118.

¹²⁹ *The Statistical Abstract* of the U.S., 1997, CD-ROM version, table 533.

- He was admirably modest. (“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.”)¹³⁰
- He fought fiercely on behalf of the “little man.”
- He was more realistic about the Communist threat than almost any other President.

Truman’s Contemporary Image

Truman left the White House after the 1952 elections as one of the most unpopular Presidents in American history. Most Americans thought of him as a crude, no-class, hack politician who had arrived in the White House by accident.

The public remembered the music critic Truman’s daughter, Margaret, was pursuing a career as a classical singer. On December 5, 1950, she gave a recital in Washington, D.C. which drew on unflattering review from The Washington Post’s music critic, Paul Hume. Truman sent Hume a letter on White House stationery, that said in part:

I’ve just read your lousy review of Margaret’s concert. I’ve come to the conclusion that you are an “eight ulcer man on four ulcer pay.” . . .

Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you’ll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a supporter below!¹³¹

No one had any illusions that he was an intellectual, a straight-shooter, or a statesman. He retained his poor image for another twenty years or so.

Rehabilitating Truman’s Image

In the 1970s *Plain Speaking* novelist and journalist Merle Miller published a book of interviews with Truman. Miller’s hero-worship was evident. He would ask Truman a series of leading questions — to which Truman could reply in the I-don’t-care-what-the-consequences-are-I-just-tell-the-truth fashion.

¹³⁰ http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Harry_S_Truman/1 and http://www.thinkexist.com/English/Author/x/Author_3044_2.htm and <http://www.intelligentsianetwork.com/truman/truman.htm>.

¹³¹ <http://www.rjgeib.com/heroes/truman/truman-daughter.html>

For some reason, the liberal intelligentsia of the time swallowed this self-promotion. Miller's book was on the New York Times best-seller list for months in 1973-1974, and was #1 for several months. Harry Truman was transformed into one of America's "near-great" Presidents.

It wasn't long before Republicans began lauding him as an example of a "good Democrat" (in contrast to whatever Democrats the Republicans were criticizing at any given time).

Truman's Anti-Communism

Central to the new view of Truman was that he had recognized and faced up to the Communist threat. It's true that he authored foreign policy that continued throughout the Cold War and beyond, but there is no evidence his policies were realistic or even that they were motivated by a genuine concern about communism.

His anti-communism may have been no more than a political ploy. It might even have been prompted by some slight that he may have felt at Stalin's hands — since he never seemed to forget anything that rubbed him the wrong way.

But it tells a lot about him that the fantasies he confided to his diary didn't include generating a coup in Moscow or Beijing — or assassinating Stalin or Mao. Instead he dreamed of wiping out every major Soviet and Chinese city — which would have killed tens of millions of people.¹³²

The Self-Promoter

Truman was an intellectually challenged street-fighter with a very short fuse who was thrust into the Presidency when many leading Democrats wanted someone — anyone — to replace the extreme left-winger Henry Wallace as Franklin Roosevelt's Vice-President in 1944. Roosevelt died three months after his fourth inauguration, and Truman became President.

Of course, today he is known as an intellectually curious man who was an avid student of history. How do we know that? Because he kept telling us so.

¹³² Diary entry for January 27, 1952, *The Public Papers of Harry Truman*, box 333; cited in *Another Such Victory* by Arnold A. Offner, page 410.

How do we know that he always told the truth? Because he kept telling us so.

How do we know that he never passed the buck? Because he kept telling us so.

In truth, Truman appears to have made any presidential decision on the basis of one of three standards:

- How can I make the Republicans look bad?
- How can I use this situation to settle some long-standing personal grudge?
- How can I expand the power of the Presidency?

As we've seen, he lied about his reasons for dropping the atomic bomb, he lied about the Soviet threat in Europe in order to expand the military budget, he lied frequently throughout the Korean War.

He had absolutely no respect for the Constitution of the United States. He imposed wage, price, and credit controls; he tried to take over the entire health-care industry; and he expanded government in dozens of other ways. He confiscated the American steel industry, claiming the (divine?) right to seize any industry he wanted.

He tried in peacetime to draft striking railroad workers into the Army, created the military-industrial complex, and initiated the destructive foreign aid program.

He posed as a communist-fighter while stopping the Senate from investigating the hundreds of security risks that infested his administration. He even rushed to the defense of the Soviet spy Alger Hiss — calling the investigation of Hiss a red herring.

Many of his subordinates were found to be profiting personally from their government positions. When Warren Harding (whose administration will forever be known for its scandals) found his subordinates turning profits, he promptly fired them. Truman didn't fire his subordinates; he defended them. And rarely now does anyone refer to those scandals; when mentioned, it's usually to compliment Truman for standing by his friends.

His most remarkable achievement was winning the 1948 presidential election, despite his unpopularity. But even that feat is overrated. He was running against Thomas E. Dewey, the latest in a series of me-too Republicans who made little attempt to oppose Truman's

unconstitutional acts, his lying, and his fits of temper. In fact, Dewey didn't bother to campaign much at all — so confident was he that Truman could never be reelected.

In 1952, Truman was still eligible under the 22nd Amendment to run for another term. There was no chance that he would, because he was almost universally disliked by then. But in retirement he was able to fashion a new image of himself.

Harry Truman exemplifies the power of self-promotion. We know he was honest, responsible, clean as a whistle, and dedicated to the little people. We know these things because he told us so — over and over and over and over and over and over again.¹³³

CONCLUSION

It was only after the Korean War was over — and, in some cases, only decades later — that Americans learned U.S. soldiers had fought and died not to defend a free country, but a tyranny as bad as the one America opposed — that the North Korean invasion was no surprise to American officials — that, far from being determined to protect Korea from a Communist advance, the U.S. changed its attitude and objectives in Korea several times — that American soldiers were unprepared, ill-trained, and ill-equipped to fight in Korea — that Korea was devastated by the American military — that Truman had lied about the danger posed by the North Korean invasion — and that Harry Truman was prepared to use the Atomic Bomb in the war.

By the time these truths surfaced, no one really cared any more. They were too focused on another country — Vietnam — where Americans were supposedly fighting and dying to preserve “freedom and democracy.”

COURT HISTORIANS

On January 14, 1951, it became public knowledge that President Truman was in the process of setting up a group of court historians to provide a proper history of world events that would not include the kind of events that historians had revealed about the

¹³³ An excellent study of Harry Truman is “Harry S. Truman: Advancing the Revolution” by Ralph Raico in *Reassessing the Presidency*, edited by John V. Denson, pages 547-586.

two world wars. Truman said the purpose was to protect Americans from the lies promulgated by “Communist imperialist historians.”¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Revisionism and the Historical Blackout” by Harry Elmer Barnes in *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, pages 65–66.

6

The Vietnam War

Liberation

Begin and end the chapter with liberation.

War Aims

“Fighting for freedom for the Vietnamese people.”

South Vietnam was a dictator. People executed in the city square for violating the price controls.

The aftermath: See newsletter article on economic freedom in the unified Vietnam.

Gulf of Tonkin

THE LIGHTHOUSE

“Enlightening Ideas for Public Policy . . .”

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DANIEL ELLSBERG AND CO-SPEAKERS EXPOSE GOVERNMENT LIES

Transcript Now Online

Daniel Ellsberg — the former Pentagon employee who exposed government lies about progress on the Vietnam War by leaking the Pentagon Papers to the national media — made several startling revelations at last month's Independent Policy Forum, "Secrets, Freedom and Empire: Lessons for Today from Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers," the transcription of which is now available at: www.amazon.com/Secrets-Memoir-Vietnam-Pentagon-Papers/dp/book-citations/0670030309-143k

Perhaps Ellsberg's most vivid revelation concerned his first day at work in the Pentagon — August 4th, 1964 — when he received cables from a U.S. naval flotilla in the Gulf of Tonkin, off the coast of Vietnam. The cables claimed that the USS Maddox — which the North Vietnamese had attacked unsuccessfully with torpedoes two days earlier — was again under torpedo attack, this time with up to twenty-six torpedoes — more than the U.S. had estimated that North Vietnam possessed!

Days later, at President Lyndon Johnson's urging, Congress passed — unanimously in the House and with only two dissenting votes in the Senate — the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, authorizing LBJ to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression," thus paving the way for escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

But what President Johnson didn't tell Congress (and the public) was that the Maddox's captain had, later on August 4th, retracted his earlier claims — the twenty-six "torpedoes" were apparently misread by his sonar operator — although he insisted that the Maddox had been fired upon once that day. (When presented with a new analysis in 1981, however, the captain became convinced that the Maddox had not been fired upon at all on August 4th.)

And although the earlier, August 2nd, firing upon the Maddox had occurred in international waters, this occurred as the Maddox was fleeing what North Vietnam regarded as its territorial waters — eight miles from the mainland — a location from which the Maddox had been supporting U.S. covert missions in North Vietnam.

President Johnson and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara — Ellsberg's boss — publicly characterized the attack as a completely unprovoked act of naked aggression that, if repeated, would be met with force. But in a secret meeting of the National Security Council that Ellsberg attended on August 4th, then-CIA director John McCone

opined that the North Vietnamese were “reacting defensively” to attacks on their off-shore islands.

But the momentum for President Johnson’s military response proved unstoppable. LBJ even insisted on announcing publicly that U.S. military reprisals on North Vietnam were imminent — even before the U.S. response vessel had entered North Vietnam’s radar range, thus sacrificing the element of surprise to LBJ’s wish for quick publicity.

From Maybury Book

On August 4, 1964, President Johnson met with Congressional leaders and told them of the attack. He said “some of our boys are floating around in the water.” Later determined to be false.

A single machine gun bullet had struck the Maddox, making a half-inch hole and scratching the paint.¹³⁵

THE 1956 VIETNAMESE ELECTIONS

From the Encarta Encyclopedia:

The Geneva Accords called for reunifying elections to be held throughout Vietnam in 1956, a prospect the United States feared since Ho Chi Minh was certain to win. With the support of the United States, Diem violated the accords by refusing to hold national elections. Elections were staged only in the south and resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Vietnam (commonly referred to as South Vietnam) with Diem as its first president. Also in violation of the Geneva Accords, U.S. military advisers were brought in to create and train the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).¹³⁶

¹³⁵ “The Phantom Battle that Led to War,” *U.S. News & World Report*, July 23, 1984, pages 59, 64; cited in *World War I: The Rest of the Story* by Richard J. Maybury, page 136.

¹³⁶ “Ngo Dinh Diem,” Microsoft Reference Library 2003.

A GOOD WAR

Find comments by Reagan and others that the Vietnam war was a good war. Tell that to the families of the over 58,000 Americans who died there — defending a dictatorship.

POSTWAR CONDITIONS

Find article about free market in Vietnam after Saigon fell. Probably in Research File upstairs.

7

The Gulf War

“Our allies.” Buying them up. Syria. See my Iraq newsletter article.

We begin with the Gulf War because it may be the most blatant use of misrepresentation to conduct a war in the history of the world.

The Gulf War was pretty much one long lie from beginning to end. . . .

- The politicians lied by omission — by not explaining the historical context in which current events were occurring.
- The politicians lied by inciting the American people with fictitious claims of threats to America and Iraqi atrocities.
- The politicians lied throughout the brief war by presenting a wholly false picture of what was actually happening in the war.
- The politicians lied after the war by claiming that the American military had overcome a strong and dangerous foe.

In effect, we civilians saw the Gulf War like a movie or a video game — a fictitious epic composed by script-writers. The story General Schwarzkopf told on television of “smart bombs,” the amazing mid-air interception of Scud missiles, and the laser-sharp accuracy of American air attacks was almost entirely fiction — bearing little resemblance to what actually happened in the war.

After the war, it seemed important to the Bush administration to portray the war as a great victory for the American military. General Schwarzkopf came home as a conquering hero who had slain the terrifying dragons that threatened the world.

When he spoke before a televised joint session of Congress, it was as though the U.S. had just defeated the Soviet Union, China, Napoleon, and Attila the Hun in one terrible war. The politicians jumped to their feet XX times to cheer him. One of his biggest ovations came as he began the speech saying, “What a great day to be an American!” (because we beat up those frightened little people in the land of the tin-horn dictator).

Someone who spoke no English or German, and who looked at films of the Schwarzkopf speech and a torch-lit Nuremburg rally of the 1930s, would be hard-pressed to tell the difference. The cheering Congressmen looked no different from (and had no more self-respect than) the Germans who proclaimed in unison “Deutschland uber alles!”

I’m not comparing General Schwarzkopf with Adolf Hitler. I am amazed to see the people holding some of the highest offices in the land leaping to their feet and cheering as though they were school kids at a football game.

But, then, perhaps we should be inured to this by now. After all, for decades Congressmen have been doing the same thing at the yearly presidential State of the Union address. It’s just disconcerting to realize that people who act like children are enacting the laws that govern your life.

So what if these things turned out to be lies? Saddam Hussein is still a very bad person.

That may very well be true. But if so much of what we heard about Hussein turned out to be untrue, how do we know the rest of what we heard was true?

I’m not suggesting Saddam Hussein is a good person. First off, he’s a politician, which lowers him in my eyes at the outset. Second, I’m sure he’s committed terrible acts. After all, look what our politicians can get away with — and we supposedly live in a democracy. Imagine what a dictator can accomplish against his own people.

But the fact remains that Iraq was absolutely no threat to America. The politicians took us into war focusing exclusively on the sins of Saddam Hussein — real or unreal — while ignoring completely the very real sins of dictators who joined the “coalition” against Hussein and who received enormous amounts of money and gifts from the U.S. government — gifts that you paid for.

8

**America after the Cold War
The “Dangerous World”**

Israel

“If the U.S. didn’t support Israel, it would fail.”

Stop supporting its enemies.

Troops Overseas

America has troops in over a hundred countries because those countries have asked for our troops.

Serbia-Kosovo War

See article in Kosovo-Serbia folder: “Lies . . .” Excellent background.

AMERICA THE EMPIRE

Liberty, Security, Empire

Perhaps you don’t think America has become an empire. So we should begin by defining what an empire is.

It is a nation that assumes it has the right to control other nations — to determine who their leaders are, to determine what their policies will be. The empire might impose its will by overt force, by subversion, or by bribing the nominal leaders of the other nations.

Whatever the method, it is an attempt by the leaders of one nation to enforce their will upon other nations.

That is what America has done. You may think America is right to do so. You may think we have been appointed by God to rule others. You may think our leaders have nothing but the best of intentions, but America is still an empire.

Consider what America has done.

U.S. Troops in 100+ countries

According to The Department of Defense's publication, "Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country," the U.S. has troops in the following 135 countries.

Afghanistan	Finland	Niger
Albania	France	Nigeria
Algeria	Georgia	North Korea
Antigua	Germany	Norway
Argentina	Ghana	Oman
Australia	Greece	Pakistan
Austria	Guatemala	Paraguay
Azerbaijan	Guinea	Peru
Bahamas	Haiti	Philippines
Bahrain	Honduras	Poland
Bangladesh	Hungary	Portugal
Barbados	Iceland	Qatar
Belgium	India	Romania
Belize	Indonesia	Russia
Bolivia	Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ireland	Senegal
Botswana	Israel	Serbia and Montenegro
Brazil	Italy	Sierra Leone
Bulgaria	Jamaica	Singapore
Burma	Japan	Slovenia
Burundi	Jordan	Spain
Cambodia	Kazakhstan	South Africa
Cameroon	Kenya	South Korea
Canada	Kuwait	Sri Lanka
Chad	Kyrgyzstan	Suriname
Chile	Laos	Sweden
China	Latvia	Switzerland
Colombia	Lebanon	Syria
Congo	Liberia	Tanzania
Costa Rica	Lithuania	Thailand

Cote D'Ivoire
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Djibouti
Dominican Republic
East Timor
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Eritrea
Estonia
Ethiopia
Fiji

Luxembourg
Macedonia
Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia
Mali
Malta
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua

Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
Uruguay
Venezuela
Vietnam
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Coups

American leaders have attempted and succeeded in replacing the leaders in at least these countries:

Guatemala (list the year for each)
Iran
Chile
Panama
Grenada (check spelling)
Haiti
Afghanistan (twice)
South Vietnam
Indonesia
Serbia
Nicaragua
Rhodesia
South Africa
Philippines, the

Some of these coups were perpetrated by overt military force (as in Panama and Granada). Others by subversion (as in Chile, South Vietnam, and Iran). Still others by political pressures of one kind or another (as in Rhodesia, South Africa, and the Philippines). Whatever the method, the object was the same: to replace one political regime with another that was more to the liking of the American government.

Were these subversions done for the greater good of the world?

- It's hard to see how South Africa and Rhodesia (now called Zimbabwe) are better off today, when white racism has been replaced in each case by black racism.
- It's difficult to make a case that the Shah of Iran, who maintained one of the world's most repressive regimes, was good for anyone but the Shah of Iran.
- And if the replacing of the Afghan government in 1989 was such a good thing, why did it have to be replaced again in 2001?

In fact, in none of the "regime changes" engineered by the U.S. government can we say that a significant net improvement was made for world security or the prosperity of the people involved.

And even if you're convinced that one of these changes was positive, can you imagine how many people in those countries must disagree? There are tens of millions of people in the world who hate the United States of America (and, by implication, you) because of what your government has done.

To those people, America isn't a good empire, it's an evil empire. You make think they're mistaken, but they believe that nonetheless.

As Tim O'Brien has said, "If you want America to be an empire, you have to be accept the fact that angry people will run airplanes into your buildings."

9

**The War on Terrorism
The Beginning of History****Definition**

Begin by defining terrorism. Eventually show the uses of terrorism by America and its Allies.

Iraq & Weapons of Mass Destruction

No mention was made of weapons of mass destruction when George Bush Sr. took us into the Gulf War. That only came later as an excuse to continue badgering Hussein.

Lies

“They hate us because of our democracy, our prosperity, and our freedoms.”

George Bush

George Bush not only thinks he’s the world’s policeman, he thinks he’s the judge, jury, and Lord High Executioner.

Retaliation**Nazis & Hostages**

The victors not only get to write the histories, they also get to decide what is virtuous and what is evil.

During World War II in the occupied countries of Europe, when acts of sabotage were committed by the underground Resistance, the Nazis lined up a few dozen innocent villagers and shot them.

Americans, and especially the American government, treated these acts as cold-blooded murder.

What, then, should we think about American planes bombing innocent people in Iraq, the American government forcibly preventing food and medicines from getting to the Iraqi people, and other acts of aggression against innocent civilians?

Is there a difference? Is the difference that Americans have good objections while the Nazis were seeking bad goals? In other words, is any means acceptable if you think the ends sought are favorable to your country?

Pearl Harbor II

September 11 was George Bush's Pearl Harbor.

The Patriot Act

Apparently, no one in Congress got to read it before it was signed. (Someone said that Ron Paul wrote an article on it. Check to see if I have it. If not, check his website. If not there, call his office. If true, this should go in the Prologue as an example of how politicians use war to further their own desires.)

<http://www.webleyweb.com/tle/libe177-20020610-08.html>

THE LIBERTARIAN ENTERPRISE

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FEEBS UNLEASHED!

A Brief Legislative Review

by Michael W. Gallagher

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Special to TLE

Prior to the destruction of the World Trade Center, the current administration, in the person of Attorney General John Ashcroft, tried to pass a number of repressive, and unconstitutional enactments as a part of the “war on crime” and the “war on drugs”. They were generally given little chance of passage.

However, Since September 11, 2001, there have been literally hundreds of bills submitted to either the House of Representatives, the Senate, or both, regarding “terrorism”. A recent review of statutes via the Library of Congress “Thomas” search engine, (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>) showed 576 proposed bills with the word “terrorism” alone filed with either house since September 11th. While some of these are unrelated, (i.e., a few seem, on very cursory review, to appear to refer to abortion, or other topics), most appear to be a part of the “war on terrorism”.

So, after September 11th, Ashcroft and company joined the fray, by merely re-captioning many of their proposals as “anti-terrorism” legislation. Possibly the greatest legislative obscenity fostered by the Ashcroft fascism factory to date, and sponsored by some of his legislative pet trolls, is the USA Patriot Act. Congress, of course, enacted it reflexively.

There are any number of dangerous, ridiculous, abusive and/or clearly unconstitutional provisions in that law. The following is a partial list only.

Sec.101: Counterterrorism fund. Establishes a slush fund which need not be re-authorized from year to year.

Sec.104: “Requests for technical assistance”. The military can be brought in for “technical assistance” by civilian agencies in numerous cases, in contravention to the Posse Comitatus Act.

Sec.105: Electronic snooping. The Secret Service shall develop a national network of “electronic crime task forces” for purpose of “preventing, detecting, and investigating various forms of electronic crimes, including terrorism. (Translation: May develop more abilities to spy upon people, including American citizens, for any alleged crime. Not limited to investigations relating to espionage or terrorism).

Sec.203: Sharing of information. Takes down post-Nixon protections against spreading around information, including tax information, to criminal investigative agencies, at the determination of a government official that it, in some way, it might have something to do with foreign intelligence or counterintelligence.

Sec.215: Secret Warrants. Amends the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), to allow it to get and serve secret search warrants to anybody, demanding information on anything, on the certification that, in the opinion of an FBI agent, it has something, anything, to do with “terrorism” or espionage. Yes, I said “secret”, and I said “everything”.

That a search warrant must be signed by a judge is of little comfort. Any law enforcement organization worth 2 cents already has a list of judges who will sign anything.

Further, just to make it even easier, FISA established a special court and special judges appointed by the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, (and therefore even more predisposed to sign anything put in front of them). The hearings are “in camera”, (i.e., secret), “ex parte”, (i.e., the victim or his attorney are never told about the proceeding, not permitted to attend even if they knew about it, and no public record of the proceeding is kept), and may consider “secret evidence” (which would probably include massive amounts of unreliable hearsay, but since it cannot be viewed, will never be questioned).

So far, this provision has apparently been used at least three times, according to an editorial by liberal writer Nat Hentoff, in the Legal Times, on such dangerous, anti-American organizations as libraries and/or book stores. (The Hentoff article can be found at: <http://www.law.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+FTContentServer?pagename=law/View&c=Article&cid=ZZZHRP0H4ZC&live=true&cst=1&pc=0&pa=0>).

Sec.223: Impediments to suing or prosecuting federal government or officials. Under Sec.223, if you wish to sue the government for violating your rights, by way of any the above provisions, you are limited to a Bench (i.e., non-jury) trial. Despite the secrecy provisions, making it virtually impossible to find out if they have screwed you, you must bring an action within two years of the event, or within two years of “. . . the date upon which the claimant first has a reasonable opportunity to discover the violation”, or you lose the right to sue. The act does not define what “reasonable opportunity” means.

Next, the government can apply for a stay (i.e., a stopping) of the proceedings, for as long as a tame judge is willing to stay it.

There are several provisions of the law, (so mealy-mouthed as to be laughable) that say the government can not use this against protected political activity, (such as free speech). But, that was true long before this law was enacted. (A fact which has never stopped the FBI from doing what it wanted). However what is the penalty if someone targets you for your political beliefs and protected activities? No much. The following is too nauseating to describe, so I have merely reprinted the appropriate provision below:

“Sec. 223(d) Administrative Discipline. — If a court or appropriate department or agency determines that the United States or any of its departments or agencies has violated any provision of this chapter, and the court or appropriate department or agency finds that the circumstances surrounding the violation raise serious questions about whether or not an officer or employee of the United States acted willfully or intentionally with respect to the violation, the department or agency shall, upon receipt of a true and correct copy of the decision and findings of the court or appropriate department or agency promptly initiate a proceeding to determine whether disciplinary action against the officer or employee is warranted. If the head of the department or agency involved determines that disciplinary action is not warranted, he or she shall notify the Inspector General with jurisdiction over the department or agency concerned and shall provide the Inspector General with the reasons for such determination.” — Sec.223(c)(1)

Of course, the way this usually works, if someone does demand a criminal prosecution of an agent or other person for violating someone’s rights, (for example, murdering them), someone will offer up this little gem as an exclusive remedy against the agent. My guess is, they will probably get away with it, too. So, they can destroy your business, your home, incarcerate you, and even kill you, and all they get (at most) is a few days off without pay.

Finally, this is the “exclusive remedy” for anyone damaged by government actions, taken pursuant, or purported to be taken pursuant, to this Act.

As a part of their “war on terrorism” Reichsmarshal Ashcroft and Co. have gone so far as to indict an attorney defending a Muslim clergyman, on the grounds that answering questions from the press constituted communicating terrorist information; (and virtually guaranteeing that the next hundred defendants, foreign or domestic, accused to terrorism or other anti-government activities will be unable to secure competent defense counsel); demanded the “right” to bug all communications between (certain) defendants and their attorneys; broken into offices and searched them, with no notice, under “secret” warrants, (in clear violation of two hundred years of constitutional jurisprudence), and engaged in the sort of behavior that only a Lavrenti Beria or a Heinrich Himmler would consider a proper part of “law enforcement”.

And this is just the beginning. It is the nature of things like this that they start slowly, against those people the public dislikes most, and grow over time, both in type and frequency of use, and in type of target, (i.e., victim). If it is allowed to stand, it is only a matter of time before it is read more and more broadly, before the word “terrorism” is applied to more and more activities, and before more statutes like it are written, under the rubric of “national security”, with more secret warrants, “no-knock” searches, for more alleged “crimes”. It is coming.

America the Bully

America perceived as a bully: How American foreign policy has controlled countries all over the world — provoking anger and hatred among people whose lives have been hurt. Tables of countries in which troops stationed, interventions to change policy, foreign aid given.

Retaliation Never Succeeds

Retaliation: Why it never succeeds in “teaching a lesson” to anyone (as demonstrated by the Israeli-Palestine conflict). U.S. Presidents always counsel “restraint” when there’s an outbreak of violence in the Middle East.

“Our Allies”

Buying Pakistan and others. Polls show people against us, only the bribed leaders on Bush’s side. But even that changed with Iraq.

LIES ABOUT IRAQ

Ties between Iraq and Osama Bin Laden.

Misquote on UN report about how close Hussein is to having a nuclear weapon. See my article.

At a campaign rally in Harrisburg, a few days before the 2002 elections, Bush said, “This is a dangerous man who cannot stand America because of what we love.”¹³⁷

Moslems

¹³⁷ <http://www.thenation.com/capitalgames/index.mhtml?bid=3&pid=152>

These are some of the myths or fallacies that have been perpetuated to justify attacking and killing innocent people.

- “The Moslems want to conquer us. They are not reacting to our foreign policy (although they may say so), but rather, they want to prevail — culturally and religiously — through conquest. They have decided we are weak, have no strong beliefs, are immoral, and corrupt. Hence, we are ready to fall to the strong. Only conquest by us will stop them.”

How can the U.S. appear to be weak when it has, in just the past two decades, attacked Libya, Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan, Serbia, and Iraq?

Hate Us for our Freedoms?

If they really did hate us for our freedoms, then they’ve won the so-called War on Terrorism — because, what with the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act and TIPS and all the rest of the police-state measures passed since 9-11, we’ve discarded the freedoms that the terrorists supposedly hated us for.

Osama Bin Laden & Al-Qaeda

President said they were the responsible ones, but he later ignored them.

Manipulating the Press

Government stopped releasing pictures of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

Lying about Worldwide Support for Us against Iraq

George Bush says over and over that most of the world is on our side. But Europe is almost unanimously opposed to any war against Iraq.

The President can get away with what he says because most Americans aren’t exposed to the ideas of foreigners. They don’t read the dispatches from Europe on the Internet.

See \Iraq\European opposition to war against Iraq - Paris le Monde, 03-01-14.doc

Hearings

In 2002 Congress held hearings that largely cleared the administration of any serious mistakes that could have made 9/11 easier.

The same thing happened during World War II. After Pearl Harbor, there were several inquiries — by Congress, by the Department of the Navy, and by the Army Department. All pretty much cleared the Roosevelt administration of any mistakes or wrongdoing.

It was only many years after the war that it came to light that the Roosevelt administration had goaded Japan into attacking and had misled the Pearl Harbor commanders so that the attack was as damaging as it was and the local commanders could take the blame.

Countries Bombed by the U.S.

See the list at <http://www.freedomworld.org/makelove.htm>

Foreknowledge

See timeline at:

http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/02_11_02_lucy.html

Turning of the Tide

“The war on terror is not over; yet it is not endless. We do not know the day of final victory, but we have seen the turning of the tide. No act of the terrorists will change our purpose, or weaken our resolve, or alter their fate. Their cause is lost. Free nations will press on to victory.” (Applause.)

George Bush, Speech, May 5, 2003 (Lincoln aircraft carrier)

Civil Liberties

America has finally become what it has always opposed — a police state in which people can disappear into the system.

1984

The never-ending war is straight out of 1984.

Previous Attacks on Americans

List all the attacks on Americans that preceded 9/11. See the Navy casualty table in the Military folder, as it lists dozens of such attacks.

MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY AGAIN

God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. He has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. He has made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples.

Were it not for such a force as this the world would relapse into barbarism and night. And of all our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. We are trustees of the world's progress, guardians of its righteous peace.

The judgment of the Master is upon us: "Ye have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things."

. . . Senator Albert Beveridge
Speech in Congress, January 9, 1900¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Mount Holyoke College International Relations website:
www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ajb72.htm

GOVERNMENT NOT THE ANSWER

See Rockwell article and Boaz article: people call on more government to save us from terrorists, but government has already failed at that.

INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

The Taliban said it would not extradite Osama Bin Laden unless the U.S. provided evidence of his guilt.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Rosy promise: We will end terrorism in the world.

On September 14, 2001, President George Bush said, “We will rid the world of evil-doers.”

He didn’t say how he planned to do this. Only that — as the all-powerful President of the most powerful country in the world — he could do it if the nation had sufficient resolve. And he was determined to act as cheerleader to instill that resolve in the nation.

However, the District of Columbia, in which the city of Washington is located, is under the jurisdiction of the United States government. And it happens to have one of the highest crime rates in America. {Get specific rates from Statistical Abstract}

If the U.S. government has the power to rid the world of evil-doers, why doesn’t it start with Washington, D.C.?

And if he gets rid of the evil-doers there, he could move on to some other part of America — and if he succeeds there, he could extend the program to the rest of America — and if he succeeds there, he could ask the Canadians if they want our help — and if he succeeds there, he could go on to the Mexicans, the Haitians, the rest of Latin America, and then the Europeans, and so on.

But start with the whole world? Doesn't that seem a little pretentious for a government with such a sorry record of failures?

The Difference

The President never explained that contradiction between the government's impotence in Washington, D.C. and its power to rid the world of evil-doers. But I suspect if the President ever gave it a moment's thought (even though I doubt that he did), he would have an answer for the contradiction, although I wouldn't expect him to acknowledge it openly.

The difference in the mind of a politician is that he can use force openly, nakedly, unrestrictedly against foreigners in a way he can't use it in Washington, D.C.

The President probably believes that using missiles, bombs, and 150,000 American soldiers he can achieve things overseas — while his approval rating might suffer a few points if he tried using those tools in Washington, D.C. or any other place within America.

In one sense, it's a politician's dream: the ability to use all the force he wants without any expected repercussions from the American public.

As it turned out, however, large segments of the population did worry about all the foreigners being killed by our military.

And the President was wrong about his ability to stamp out evil with force.

As it turned out, probably every missile fired into Afghanistan and every civilian killed in Iraq produced a hundred more people willing to help the terrorists — to try to stop this all-powerful nation that was imposing its way upon the world.

It was like Hercules fighting Thanatos.

LONG-TERM RESENTMENTS

After the Spanish-American War, the Americans imposed their way on the Philippines and Cuba (see Stromberg's article on the war), creating American-imposed systems that led to such people as Marcos and Batista, leading in turn to the current rebels and Castro.

There are bound to be other examples.

Did 9/11 Change Anything?

Lie: 9/11 changed everything.

Left-wing Interpretation of Terrorism's Causes

One defeats terrorism by undermining the conditions which breed terrorists. Economic inequality, crushing poverty, shattered educational infrastructures, rampant violence and a total lack of hope are the soil in which suicide bombers germinate. Until you get rid of those, you will always have terrorism. Period.

William Rivers Pitt

Truthout, August 31, 2004¹³⁹

Examples of Meddling

See Alan Chapman's archive of Bush achievements, under "Foreign-Aid & Foreign Interventionism"

¹³⁹ http://www.truthout.org/docs_04/090104A.shtml

10**The Second Iraqi War**

See “Chemical Warheads” letter from William Pitt to CNN.

\Iraq\Chemical warheads not chemical warheads - Wm Pitt, Truthout, 03-01-16.doc

See Frum article on Bush wanting someone to write a speech giving reasons for attacking Iraq.

Check all articles in Ideas\Iraq\Lies

Lies

See the article I started on the catalog of lies.

Destroying the Oil Fields

Rumors such as the possibility Iraq will destroy their oil fields has oil going through the roof. (from John Mauldin)

The Assassination Attempt on Bush

During 2001-2003, as George W. Bush moved from one rationale to another to support his desire to attack Iraq, one reason he cited was the presumed Iraqi attempt to assassinate Bush’s father, ex-President George H.W. Bush, in Saudi Arabia in 1993.

As we saw, World War I was ignited by two Serbs who assassinated Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in 1914. Instead of trying to capture and prosecute the assassins, the Austrians went to war, mutual-defense treaties were triggered, and all of Europe was plunged into a terrible conflict that eventually killed approximately 20 million people (8.5 million troops and 11.5 million civilians) and wounded 21 million.

No politician has the power of second sight — the ability to see into the future and predict the outcome of his actions. This is usually cited as the excuse for such terrible tragedies as World War I — not to mention the ways that World War I made World War II inevitable. So Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph is never blamed for causing the deaths of 20 million people by attacking Serbia to revenge the death of his son.

But the proper interpretation of the politicians' inability to see the future should be exactly the opposite. Because they can't foresee the consequences of their aggressive acts, they should be very cautious about what they do.

I realize that history is the last thing in the world that interests George W. Bush. But someone should point out to him the human carnage and property wreckage that resulted from an attempt in 1914 to avenge an assassination.

Politicians recite slogans, inciting people to want vengeance, thousands — or millions — of people die, none of the promised benefits of victory materialize, but the politicians are rarely blamed for the damage they've caused. Unless, of course, they're on the losing side — in which case they can be made to take the blame for every tragedy, every atrocity, every death — no matter which side was actually responsible.

Hussein a Bad Man

There is no question that Saddam Hussein is a bad person. There is no question that the people of Iraq suffered under his rule (as the people in most countries suffer because of their governments).

But that doesn't justify creating an open season in which any charge can be made against Hussein in order to justify risking the lives of Americans. The charges must be proven to have any relevance whatsoever. And even if the charges are proven, they don't necessarily justify risking the lives of Americans.

Gassing his Own People

See articles in Iraq folder from Wanniski, Pelletiere, and others.

See Bush State of the Union address for 2003, in which he states this.

If Hussein was guilty of gassing the Kurds, why didn't he use gas against the Americans in the Gulf War?

History of U.S. Relations with Iraq, 1990-

See <http://www.accuracy.org/iraq/index.htm>

Seeking Uranium Lie

See Bush 2003 State of the Union speech in which he mentions Hussein seeking uranium in Africa. The passage is marked.

There are three separate lies in the same paragraph.

1. The IAEA “confirmed in the 1990s” is probably referring to 1990 before the Gulf War, and is the same lie he told in 2002.
2. The African lie.
3. I believe the aluminum tubes assertion was declared bogus by the weapons inspectors.

Powell says the forged document came from “other sources,” and it was given to the inspectors “in good faith.” Then why did Bush use it without any verification in his State of the Union address?

\\Iraq\Lies\Forged document - Powell's excuse, 03-03-15.doc.

Terrorism Link

Iraq wasn't on State department list of states that support terrorism. Try to find a recent such list on the Internet.

Lie: Iraqis Behind 9/11

“The United States lied to the world when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said he had ‘bulletproof evidence’ that Iraq was behind the Sept. 11 attacks and then failed to produce a shred of credible evidence.”

Robert Sheer: “A Naked Bid to Redraw World Map,” Los Angeles Times, March 18, 2003.¹⁴⁰

Hypocrisies in War against Iraq

- 1 Bush said it was about disarmament. Then said it didn’t matter whether Hussein disarmed; he had to quit.
- 2 Bush gave Hussein 48 hours to go into exile. After the war, Bush threatened Syria with invasion if it harbored Hussein in exile.
- 3 Bush said the war was about liberating the Iraqi people. Then he said the U.S. would run the country after the war.
- 4 Bush said it was about chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Then the Defense Department said it would use chemical weapons against Iraq.
- 5

U.S. Demonstration of Power

The Iraqi war supposedly demonstrated that the U.S. wasn’t soft — thereby intimidating terrorists to stop their terrorism.

(List all the previous U.S. attacks. If anything, the war on Iraq indicates that opponents must resort to terrorism because the U.S. can’t be beaten in a war.)

Hypocrisy of Coverage

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.latimes.com/la-oe-scheer18mar18,0,6256500.column>

News shows Americans and British caring for wounded and hungry Iraqis. But it was the Americans and British who wounded and starved them, and nothing was done for the hospitals with all the resources available to the Americans.

Lies

See highlighted lies in:

Bush\Speeches\Iraq 48-hour war ultimatum, 03-03-17.doc

Germans & Americans

All my life I've been hearing that the Germans must have known what Hitler was doing to the Jews. How could they not know?

And yet polls have shown that after a year of George Bush blending Iraq and the attacks on the World Trade Center in his speeches, a majority of Americans believe that Iraq was behind the attacks.

Imagine how easily someone in a completely totalitarian country can make public opinion be whatever he wants it to be.

That's one of the most distressing consequences of the lying. With each war, the lies get bolder and more audacious — and the politicians who utter them suffer less opprobrium for them.

Where exactly are we headed?

Fox News Disinformation

Be sure to include items from the article in the \Iraq\Press folder.

WHY THE WAR WAS WANTED

Possible reasons:

Remove the Iraqi threat to Israel.

Get hold of the oil.

Demonstrate U.S. power to intimidate other Middle East leaders.

Increase power in Washington.

Provide rebuilding contracts for U.S. firms.

Military bases for U.S. troops.

The fact that a particular potential reason didn't materialize doesn't rule it out as a possible motive. It's obvious that the U.S. officials were wrong in many ways about what the war would achieve.

Why No Weapons?

Iraqis destroyed the weapons just before the war, or shipped them to another country?

Why would Hussein develop them if he wouldn't use them to save his regime?

JESSICA LYNCH

Lie #1: Pvt. Jessica Lynch was a heroic soldier who was shot while exchanging gunfire with Iraqis, captured, and then rescued when a squadron of Marines overcame her captors and took her back to American lines.

This story would be true except for a few minor details:

- She wasn't shot.
- She never fired her rifle.
- She was "rescued" from a hospital when her rescuers met no resistance whatever.

Her unit was ambushed on March 23, 2003 when they went into the wrong town by mistake. The rifles of Jessica and several of her comrades failed to fire because they had been poorly maintained. She escaped from the ambush in a jeep with several others, but she was injured when the jeep overturned. Some of her comrades were killed, some escaped, and some were captured.

The real hero of the encounter was Sgt. Donald Walters. He stood his ground and held off the enemy while some of his comrades escaped. But he finally was shot and died. He has been almost completely ignored, however, in all the hoopla about Jessica Lynch.

Jessica was captured in the encounter. She was taken to an Iraqi hospital, where her injuries were treated. She was given the best care possible under the difficult circumstances of all the Iraqi hospitals at the time.

The hospital staff even tried to return her to the Americans. They drove her back in an ambulance, but were fired upon as they approached American lines. The ambulance returned to the hospital, where Jessica remained under a doctor's care until her "rescue."

On April 1, 2003, a unit of commandos burst into the unguarded hospital, broke down doors, and tied up the doctors and other staff personnel. They carried Jessica out and back to the American camp. A TV unit accompanied the commandos — filming the entire episode, so that the folks back home could see the rescue for themselves.

The fact that Jessica wasn't a hero is nothing to be ashamed of. The fact that others tried to portray her as a hero to make Americans at home feel good about the war is something to be ashamed of. She apparently can't remember anything of what happened — an indication of trauma, which may well in turn indicate that she wasn't properly trained for the dangerous situation in which she found herself.

To call attention to this is not to denigrate the soldiers who fought in Iraq. It is a sad commentary on those who sent Jessica Lynch and others off to Iraq to fight a war they weren't prepared for.

INSPECTORS KICKED OUT

U.S. about to begin a bombing campaign and it was no longer safe to be in Iraq.

Inspection team realized U.S. members were using the inspections for American espionage.

Hussein didn't kick them out; they left voluntarily.

DEMOCRACY IN IRAQ

Lie: The U.S. “liberated” Iraq so that it could be a democracy.

List Rumsfeld’s conditions.

CHEMICAL ALI

Chemical Ali (Ali Hassan al-Majid) was killed early in the war.

But then he was caught five months later. Either the government misinformed us in March or else the military is currently interrogating a dead man.

LIE: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

FIGHTING IN MIDDLE EAST INSTEAD OF U.S.

“Our military is confronting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other places so our people will not have to confront terrorist violence in New York, or St. Louis, or Los Angeles.” — George W. Bush, speech at American Legion Convention, August 26, 2003.¹⁴¹

Shades of Harry Truman in the Korean War.

FROM PROLOGUE

In 2002 President George W. Bush made it clear that he wanted to go to war against Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power.

He made numerous assertions about Hussein’s activities and intentions. He said Hussein had dangerous weapons and the ability to use them against the U.S. homeland, he said Hussein was in league with Osama Bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, and he made various allegations about atrocities Hussein had committed.

¹⁴¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/08/20030826-5.html>

The American people had no way to verify these assertions. Although the President and his advisors often said they possessed evidence to back up the accusations, they never made any of the evidence public.

Finally, the White House announced that on October 7, 2002, President Bush would give a speech laying out the full case for removing Saddam Hussein from power by force.

The big day arrived and the President delivered his speech. But it turned out to be nothing but a rehash of all the allegations previously made.

We can't expect the President to bore a room full of politicians with photos and forensic evidence. But this long-awaited presentation didn't even point to places where the evidence could be found. Instead, it was simply the same litany of horror stories administration officials had been reciting for nearly a year:

The Iraqi regime has violated all [its] obligations. It possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons. It has given shelter and support to terrorism, and practices terror against its own people.¹⁴²

He spoke of “surveillance photos,” but didn't offer to show any of them. He mentioned “intelligence” discoveries, but provided no details or proof. He didn't even claim to be withholding the proof for national-security reasons.

And he made it plain that the threat from Iraq was unlike any other in the world:

While there are many dangers in the world, the threat from Iraq stands alone — because it gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place. . . . By its past and present actions, by its technological capabilities, by the merciless nature of its regime, Iraq is unique.

Evidence?

No, we were expected to take his word for all of it.

¹⁴² From George W. Bush's speech in Cincinnati, October 7, 2002, published by the White House Press Secretary. Available at: www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html

Not the Whole Truth

And politicians in Congress did take his word for it. Two weeks after his speech, Congress voted to give him the authority to wage war against Iraq at his own discretion.

The day after the vote, the Communist government of North Korea revealed that it already had nuclear weapons and the means to use them against Japan, China, and Alaska. This apparently made North Korea a bigger threat to the U.S. and to world peace than Iraq. If the Senators and Congressmen had known this, they might not have voted to give President Bush the authorization to go to war against Iraq whenever he wanted.

Was this just an accident of timing that caused the truth to be known only after the day of the vote?

No. The Bush administration admitted that it knew about the North Korean nuclear weapons two weeks before the Congressional vote.¹⁴³

Was the vote rescinded? Did Congress reopen the question of going to war against Iraq?

No. Once politicians decide to go to war, almost nothing can reverse the bandwagon.

So the American government continued to prepare for war against Iraq, even though the claim that Iraq was the principal threat — in fact, a unique threat — to U.S. security was no longer valid.

For hiding the truth, the Bush administration didn't have to pay any price. The Congress moved on to other business and allowed the President to do as he pleased with the blank check they'd given him.

WOUNDED

OMISSION

(For example, the Bush administration's failure to inform Congress that North Korea represented a more concrete threat than Iraq.)

¹⁴³ "North Korea Issue Irks Congress," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 2002, page A02. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49358-2002Oct18.html

WAR CRIMES

Lie: Saddam Hussein and top Iraqi officials should be tried for war crimes.

“Credible research shows that up to 10,000 civilians were killed in the attack on Iraq, together with perhaps 30,000 Iraqi soldiers, many of them teenage conscripts. A slaughter. These people were killed by weapons designed to reduce human beings to charcoal or to shred them. The British Army littered urban areas with cluster bombs, while the Americans did the same and in greater quantity, adding uranium-coated munitions, whose radiation poison is ingested with the desert dust.

“In my experience, the unseen deaths are far more numerous. Today, malnourished children are dying from thirst and gastroenteritis because the world’s biggest military machine, including the British, fails to restore power and clean running water as its most basic obligations require.

“This carnage, wrought in an unprovoked illegal assault on a sovereign country, is a crime by any measure of international law: be it the United Nations Charter or the Geneva conventions. The “supreme international crime,” the Nuremberg judges decided, was that of unprovoked aggression, because it contains “the accumulated evil” of all war crimes. . . .

“Robert Jackson, the US prosecutor at Nuremberg in 1946, said: ‘If certain acts of violation of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or whether Germany does them, and we are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us . . .’”

John Pilger¹⁴⁴

LIBERATING IRAQ

There wasn’t anything said in Powell’s UN presentation about liberating Iraq. That objective arose only as it began to look as though no weapons would be found in Iraq.

¹⁴⁴ “Needed: An Inquiry into a Slaughter” by John Pilger, Independent Television:
<http://pilger.carlton.com/print/133080>

WARTIME PROPAGANDA

During the war we heard about surgical strikes, about protecting the infrastructure, about warring against the regime rather than the people — only to find after the war that the Iraqis had been deprived of electricity and clean water, and that there was no institution on hand to stop looting and vandalism that destroyed priceless Iraqi artifacts.

IRAQ DEFIED UN RESOLUTIONS

Lie

U.S. REBUILDING IS BECAUSE OF HUSSEIN

Lie: The rebuilding in Iraq was necessitated by the terrible shape Hussein allowed the country to become.

HUMAN TRAGEDY

Fernando Suarez, whose 20-year-old son, Jesus, was one of the first fatalities, said: “My son died because Bush lied.”¹⁴⁵

NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE?

Like most of his 20th-century predecessors, George Bush acts as though his liberation movement in Iraq is something new.

It isn't.

¹⁴⁵ *UK Guardian*, September 27, 2003;

www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,1050949,00.html

In fact, the U.S. has done this sort of thing time and time again. Because most Americans grow up having been taught very little about the history of their country, they don't realize this is the "same old, same old;" nor are they aware of what happened before.

As for those in our government, they may be somewhat aware of history, but little interested in what happened before, because their purposes really aren't to bring democracy to others — but, rather, to build themselves up as world leaders and to reward their friends.

During the Spanish-American War, the U.S. military "liberated" Cuba, and then ran it as something very close to a U.S. colony. It dictated Cuba's new Constitution, virtually ran the sugar industry (Cuba's #1 product), imposed a governmental system that eventually led to the repressive regime of Fulgencio Batista, which in turn encouraged such anti-American sentiment ("Yanqui, go home") that Fidel Castro was able to take over the island.¹⁴⁶

Substitute oil for sugar and you have Iraq today.

Also during the Spanish-American War, the U.S. military "liberated" the Philippine Islands from Spain by helping the indigenous revolutionaries there. At the end of the war, the U.S. refused to vacate the island and the U.S. continued to run it as a virtual colony for the next 45 years, leading to the repressive regime of Ferdinand Marcos, which created such anti-American sentiment that it fostered the terrorist movements now operating in the Philippines — movements the U.S. is fighting in its War on Terrorism.¹⁴⁷

In Nicaragua, the U.S. military invaded the country to "liberate" it from bad guys, and continued to intervene in Nicaraguan politics from 1912 through 1933. When the U.S. Marines left, they turned the security of the country over to Anastasio Somoza, who quickly overthrew the government and took over the country. He, his son, and then his other son operated a repressive regime for the next XX years — helped by the U.S. from the 1940s through the 1970s. Their opposition was the Sandinista movement, founded in 1961, which finally took over in 1979. The Reagan administration then spent hundreds of millions of dollars and tons of good will fighting the Sandinistas, who had profited from the anti-American feeling created by the original U.S. intervention and by the U.S. support given to the Somozas.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Stromberg article.

¹⁴⁷ Stromberg article.

¹⁴⁸ "Nicaragua, History of, " *Britannica 2001 Deluxe CD-ROM Edition*.

Summary of Iraqi Lies

- 1 Cost of reconstruction would be financed by Iraqi oil.
- 2 Aluminum tubes.
- 3 Iraq reconstituting nuclear weapons.
- 4 Inventory of biological and chemical weapons.
- 5 Mobile laboratories.
- 6 Al-Qaeda camps.
- 7 Jessica Lynch was wounded in heroic gun battle.
- 8 Hussein has stalled for 12 years.
- 9 Enriched uranium purchase forgery.
- 10 Unmanned airplanes that could reach North America.
- 11 Major countries would join coalition once the war started.
- 12 Long-distance ballistic missiles.
- 13 Cost of war estimated at \$50-60 billion.
- 14 Iraqis would greet U.S. military as liberators. Statue toppling.
- 15 IAEA report on nuclear weapons program misrepresented.

STATEMENTS ON WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION BY POLITICIANS

Quote some people who say that Bush never said the threat was immediate. Then list as many contrary statements from Bush, Cheney, and the others as you can find.

SAFER PLACE?

If the world were a safer place with Saddam Hussein gone, the tight security at airports would be eased; there would be fewer, not more, suicide attacks.

UN & OTHER COUNTRIES

Misleading statement: The UN and other nations all said Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

Truth: They got their information from the U.S. and Israel.

Defense of Freedom

Lie: “The defense of freedom is always worth it.”

INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

Lie: The mistakes made prior to the Iraqi war were intelligence failures.

If you were President of the United States, I dare say you would not send Americans to fight and die without examining very closely the hard evidence available to justify going to war. But politicians who want to go to war will seize upon anything anyone says that will support the idea of going to war.

If President Bush was truly deceived, it was his own fault. He didn’t rigorously examine the evidence; he simply took the word of people who told him what he apparently wanted to hear — that Saddam Hussein was a danger to the United States.

BUSH ON FREEDOM-HATERS

Talking about the resisters in Iraq:

We still face thugs and terrorists in Iraq, who would rather go on killing innocent people than accept the advance of liberty. And there's a reason why: They know that a free Iraq will be a major defeat in the cause of terror. They hate freedom. They can't stand the thought of a free society. And what they're trying to do is they're trying to shake our will. They're trying to shake the will of America. America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins. (Applause.)¹⁴⁹

We've got tough work there because, you see, there are terrorists there who would rather kill innocent people than allow for the advance of freedom. That's what you're seeing going on. These people hate freedom. and we love freedom. And that's where the clash occurs. See, we don't think freedom is America's gift to the world. We know that freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world. That's what we know. (Applause.)¹⁵⁰

LONG-RANGE MISSILES

Bush still lying about them in his press conference of April 4, 2004.

OIL REVENUES

Rosy promise: oil revenues will pay for most of the war and reconstruction.

CASKETS

No pictures of caskets allowed. See article in "Articles to check."

¹⁴⁹ Bush-Cheney fund-raising luncheon, Charlotte, North Carolina, April 5, 2004.
(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040405-5.html>)

¹⁵⁰ Remarks by President Bush at South Arkansas Community College, April 6, 2004.
(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040406-6.html>)

COST OF THE WAR

Rosy promise: Small cost of the war.

PHILIPPINES

Pacifying the Philippines in 1900. Similar to Iraq in 2004.

ATROCITIES ON IRAQI PRISONERS

Lie. See general's interview last fall in which she said prisoners were well-treated.

Quote about what happens when a soldier from West Virginia gets power.

Atrocities committed on Iraqi prisoners - CBS, 04-04-30.doc

AL-QAEDA CONNECTION

Two years after 9/11, a Washington Post poll revealed that 70% of Americans believed that Saddam played a direct role in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

That belief is the fruit of one of the great bait-and-switch efforts of modern history, a collective endeavor by administration officials, hawkish television pundits and squads of neo-conservative columnists and editorialists. Their work should long be regarded as a case study in the manipulation of mass opinion — comparable, though of course different, from what took place in the mass dictatorships of the 1930s.

Scott McConnell
"Duped by the Neo-Cons"
The Australian, July 16, 2004

Promise of Terrorist Threat Reduction

"The terrorist threat to America and the world will be diminished the moment that Saddam Hussein is disarmed."

George W. Bush, March 17, 2003.¹⁵¹

U.S. ENFORCING SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Lie. No resolution empowered the U.S. on its own to invade Iraq. No resolution called for the use of violence against Iraq. And the U.S. knew it couldn't get such a resolution in 2003.

PROMISE OF END OF VIOLENCE

The U.S. said the violence would subside after the handover of sovereignty from the U.S. military to the interim Iraqi government on June 30, 2004. But the violence intensified.

OTHER NATIONS THOUGHT IRAQ WAS A THREAT

What everyone knows: Forgive me for repeating something I've said before, and before, and before. But in reporting Tuesday's Senate debate on the nomination of Condoleezza Rice to be Secretary of State, some Democrats blasted Rice as being part of the team that made the false claims that led to the Iraqi War. CNN reports:

Sen. John Warner, a Virginia Republican, defended Rice, calling attacks on her integrity "somewhat astonishing" and noting that many governments had considered Iraq "a grave and gathering threat."¹⁵²

The only reason that many governments had considered Iraq "a grave and gathering threat" was because the U.S. government claimed it had overwhelming evidence that Iraq was "a grave and gathering threat." I really doubt that Poland or Spain or the United Nations or Portugal or South Korea — much less Micronesia or the Marshall Islands — had its own CIA operatives in Iraq discovering evidence of mobile laboratories and unmanned airplanes that could drop biological weapons on the East Coast of the United States.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>

¹⁵² <http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/25/rice.confirmation/index.html>

It is an old tactic to dispense false information, and then cite those who repeat the false information as evidence that your disinformation has been independently verified.

11

Déjà Vu Again**Nothing Ever Changes**

Recap the recurring themes in the previous chapters. The general myths of war that haven't been addressed will be handled in the next chapter. Maybe they belong here as well.

Constant Themes

Liberation of enslaved people
Someone was intent on enslaving the whole world
Americans in danger
Americans believe the most astounding atrocity stories
The world will be better than ever when the war ends

Allies Suddenly Become Enemies

Explain & quote George Orwell hate-week turnaround. No explanation for the turnaround; just assumed it had always been this way.

This may be where George Orwell got the idea, for a similar jolting shift in attitude that takes place in his great novel 1984.

Germany in World War I

The Russians in World War II and afterward.

Iraq in the 1980s and afterward (the invasion of Kuwait was no more unprovoked than the invasion of Iran).

Noriega in Panama
The Taliban in Afghanistan.

Examples

Attitude toward Germany before World War I.

Russia-China switch by U.S. in 1971.

Hussein in 1990.

Trujillo.

Lies that are retold from one war to the next. “The enemy fired first.” Enemy atrocities and demonizing the enemy. Enemy has plans to conquer America. War objectives are pure rhetoric, they change throughout the buildup and the war, and they’re never met.

War Crimes

World War I treaty demanded that the Kaiser and other leaders be put on trial as war criminals.¹⁵³

World War II.

Bush’s talk prior to Iraq War.

Civil Liberties Invasions

Bill of Rights suspended:

- World War I roundup of German sympathizers and Bolsheviks.
- World War II internment of Japanese-Americans.
- War on Terrorism holding of suspected “bad guys” and POWs without trials.

Collateral Damage

World War I: British blockade of Germany

World War II: Bombings of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

Iraq: Sanctions for 12 years.

¹⁵³ *The Illusion of Victory* by Thomas Fleming, page 378.

Bringing Freedom & Democracy To The World

See Wilson quote on showing “the nations of the world how they shall walk in the paths of liberty.”

Or use a different one here:

“We are in this war to fulfill the promise of [our Founding Fathers’] vision; having achieved our own liberty, we are to strive for the liberties of every other people as well.”¹⁵⁴

He didn’t mention why it was the obligation of young Americans to die to bring liberty to people elsewhere in the world.

Bush creating democracy in the Middle East.

Loose Language & Empty Rhetoric

Quotes from Presidents making absurd statements.

Bush’s petty lies. Right after 9/11, without knowing for sure who did it, “They hate us for . . .”

“We will rid the world of evildoers.”

Force, Force to the utmost, Force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant Force which shall make Right the law of the world, and cast every selfish dominion in the dust.

Woodrow Wilson¹⁵⁵

[We fight] for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world at last free.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, volume 24, page 515; cited in “Woodrow Wilson’s Revolution within the Form” by Richard M. Gamble in *Reassessing the Presidency*, edited by John V. Denson, page 418.

¹⁵⁵ *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace* by Arthur S. Link, page 85; cited in *Promised Land, Crusader State* by Walter A. McDougall, page 138.

Those Who Oppose The War Are Anti-American and Pro-Enemy

See the senatorial debate in World War I.

Must have unity. This isn't the time to speak out against the government's policy.

No Knowledge of Consequences

What Wilson did to Europe.

What FDR did to eastern Europe.

What Bush did to Iraq.

Presidents Speaks For America

On May 27, 1916 Wilson, speaking before the League to Enforce Peace in Washington, D.C., said: "I'm sure I speak the mind and wish of the people of America when I say that . . . "¹⁵⁷

Beware of Peace Candidates

Wilson in 1912 and 1916 elections.

Roosevelt in 1940

LBJ in 1964 election.

Bush in 2000 election renouncing nation-building.

No Regard for History

Europe was a mess but Wilson ignored its history and expected to make it all okay.

George W. Bush thought he could bring democracy to the Middle East and Afghanistan, without any regard for their histories.

¹⁵⁶ *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, edited by Charles Seymour, volume 2, page 448; cited in "World War I: The Turning Point" by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, page 229.

¹⁵⁷ *Promised Land, Crusader State* by Walter A. McDougall, page 122.

Force Solves Everything

Bad guys only understand force.

Harsh terms on Germany after World War I will deter war for centuries.

Nuremberg trials will make war unthinkable.

The atomic bomb will stop war.

Wars are invited by weakness, not strength.

Deterrent to Future Wars

World War I: The New York Times said, “The punishment Germany must endure for centuries will be one of the greatest deterrents to the war spirit.”¹⁵⁸

The A-bomb would be a deterrent to future wars.

Converting Thugs Into Popular Heroes

Hitler, Osama bin Laden, even Hussein.

Giving Up Freedom To Save It

Myth: Free countries triumph over totalitarianism.

But America has been anything but free during the wars. Cite civil liberties invasions and economic takeovers — changes that remain and make government ever-larger.

World War I: Attorney General said the country had never been so thoroughly policed.¹⁵⁹

Dissidents Are Called Anti-American & Pro-Enemy

As in all wars, someone who criticized government policy — even to save lives — wasn’t expressing a simple difference of opinion; he was labeled anti-American, an enemy supporter, and a menace to national unity. “Why don’t you go live in Germany, if you love it so much?” was a common put-down of anyone who had any criticism of the American government.

¹⁵⁸ *The Illusion of Victory* by Thomas Fleming, page 380.

¹⁵⁹ *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn, page 369.

Turnabouts

Turnaround in allies & enemies with no explanation for the change.

Americans' Lack of Knowledge of Atrocities

World War I: Little knowledge of British blockade.

World War II: No knowledge of FDR's browbeating of Japanese.

Korean War: No knowledge of Rhee's tyranny.

1990s: Little knowledge of U.S.-British bombing of Iraq.

Allies & Enemies Interchangeable

This kind of unexplained about-face — with friends suddenly becoming enemies and enemies suddenly becoming courageous allies — shows up frequently in wars.

Germany, the Kaiser during World War I.

Russians before, during, and after World War II.

Iraq in 1990.

It isn't enough to say that an alliance is necessary temporarily. The ally must be puffed up falsely.

How Little We Know About Presidents

Wilson was delusional and incapacitated.

FDR was very sick when reelected in 1944 and when making war decisions.

Men of Peace Take America Into Wars

Wilson, FDR, LBJ, Bush Jr.

Remember that when the next politician tells you he's anti-war.

Liberation

People had been liberated.

Hatred & Atrocities

The Committee helped whip up a frenzy of hate toward all things German — especially the Kaiser. In wartime, a government never describes the enemy's leaders as just bad people, but as inhumane butchers who commit unspeakable atrocities for the fun of it. Fervent hatred is essential to any war effort.

Suppressing Indications of War Dead

Censorship used to prevent knowledge of battle losses, pictures of caskets.

Attacking The Soldiers

If you oppose a war, you're attacking the soldiers who have to fight in it.

While the flower of American youth was pouring out its blood to vindicate the cause of civilization, this man, Debs, stood behind the lines, sniping, attacking, and denouncing them.¹⁶⁰

Safe Political Views

Being "soft on Germany" etc. was politically dangerous. Communism or terrorism.

Unconditional Surrender

Anything less is to break faith with those who died.

President Isolated

Wilson in World War I. Bush and others relying on a small group of advisors to tell them what's going on in the world. Bush doesn't watch television. Imagine how isolated earlier Presidents were when there was no television at all.

¹⁶⁰ *The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene V. Debs* by Ray Ginger, pages 346–359, 362–376, 405–406; cited in "World War I: The Turning Point" by Ralph Raico, in *The Costs of War*, page 238, cardcover edition.

Mission

God has put us here to bring freedom to the world. A way of justifying tyranny.

Trivialization Of Human Life

Collateral damage, gave his life to defend freedom or defend his country.
Ban on casket photos.

Fight Them There, Rather Than Here

We have to fight in Iraq, so we won't have to fight in New York. Said in every war.

The result is that we have an overwhelming national offense, but no national defense.

The Biggest Lie of All

The biggest lie of all is the myth that Americans are "good" and our enemies are always "bad."

This lie is sustained in part because many Americans are afraid to acknowledge any wrongdoing by their own side — for fear that this would justify the enemy's actions and make them "good."

But that isn't true. The truth is that power corrupts — and the worst corruption is the opportunity to take a country into war. It is a dangerous corruption in all countries.

It is simply that our politicians are no purer than politicians in other countries. And we deceive ourselves, we allow ourselves to participate in death and destruction, when we try to maintain that our politicians would never lie, would never kill civilians, would never condone atrocities, would never sacrifice Americans for the self-serving ends of politicians.

EPILOGUE

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote, relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

**George Washington Farewell Address,
September 17, 1796**

12

The Meaning of America**The 19th Century**

During the 1800s, while European cities were being damaged and had to be rebuilt, Americans were building brand new cities.

While Europe's young men spent most of their time fighting in wars of aggression or wars of defense, America's young men were exploring the West, developing new companies, new products, and new services.

We read of wars, battles, strategic triumphs, alliances, tactical maneuvers, and heroism. But war is nothing but devastation — the devastation of property and the devastation of human life.

During the Napoleonic wars of the early 1800s, tens of thousands of men would die month after month, year after year. And for what? For conquests that fed the glory and egos of rulers — conquests that were reversed the following year or decade.

It's no wonder that America progressed so much more rapidly than Europe during the 1800s. As a result, by the end of the century, our young nation was a world-class country. It's entry into World War I not only tipped the balance of power, it upended it.

The devastation suffered by European countries in World War I and World War II only heightened the lead the U.S. had over European countries, it didn't create that lead. Although Americans fought in both those wars, they didn't enter the war until after a great deal of the damage had occurred, and they never had to fight the wars on their own land.

Tragedy

It is tragic that so many people in the world are trapped by hatreds and fears that in some places go back hundreds of years.

Palestinians and Jews, Serbs and Albanians, Indians and Pakistanis, the French and Germans — all enslaved to hatreds that make recurring wars almost inevitable.

Yes, it is a tragedy to live in those countries and be part of those never-ending fears and hatreds.

But what is even more tragic is that America — bound by two giant oceans and two friendly neighbors, blessed with a clean slate and no long-standing enemies — deliberately, unnecessarily, and to no successful end injects itself into the feuds of other countries and allows itself to become the object of hate and fear.

Objectives

Every American war of the 20th century has been accompanied by a high-minded objective:

- World War I was the war to end all wars.
- World War II was going to establish an international organization that would keep the peace throughout the world.
- The Korean War was going to reunify the Korean peninsula.
- The Vietnam War was going to stop the communists in their tracks.
- The Gulf War was going to establish a New World Order.

At the time I wrote this, the latest war was the one in Iraq — which President Bush claimed would bring freedom to the Iraqis and peace to the Middle East. With a little bit of luck, it will succeed as well as the previous wars.

Introduction

When I was growing up, we thought of America as being a country like no other in the world. Fastened in our minds were several elements of that uniqueness:

- America didn't start wars; it finished and won the wars started by others.
- America was a much more humane country than others. Even in war, it didn't stoop to the brutality and barbarism engaged in by other nations.
- America was the land of the free. Individual liberty was the highest political value. When someone was criticized for his actions, it was common to retort, "It's a free country, isn't it?" Whenever we fought, we were fighting to defend precious freedoms that weren't available in any other country.

Impressions Linger on

Because the Constitution was so honored in practice as well as word during the first hundred years, and because America stayed out of foreign wars during that period, the notion of America's uniqueness has persisted.

We still think there's something special about America:

- "America is a free country."
- "We have liberties people in no other countries have."
- "America would never fight a war of conquest, like other nations do."
- "If America is in a war, we must be in the right and the other side wrong."

These impressions of America have lingered long after the realities have disappeared.

Yes, we still have some freedoms that some people in some other countries don't have, but the liberties we have left are far from unique. And American politicians now have the power to take us into wars for any purpose they choose — even without Congress taking the time to deliberate and investigate whether the provocation is what it seems to be.

And the politicians have the power to censor war correspondents, so that the war is reported in whatever way is helpful to the politicians, even if it isn't helpful to America.

Reality Check

If we want to preserve and expand the liberties we have left, we have to drop the scales from our eyes and view politicians, power, and wars as they really are.

- We have to realize that whatever power is given to politicians, they will use. And if you give the power to a good politician to do good, you have automatically given some future bad politician the power to do bad. You can't specify that a given power will be used only for a good purpose.
- We have to realize as well that not all bad politicians started out determined to expand their own power and fortunes at our expense. Many of them had high ideals and objectives but eventually succumbed to the temptation to take care of themselves, simply because they were given the power to do so.
- And we have to realize that not only does power corrupt, but that power attracts the worst elements of society. Those with the most benevolent instincts generally don't gravitate to positions where they can inflict their way on other people by force. If you give power to a good person, you're creating a magnet that will attract people who see that power as a way to get what they want for themselves without regard to the consequences inflicted on other people.

In other words, the problem is not so much the people involved, but the power that's been handed to them. As Michael Cloud has pointed out, "The problem isn't the abuse of power; it's the power to abuse."

Nowhere is this more evident than with matters of war and peace. The power to wage war has elevated more than one otherwise mediocre President into a GLORIOUS LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD — remembered by grateful citizens as the man who saved us from _____ [fill in the blank].

Objective

I hope this book will encourage a restoration of the America of peace and liberty that once existed, but has been overwhelmed by the relentless political push for "national greatness."

In 1776 Thomas Paine said:

Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them.¹⁶¹

And in 1899, William Graham Sumner, explaining the Founding Fathers' idea of America, said:

There was to be no grand diplomacy, because they intended to mind their own business and not be involved in any of the intrigues to which European statesmen were accustomed. There was to be no balance of power and no "reason of state" to cost the life and happiness of citizens.¹⁶²

In short, America was blessed by being insulated from the perpetual fighting of the Old World — insulated by two gigantic oceans and two friendly neighbors. The American ideal considered individual liberty to be far more important than "national greatness" or great social experiments.

Yes, it is a different world now than it was a century or two ago. But with regard to America's safety, most of the difference for us has been caused by our politicians — not by the never-ending string of Old World tyrants.

Americans need to know that it doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to live in a garrison state, accepting every claim of a new threat as our sad fate. We don't have to give up the Bill of Rights for an alleged security that never seems to materialize.

If we understand that most of the threats to America's safety are the product of the imaginations of American politicians, Americans can dedicate themselves to bringing back the land of the free — rather than having to be forever the home of the brave.

¹⁶¹ *The American Crisis*, no. 1 (December 23, 1776), quoted in *Bartlett's* 15th edition, page 384.

¹⁶² "The Conquest of the United States by Spain," originally published in the *Yale Law Journal*, January 1989, volume VIII, pages 168-193; republished in a book of Sumner's essays, entitled *The Conquest of the United States by Spain*.

Are lies justified?

Some people may say the government is right to lie — that politicians know best whether a war should be fought. And if it should be fought, anything the politicians do to rally Americans to the cause is justified.

Fine. Such people may prefer a dictatorship, and they're entitled to their opinions. I don't agree with them, but it's an honest opinion.

But that, too, is irrelevant.

Whether right or wrong, the politicians lie about the reasons for going to war, they lie about the conduct of the war, they lie about what the postwar world will be like, and they perpetuate those lies long after the war has ended.

The obvious lesson from the evidence, an enormous amount of which will be presented in this book, is very simple:

You should disregard whatever the politicians say until they provide absolute proof of their assertions.

- When your President or Senator Foghorn goes on and on about the terrible things a foreign leader is doing to his own people or his neighbors, take it with a grain of salt. It's very possible that a few years from now, most of it will turn out to have been untrue.
- When you see a military commander on TV explaining the latest American raid or battle, assume that the commander is telling you what he thinks you should hear — and that could even be the opposite of what actually happened.
- When the politicians tell you how much better the world will be once the current war has been won, remember the promises that were made during World War II: Europe would be liberated (allowing the Soviets to replace the Nazis as the conquerors), an international agency would assure that there would be no more wars (like Korea, Vietnam, and the hundreds of wars that have been fought throughout the world since 1945), and the government could retrench to a peacetime level (in fact, after a brief respite, the military budget began undergoing permanent growth).

When people speak of the “unprovoked” attack on Pearl Harbor, or the U.S. defending “free” countries like South Vietnam or Korea, remind yourself that your high-school history books didn’t provide any background on the events leading up to World War II or the true nature of governments like those in Korea or South Vietnam. Realize that the slogans and legends are based on over-simplified accounts of what happened when thousands — or millions — of people died on the battlefield or in their bombed-out homes.

Politicians lie.

In addition, even when they’re honest and conscientiously seeking the truth, they can make mistakes, they can get wrong information, and there can be differences of opinion.

But as you read this book and see the pattern of one false statement after another, realize that whatever the reason, when politicians goad us into war they almost always are doing so on the basis of assumptions that will later prove to have been completely wrong.

If you take nothing else from this book, the next time you hear a politician tell why we must go to war, intervene in some conflict, right some terrible wrong, or bring peace to some war-torn region, assume that most of what he’s saying will later prove to have been untrue.

NO SUPPORT FOR POLITICIANS

As we’ve seen, politicians have always found war to be to their advantage — regardless of the number of people who die, the property destroyed, the resources squandered.

Even if we can’t change them, our self-respect demands at least that we don’t support them.

PEACE AMENDMENT

What we sorely need is a Peace Amendment to the Constitution. I will leave the precise legal language to someone else to craft, but here are the essentials that such an amendment must contain:

1. The United States shall be at war only after a declaration of war, naming the specific enemy nations, is approved by the President and by a two-thirds vote of the members in both houses of Congress.

2. Before Congress can vote on a war declaration, the President must appear in person before Congress to present the case for war and answer all questions posed by members of Congress.
3. In the absence of a Congressional declaration of war, the President may deploy the military to repel an armed invasion of the United States, but may not deploy troops or engage in hostilities outside the United States.
4. The United States shall enter into no treaty with any nation or organization if such treaty could oblige the United States to be at war without a declaration of war by Congress, and the United States shall not be bound to engage in war by any action taken by any organization of which they are a member.
5. Except in time of war, as specified in Section 1, the United States will provide no weapons or any other resources to foreign governments, will engage in no military action outside the borders of the United States, and shall deploy no military personnel or weapons outside the boundaries of the United States — except that elements of the Navy may venture up to 300 miles outside the United States and a contingent of no more than 25 military personnel is permissible at each embassy.
6. Conscription is strictly prohibited in wartime or peacetime as a violation of the 13th amendment against slavery.
7. In the absence of a declaration of war, no one may be treated as a prisoner of war, and anyone detained by the United States or any subdivision is entitled to full constitutional protection.
8. Upon any violation of this article by the President, Congress has the obligation (not the option) to institute impeachment proceedings within 14 days.

Neither section 2 nor section 4 precludes a missile defense or any other kind of defense of this nation. It says only that the President must wait until a declaration of war has been issued before attacking a foreign nation or sending troops abroad. Even if some incapacity prevents Congress from making a declaration quickly, America could still defend itself. It just couldn't attack anyone else.

You may feel that some of the provisions handcuff the President too tightly. But no more than 5,000 American lives have been lost in the past from attacks against the U.S. — an

infinitesimal number compared to the 500,000 lives lost because America was dragged into wars that were none of its business.

Those who speak so cavalierly of “collateral damage” (the snuffing out of innocent lives in pursuit of a great good) should consider that comparison.

And it’s doubtful that a single one of those roughly 5,000 American lives lost in attacks on the U.S. would have been lost if Presidents had been restrained from playing God.

LACK OF SUCCESS IN FIGHTING WARS

EDUCATION

We can fault the schools for the lack of knowledge that Americans have about wars. But since education is primarily the province of government, it’s our fault if we allow ourselves to be surprised that government schools don’t teach our children to be skeptical of government claims.

Perhaps the greatest mistake Americans have ever made was in letting government educate their children.

WHAT IS WAR?

The politicians’ stirring phrases are meant to keep our eyes averted from the reality of war ~ to make us imagine heroic young men marching in parades, winning glorious battles, and bringing peace and democracy to the world.

But war is something quite different from that.

It is your children or your grandchildren dying before they’re even fully adults, or being maimed or mentally scarred for life. It is your brothers and sisters being taught to kill other people ~ and to hate people who are just like themselves and who don’t want to kill anyone either. It is your children seeing their buddies’ limbs blown off their bodies.

It is hundreds of thousands of human beings dying years before their time. It is millions of people separated forever from the ones they loved.

It is the destruction of homes for which people worked for decades. It is the end of careers that meant as much to others as your career means to you.

It is the imposition of heavy taxes on you and on other Americans and on people in other countries ~ taxes that remain long after the war is over. It is the suppression of free speech and the jailing of people who criticize the government.

It is the imposition of slavery by forcing young men to serve in the military.

It is goading the public to hate foreign people and races ~ whether Arabs or Japanese or Cubans. It is numbing our sensibilities to cruelties inflicted on foreigners.

It is cheering at the news of foreign pilots killed in their planes, of young men blown to bits while trapped inside tanks, of sailors drowned at sea.

Other tragedies inevitably trail in the wake of war. Politicians lie even more than usual. Secrecy and cover-ups become the rule rather than the exception. The press becomes even less reliable.

War is genocide, torture, cruelty, propaganda, dishonesty, and slavery.

War is the worst obscenity government can inflict upon its subjects. It makes every other political crime ~ corruption, bribery, favoritism, vote-buying, graft, dishonesty ~ seem petty.

Government's Role

If government has a role to play in foreign affairs, it isn't to win wars, to assure that the right people run foreign countries, to protect innocent foreigners from guilty aggressors, or to make the world safe for democracy ~ or even a safer place at all.

If government has a role, it can be only to keep us out of wars ~ to make sure no one will ever attack us, to make certain you can live your life in peace, to assure you the freedom to ignore who is right and who is wrong in foreign conflicts.

The only reason for military power is to discourage attackers, and ~ if they come anyway ~ to repel them at our borders. Such things as stationing troops in far-off lands, meddling in foreign disputes, and sending our children to foreign countries as "peacekeepers" only encourage war.

To make America safer and to assure that we stay at peace, we don't need to put more weapons in the hands of government employees, or to reform military purchasing methods, or to make more treaties with other governments, or to increase the military budget.

In fact, we need just the opposite of these things. We need to make it as hard as possible for politicians to involve us in war. And we need to create a defense system that relies as little as possible on the normal working of government.¹⁶³

PRESIDENTS IN LOVE WITH THEIR VOICES

Wilson, FDR, and George W. Bush were all in love with the sound of their own voices — and began to believe that they could convince anyone of anything.

IS FORCE THE ONLY OPTION?

The millions of automobiles produced every year in America don't involve the forcible conscription of labor. No people die as the inevitable "collateral damage" that must accompany the greater mission of getting the automobiles out the door. In fact, companies pride themselves on their safety records.

When a company's computers create problems, the company's management doesn't reach for its guns and start threatening people in order to solve the problems.

When a company faces a problem with a foreign government, it finds a way to get around the problem. It doesn't declare war on the foreign government.

When a business problem arises, it may be that no one involved knows the solution at the outset. But that doesn't mean the management must reach for their guns and start shooting or threatening. Instead, they hire the most creative minds to come up with solutions.

Force is not an option — and yet most business problems get solved.

But when politicians face a diplomatic problem, there is no other answer but force. Guns must be used, resources and people must be confiscated, people must die.

¹⁶³ *Why Government Doesn't Work* by Harry Browne.

No time is spent looking for some peaceful way of settling the problem.

If America's companies were run the way America's government is run, we'd all be dead by now.

FUTILITY OF IT ALL

In *Life in the Tomb*, Greek author Stratis Myrivillis, who fought in World War I, said:

A few years from now, I told him, perhaps others would be killing each other for anti-nationalist ideals. Then they would laugh at our own killings just as we had laughed at those of the Byzantines. These others would indulge in mutual slaughter with the same enthusiasm, though their ideals were new. Warfare under the entirely fresh banners would be just as disgraceful as always. They might even rip out each other's guts with religious zeal, claiming that they were "fighting to end all fighting." But they too would be followed by still others who would laugh at them with the same gusto.¹⁶⁴

THE PROBLEM IS POWER

The power to "do good" is too great an aphrodisiac.

And so even the best Presidents — such as Washington, Jefferson, Cleveland, Harding, and Coolidge — have ventured outside the bounds of the Constitution on more than one occasion, with no better results than those with the worst intentions. And in the process they have helped to encourage bad precedents for those with the worst intentions.

As Friedrich Hölderlin said, "What has made the State a hell on earth has been that man has tried to make it his heaven."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ *Life in the Tomb* by Myrivillis Stratis, page 137; cited in *War Is the Force that Gives Us Meaning* by Chris Hedges, pages 31–32.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted by F.A. Hayek in *The Collected Works* of F. A. Hayek, page 175; cited by John V. Denson in "A Century of War," page 2, *Studies in Classical Liberalism* series, Ludwig von Mises Institute. [Http://www.mises.org/asc/essays/denson.pdf](http://www.mises.org/asc/essays/denson.pdf)

Insofar as war is concerned, our only hope is, as Jefferson said, to bind the politicians “down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.”

WAR BEGETS WAR

Every war is sold to us as a war of necessity — the only way to defend ourselves against forces that are determined to conquer us and take away our freedom. And every war is sold as the means to bring about a permanent peace — when in fact the war makes future wars inevitable.

As we’ve seen, the United States had no reason to enter World War I — a purely European squabble. But Woodrow Wilson misled the American people and caused America to be involved. U.S. entry in the war tipped the balance of power, allowed a punitive and humiliating peace to be imposed on the Germans, and thus created the conditions that led to World War II.

Again, World War II was no business of America. But Franklin Roosevelt misled the American people in order to get America involved. The U.S. government transferred enormous resources to the Soviet Union, allowing the Soviets to take over eastern Europe and become a 45-year threat to the United States.

America fought the Cold War partly in the open and greatly in secret. U.S. Presidents misled the American people by hiding the events in which U.S. resources were used to overthrow governments — some of them democratic governments — and help keep brutal dictators in power. These events provoked a worldwide revulsion against the United States — allowing terrorists to gain the support of people who saw no other way to strike back against the American giant.

Now the so-called War on Terrorism is being fought in the same way. U.S. planes, missiles, and soldiers are killing thousands of innocent people, occupying foreign countries, and our government is demanding absolute obedience from every other country in the world.

The World’s Policeman

We’re told over and over that as “the world’s lone superpower” we must be the policeman of the world.

This is what the Romans thought.

This is what Napoleon thought.

This is what the British thought.

This is what the Nazis thought in 1940

This is what the Soviets thought.

It didn't work out well for any of those empires. It has no chance of working out well for America.

For one thing, it overlooks the fact that giving such absolute power to one entity guarantees that the power will be corrupted and abused. It already has been; it can only become worse.

SIMILARITIES AMONG WARS

- 1 Politicians saying America was threatened or attacked, when it wasn't.
- 2 Dissenters attacked as anti-American or pro-enemy.
- 3 Reasons for the war keep changing.
- 4 Supporting the troops means not opposing the government.
- 5 Demands for war crimes trials, where the victor's offenses are ignored and the losers are made to pay.
- 6 Unexplained reversals in alliances and enemies.
- 7 Politicians assume that strength brings peace and weakness brings war.
- 8 American President believes he can do extraordinary things.
- 9 Seeds of further wars.
- 10 Politicians and war hawks talking about sacrifice, but making none themselves.

- 11 War waged against a whole country because of the act of one or a few individuals. (Sarajevo in World War I and 9/11 with Afghanistan and Iraq.)

IS WAR NECESSARY?

I have managed to live on this planet for 70 years without ever striking another human being.

There have been a dozen or so times when someone wanted to fight me. I managed to talk my way out of a fight in most of those cases. In the few times I didn't succeed in avoiding a fight altogether, I managed to end the scuffle without hitting the other person and without suffering any noticeable damage to myself.

Granted, I've been fortunate. I grew up in a peaceful suburban area. Had I had the bad fortune to have been born in the inner city in a gang neighborhood, I might not have avoided violence so easily.

But that's an important point. Being fortunate in the circumstances of my birth and my growing-up, I didn't squander that good fortune by looking for trouble.

The U.S. by Birth

America was also fortunate in the circumstances of its birth.

After one apparently necessary fight to extricate itself from British rule, it found itself in the best neighborhood possible. It is bounded by two friendly countries and two enormous oceans. No need here to look for trouble.

And yet, ruled by American instead of British politicians, the United States has found itself embroiled in one street fight after another.

In fact, in the 20th century there were less than 20 years in which America was at peace with the world. What with World Wars, the Cold War, police actions, gunboat diplomacy in Latin America, overthrowing governments in Iran and other places, suppressing the Philippine rebellion, interfering with the Mexican revolution, firing missiles at Afghanistan and the Sudan, invading Panama and Grenada, bombing Libya, and on and on and on, Americans have lived with the tension of conflict and violence almost their entire lives.

And we live in a good neighborhood!

The Swiss by Birth

Contrast our circumstances with those of Switzerland.

The poor Swiss have the misfortune of living in the middle of one of the worst neighborhoods in the world. Centuries of imperial rivalries, ethnic hatreds, governments armed to the teeth and ready to go to war at the drop of the hat, and populations nursing grudges against each other — all these elements have kept Europe in turmoil for centuries.

Switzerland is like the inner-city family that hears gunfire outside its windows every night.

And yet Switzerland hasn't been involved in a single war for two centuries. The Swiss managed to avoid being sucked into the World Wars, the Cold War, or any of the other conflicts that have beset Europe.

The Swiss haven't been fortunate in their geographical circumstances. But they've dealt with those circumstances intelligently. It wasn't by the grace of dictators that they've avoided war; it has been a national policy to do so.

The Swiss have always made sure it was in the self-interest of warring nations to leave Switzerland out of their quarrels. They've devised ingenious defenses to demonstrate that, while Switzerland is not unconquerable, the cost of conquest would be intolerable to the conqueror. And they've made themselves an indispensable trading partner to any country that otherwise might see some profit in invading Switzerland.

It may *seem* that war is inevitable for many countries — such as the warring factions in the Balkans or some countries in Asia or Africa. But Switzerland has proven that it isn't inevitable for anyone — not even for a country as poorly situated as Switzerland is.

Why then is America continually at war over one thing or another?

The "Last Resort"

Whenever the U.S. goes to war somewhere, the politicians tell us that diplomacy was tried and failed — and that war was the very, very, very last resort.

But the truth is that the politicians didn't try much at all to avoid war. And the diplomacy was bound to fail, because it involved our politicians making insensitive demands on a foreign country — demands we had no authority to make, demands that were known in advance to be unacceptable to the foreigners.

In the few cases that America has been attacked, it's been because our politicians were trying to dictate to other countries — countries that represented no threat to us at all. The foreigners attacked either to try to gain an advantage against the stronger U.S. when our government had made war seem inevitable (as at Pearl Harbor), or because attacking seemed the only way to strike back at a country that was throwing its weight around in other people's business (as in 9/11).

Our Neighborhood

How easy it would have been for Americans to have lived the past two centuries in peace. We have never been attacked by a country that hadn't first been bullied by our politicians.

Maybe others aren't so fortunately situated, *but we are*.

No one can seriously believe that terrorists have struck America because they hate our freedom, our democracy, or our prosperity. If that were true, they would have warmed up first by attacking Switzerland — an easier target.

And if someone asks how you would handle the terrorists without war, now that Pandora's Box has been opened, here's a simple answer:

I'm not certain what I'd do, but I know one thing for sure: With \$2 trillion a year at my disposal, I could hire the best minds in the world to find a solution that didn't involve using the cave-man tactics of trying to beat people to death.

But no one in power is interested in finding alternatives to war. They arm to the teeth and then tell us we will obtain "peace through strength."

Well, America has been overwhelmingly strong for a century, and we're still waiting to see the peace. As Charles Beard put it, we've had "perpetual war for perpetual peace." Perhaps part of the problem is that we have an overwhelming national offense, but practically no national defense.

Is It Necessary?

I have never hit anyone, and not doing so has caused me no humiliation; nor has it made me a target for bullies. If America made peace the object, it need be neither humiliated nor picked upon.

Is war necessary?

For Americans, no.

Is war inevitable?

For Americans, yes — so long as we give politicians the power to meddle in our lives and in the lives of foreigners.

Switzerland in World War II & Beyond

“You misunderstand and misuse history. Switzerland has not had a war in lots of years because every Swiss is armed, is in the armed services until age 40, and shoots to kill anyone that violates their sovereignty.

They are at all times prepared to defend themselves. And, being such a small country, even Hitler and Stalin and his successors felt that the cost of invasion was not worth the gain.

Wake up, smell the coffee and live in the real world, not some idealistic place in your warped mind and some place that has never existed.”

ANSWER: Since I said in my article "They've devised ingenious defenses to demonstrate that, while Switzerland is not unconquerable, the cost of conquest would be intolerable to the conqueror," I'm not sure what you're complaining about. As a matter of fact, I lived in Switzerland for six years and am quite familiar with its defense system. But notice that it is focused on defense, not offense — as the U.S. system is.

Bravery & Responsibility

EMAIL: “Either you live in a cocoon or are a physical and/or moral coward!!”

ANSWER: Would you like me better if I said I had beat up two dozen men and a handful of women?

EMAIL: “Sometimes you have to accept the burden. Some responsibilities can not be wished away. That is what the liberals do, they run from responsibility, hoping that by being "nice" people, the big bad wolf will not bang on their

door. . . . You liberals either don't understand history or don't want to. Either way, you end up being physical and moral cowards."

ANSWER: You have me mixed up with someone else.

Unlike liberals, and unlike you, I have no faith in government. It can't run the health-care system, doesn't educate our children well, and it certainly doesn't keep us safe from your "big bad wolf."

As for "being physical and moral cowards": If it's cowardly not to want to see innocent people killed, I guess I'm a coward. I'm not brave enough to taunt the villain and dare him to kill a bunch of other people. In other words, I'm not a chicken-hawk. I want to see America live in peace and liberty. And big government doesn't provide either.

Switzerland & the Nazis

EMAIL: "One important fact not reported by Mr. Browne. Switzerland became a repository for Nazi gold during World War II as well as valuable artifacts and paintings. When Germany lost the war, Switzerland simply kept the gold and other valuable items and founded a banking system that would not have been possible otherwise.

In addition, Switzerland did cooperate with Nazi Germany during the war and manufactured critical war materiel for the German war machine for which they were paid handsomely.

Switzerland has kept out of conflict by being underhanded in its dealings and not because of any moral commitment.

Sorry to burst your bubble."

ANSWER: Since I said in my article, "And they've made themselves an indispensable trading partner to any country that otherwise might see some profit in invading Switzerland," I'm not sure what new information you think you're providing.

The banking system there is hundreds of years old. Laws were passed in the mid-1930s to protect Jewish accounts from being investigated or

confiscated by the Nazis; otherwise, the system remained as it always had been.

And I don't see anything underhanded in dealing openly with Germany and Britain during the war. Not joining your side doesn't make them underhanded, just discriminating.

The last time I looked, the bubble was still there.

Switzerland Funding Wars?

EMAIL: “One point about Switzerland. The reason they never go to war is because that is the enclave that the world's bankers use to house all the world's (their) money. And, they are the ones that fund all the wars, and both sides of the wars. War is very profitable for them and keeps countries unstable, while they remain in full charge through finances which is power.”

ANSWER: I understand what you're saying, but Switzerland doesn't fund wars. The Swiss government foreign aid program is too small to have any effect on anything. And the banks are privately owned. No private bank is going to lend money to both sides of a war (as our government sometimes has), because a bank can't afford to lend money to the loser who may not repay his loans.

Switzerland's Defenses

EMAIL: “I'm curious about two points.

1. Mr. Browne stated "They've [the Swiss] devised ingenious defenses to demonstrate that, while Switzerland is not unconquerable, the cost of conquest would be intolerable to the conqueror." What are these devices and/or where could I learn more about Switzerland's defense policies?

2. He also wrote: "In the few cases that America has been attacked, it's because our politicians were trying to dictate to other countries." What were we doing to Japan to provoke the attack on Pearl Harbor?"

ANSWER: 1. Unfortunately, not a lot has been written in the English language about Switzerland's defense policies. And I don't have time to try to remedy the lack of material. Here are two examples.

During World War II, the Swiss government allowed the Nazis to pass through parts of Switzerland to resupply troops in Italy. The Nazis had to pass over the Alps to do this. The Swiss mined all the critical passes and told the Nazis that the Swiss would blow up the passes the moment the Nazis engaged in any funny business.

Second, the Swiss made a deal with the Nazis allowing the Germans to buy machine tools from Swiss companies — but only on condition that Swiss boats be allowed to safely carry equipment down the Rhine River to the Atlantic Ocean for delivery to the British.

2. As for the other question, the Roosevelt administration browbeat the Japanese for two years before Pearl Harbor — demanding that the Japanese give up their colonies and conquests in China and East Asia. The Japanese were absolutely no threat to the United States, but Roosevelt made it clear to his subordinates (who later reported his views) that he wanted to lure the Japanese into "firing the first shot" so that America could get into the war against Hitler. (The Japanese and Germans had a mutual defense treaty.)

I don't know of a single historian today who believes the Pearl Harbor attack was either unprovoked or a surprise. The only argument is over whether Roosevelt was right to bully the Japanese into attacking, in order to rally the American people to support U.S. entry into the war.

Is It Wrong to Be for Peace?

EMAIL: “Going against the war is bad for the Libertarian Party. The war has largely been a success, especially when compared with pre-war predictions made by Harry.

But what matters is the tremendous number of Bush supporters who are upset with his domestic agenda. The Patriot Act, his propensity to spend, and the prescription drug entitlement are the first that come to mind.

I don't think your going to get a lot of Dean supporters; they will support the Green (communist) Party, or any of the other leftist running for the Democratic nomination, if he does not make it. Anti-war rhetoric may catch their ear, but once they learn of the Libertarian position on government, taxes and guns, they will switch us off.”

ANSWER: I'm not aware of any pre-war predictions I made. If I've forgotten some, I'll be happy to be reminded.

If we go along with the war hawks, how can we ever expect the war mentality to recede? *Someone* has to stand up and point out the obvious — that the Bush doctrine has caused tens of millions more people to believe America is a bully, encouraging more people to support the terrorists.

Maybe we couldn't stop the Iraqi War. But pointing out that politicians lie and that war isn't necessary may cause a few more people to be skeptical the next time — when the President is trying to build support for attacking Syria, Iran, or someone else.

We shouldn't determine the truth of a proposition by the people it might appeal to. I'm not speaking what I believe is the truth because I think it might appeal to Dean supporters.

Britain Better than the U.S.?

EMAIL: “You said, ‘After one apparently necessary fight to extricate itself from British rule, it found itself in the best neighborhood possible.’

I don't think my life would be any worse off today if Britain still ruled the United States. The British people are not any less free than the American people are today. So I think that war didn't matter either. In fact I would rather live in Britain today than the United States.”

ANSWER: When your own government is out of control, almost any other country can seem to be more attractive. However, I don't think you'd find Britain to be any freer than America (or even *as* free).

Create table showing all the years of the 20th century and the conflicts that filled them.

No Unavoidable Wars

The United States became a nation officially when the Constitution was ratified by the tenth state on June 25, 1788. Since that time, over 200 years, the United States has not fought in a single war that couldn't have been avoided.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO NOW?

So what if we should have done something different before? What would you do now?

If you don't understand what brought us here, you can expect today's policy to lead to anything good.

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Even though the government hasn't yet become as tyrannical in the War on Terrorism as it was in World War I, don't assume it won't become that way as the war drags on with no end in sight. The mere fact that the war doesn't end is a signal to politicians that tougher methods are needed.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS ALWAYS EXPAND

There is a pattern in government programs: they always expand beyond the original harmless, moderate estimates of what they will entail.

The politicians tell us there's a problem — too much illicit drug use, poor reading skills in schools, too many people in poverty, terrorists are a dangerous threat, some people not getting sufficient health care, or something else.

A program is proposed. Promises are made that this program will solve the problem within a year or two.

But the program doesn't solve the problem. So the program must be made more forceful.

In areas such as education or health care, the answer is to spend more money. When that doesn't work, spend even more money — and more and more and more.

For example, 40 years after the federal government first stuck its nose into education, after spending hundreds of billions of dollars to improve government schools,¹⁶⁶ after dictating standards to local school districts, the politicians tell us the schools are a mess and the only solution is to spend still more taxpayer dollars.

¹⁶⁶ See the federal government's "No Child Left Behind" website at:
<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/edlite-index.html>

In areas such as drug use or terrorism, the escalation is of a different kind. When the problem isn't solved, it's true more money is spent. But the real expansion takes place at the cost of civil liberties.

- Law-enforcement people become liars, posing as drug dealers or terrorists, in order to entrap people.
- Asset forfeiture laws are used to confiscate property and help finance law enforcement.
- It becomes much easier to get warrants to invade your privacy.
- The success of the program is measured by the number of prosecutions and convictions, not by whether drug use or terrorism is declining.
- in exchange for leniency, confessed felons are enticed to testify against people who may or may not be guilty.
- Citizens are held without bail, without access to an attorney, without a speedy trial.

In short, the Bill of Rights is eventually discarded. And the notion that these invasions of liberty apply only to drug dealers or terrorists is a naïve one. Without due process of law, a fair trial, and confronting the defendant's accusers, it's impossible to know whether someone *is* a drug dealer or a terrorist.

And when success is measured by convictions, don't expect everyone in law enforcement to be as meticulous as you are about prosecuting only guilty people.

When George W. Bush said we didn't have to worry that Jose Padilla was locked up without due process of law because he was a "bad guy," he was saying the Bill of Rights no longer applies. From now on, George Bush was to be the authority who decides who is guilty and who is innocent — who's a good guy and who's a bad guy.

WHAT HAS LYING ACHIEVED?

Many people believe that politicians have to lie frequently, because the average American can't handle the truth.

These people believe that the lying is justified by the overriding need of the politicians to deal with dangerous events on the world stage.

I don't agree with that belief. But if we assume for the moment that it's a valid belief, the first question that should be asked is: What has lying achieved?

What have we Americans received in exchange for being treated like children who can't handle the truth?

THE \$2 TRILLION SWINDLE

The Biggest Lie of All

The biggest lie of all is that it's necessary to have a \$2 trillion government in order to be protected.

Government doesn't protect us from thugs either. Gun control. War on Drugs.

Lying Applies to Other Things as Well

When we realize how often our leaders have lied to us and how casually they treat words and the truth, we should make it a point not to accept anything that's said without very firm evidence. Social Security, the budget, etc. See "Time for Truth" for examples of how Bush has engaged in cheer-leading. "Axis of evil": axis is a line, and no one has suggested that there's any sort of line running through Iran, Iraq, and North Korea — the way Germany, Italy, and Japan had cooperated and signed treaties.

Government Doesn't Work

Immigration service sent visas to two of the hijackers 6 months after the attack. Give other examples of significant government foul-ups, and point out that this is the government you want to go around the world and make everything okay.

Government doesn't succeed: History of American foreign policy objectives and the results. George Bush, Sr.'s "New World Order."

Why You Should Oppose a Warlike Foreign Policy

Why conservatives should oppose current American foreign policy.

Why liberals should oppose it.

Why libertarians should oppose it.

Big Government

How war is the quintessential big-government program — used to justify economic boondoggles and the elimination of individual liberty and personal responsibility.

The \$2 trillion swindle: how we put up with government in order to be protected — while the government doesn't protect us.

How a libertarian government would defend America from foreign attack, and how it would respond if the U.S. were attacked regardless. This book isn't the place to discuss a proper foreign policy in detail, but . . .

Big Government

Most people who think much about it recognize that war is a tremendous boost for big government.

But few people stop to recognize how big government encourages war.

The U.S. probably wouldn't have entered World War I if the income tax amendment hadn't been enacted in 1913. (Contrast that war with the Spanish-American war.)

HOW POLITICIANS GET AWAY WITH IT

Schools & one-liners. Poor education concerning the history of prior wars. This is borne out in the emails I receive.

People want peace, and so quite willing forget the war once it's over.

If politicians refuse to give the whole truth, who's going to make them?

Manipulate the press through press pools and censorship. Limited access to war zones and to civilians in the area.

Access to press conferences and sources depends on how you treat the politicians.

"National security suppression of information."

Politicians don't face the same consequences of lying that you and I do.

LYING AS A WAY OF LIFE

Lying about wars isn't a unique characteristic of political action. Politicians lie routinely about almost anything. Here are some examples.

Social Security lockbox.
Welfare reform.

The budget surpluses (show graph of debt rising)

Welfare Reform

“In 1996, we began transforming welfare with time limits and job training and work requirements. And the nation's welfare rolls have been cut by more than half. But even more importantly, many lives have been dramatically improved.”

George W. Bush, San Jose, April 30, 2002¹⁶⁷

In 1996 the federal government spent \$229.7 billion on “income security.” For 2002, the amount is \$313.7 billion (estimated as of September 2002). An increase of 37%.¹⁶⁸

WHY POLITICIANS LIE

Civil Liberties Intrusions

See article on FBI visiting libraries:

Ideas \ Civil Liberties \ Libraries visited by the FBI - WP, 02-06-24.doc

Non-War Legislation & Power Increased

The politicians immediately pass legislation and assume powers that don't help prosecute the war, but that they've wanted all along and weren't able to pass in peacetime.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020430-5.html>

¹⁶⁸ *Economic Indicators*, September 2002.

Rapid Growth of Government

The government is expanded at an unprecedented rate. After the war, there usually is a retrenchment, but spending, taxing, regulations, and power never go back to their previous level.

Politicians Secure in the their Power

Voters are reluctant to change office-holders while the war is going on. Several possible ways in which this is done: (1) war fever; (2) outright intrusions on the electoral process; (3) buying off of war manufacturers and others profiting from the war.

President Becomes ‘Great’

A war President who had previously been considered average or even mediocre goes into the history books as “great”.

Why historians rate wartime Presidents as the “greatest”

Motives

Why do countries go to war when it usually produces nothing of value along with great destruction?

For a long time, some historians have tried to explain wars as being promoted by businessmen who wanted to open up foreign trade markets. Sometimes it’s said that commercial interests wanted the U.S. to secure bases in far-off lands that would make it easier to protect American shipping to faraway countries.

Actually, I believe such conspiratorial explanations are more complicated than they need to be. There’s a much more straightforward reason so many people push for war: Many people profit from it in the short term.

We’re not surprised that farm organizations push for farm subsidies. Or that teachers’ unions push for increased spending on schools. Or that trade organizations push to keep competition out of their markets through licensing or tariffs.

Why should we be surprised that war is appealing to arms-makers, airplane builders, or missile manufacturers?

In fact, it goes well beyond that. Think of all the business that's generated by the mobilization for war. More uniforms are needed — plus mess trays, jeeps, tanks, {make this a long list}.

Do the people in all these businesses say to themselves, "It's worth having a lot of people die so that I can make more money"? I doubt it.

But, then, do farmers say to themselves, "It's worth it that some families will have to go without in order for me to make more money"? Again, I doubt it.

Instead, politicians are experts at transforming self-interest into the national interest. They don't promote farm subsidies by saying they want to make the owners of big agribusinesses richer yet. They say the nation's security depends on having a self-sustaining domestic food supply.

They don't promote aid to education on the grounds that the heads of teachers' unions should have more power. They decry the terrible shortage of teachers and classrooms that supposedly are the cause of our children getting such poor educations.

Munitions makers simply point out the need for a bigger defense budget — or even to attack some other country — in order to make our country safer.

Politicians

But the most important cause of war is the politicians. Without them, no one's cause would succeed.

Politicians make informal alliances with farm groups, teachers' unions, arms makers, and corporations of all kinds in order to expand their own power and to get allies for their own reelections.

Such alliances are as old as government itself. Even kings established alliances with bankers, businessmen, or organizations in order to govern more easily.

That's why the America's Founding Fathers were so determined to provide a Constitution that severely limited the federal government to a few simple functions — and to limit the ability of the chief executive to roam the world looking for trouble.

Foreign Policy Is Fertile Area

We know how bad government schools, etc. are. But as individuals we aren't able to monitor and judge what politicians do about foreign policy. So foreign policy provides a diversion.

PEACE AMENDMENT

In this book I've listed dozens and dozens of lies that politicians have told — lies that have dragged us into one war after another.

These lies haven't been harmless. They have caused terrible damage to the American people and the world — draining our resources, killing our loved ones, fostering hatred, fear, and resentment around the world.

Given the propensity of politicians to lie to advance their own political objectives, what should we do?

It's obvious that we must take away from politicians the power to do such terrible damage by telling us lies.

But suppose someone could prove that every "lie" I've detailed here wasn't really a lie after all — that each and every one of them was merely an unintentional error of perception or an error in judgment. In that case what should we do?

It's obvious that we must take away from politicians the power to do such terrible damage by making errors of perception and judgment.

It doesn't really matter whether the politicians said what they said to deceive us intentionally or because they were misinformed or misguided. The damage resulted in either case.

And the damage wasn't a small price to pay for some greater good, because no greater good has come from America's involvement in wars when America wasn't threatened.

Letting political animals made decisions of life and death for us has been a terrible disaster for America. It has bred death and destruction, it has transformed America from the inspiration for liberty worldwide into the dreaded imperial power that can crush anyone who stands in its way.

We have to strip politicians of the power to put our lives at risk.

Enforcing Peace

A proposed constitutional amendment to keep the American government from meddling in the affairs of other countries:

A proposed constitutional amendment to keep the United States government from dragging us into wars:

Section 1. The United States shall be at war only after a declaration of war, naming the specific enemy nations, is approved by the President and by a two-thirds vote of the eligible members in both houses of Congress.

Section 2. The members of the House of Representatives and the Senate eligible to vote on a declaration of war are those who are between the ages of 18 and 35, or who have children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren between those ages.

Section 3. In the absence of a Congressional declaration of war, the President may deploy the military to repel an armed invasion of the United States, but may not deploy troops or engage in hostilities outside the United States.

Section 4. The United States shall enter into no treaty with any nation or organization if such treaty could oblige the United States to be at war without a declaration of war by Congress, and the United States shall not be bound to engage in war by any action taken by any organization of which they are a member.

Section 5. Except in time of war, as specified in Section 1, the United States will provide no weapons or other resources to foreign governments, will engage in no military action outside the borders of the United States, and shall deploy no military personnel or weapons outside the boundaries of the United States except that at any one time up to one thousand members of the military may be outside the United States for no longer than thirty days.

Section 6. Upon any violation of this article by the President, Congress shall institute impeachment proceedings within 14 days.

Sections 3 and 5 don't preclude a missile defense or any other kind of defense of this nation. It requires only that the President wait before attacking a foreign nation until a declaration of war has been issued. Even if some incapacity prevents Congress from making a declaration quickly, America could still defend itself. It just couldn't attack anyone else.

War is too dangerous an enterprise to leave in the hands of people who routinely lie in their own self-interest.

I welcome any suggestions for making this amendment more precise. (My thanks to Arthur Medina for some excellent suggestions, which have been incorporated.)

Add limits of naval activity in absence of war.

If President wants to attack foreign country, must have declaration of war and must present his case to Congress in person.

No treating prisoners as POWs in absence of declaration of war.

Sections XX and XX don't preclude a missile defense or any other kind of defense of this nation. They simply require the President to wait before attacking a foreign nation until a declaration of war has been issued. Even if some incapacity prevents Congress from making a declaration quickly, America could still defend itself. It just couldn't attack anyone else.

War is too dangerous an enterprise to leave in the hands of people who routinely lie in their own self-interest.

Q & A

Q: >In your proposal, our navy would be prevented from practicing in the ocean; military airplanes couldn't fly to Hawaii.<

A: As long as they didn't enter the air or sea space of some other country, I don't think there would be a problem.

Q: >Giving NO resources to foreign governments would be hard to literally do. Wouldn't we want to send the Coast Guard to help a nearby sinking ship?<

A: I'm not sure there's any reason to have a Coast Guard. Private rescue companies are generally much more efficient and economical (as private fire companies have demonstrated in America).

Q: >Would we want to share intelligence info to capture some foreign crooks?<

A: I don't see that as banned by the amendment. However, I also don't see that American involvement in international agencies (such as Interpol) has achieved much of anything. If it has, I'd still give up that benefit for the much larger benefit of keeping our government out of other people's business. It's easy to compare non-government proposals with current government programs on the assumption that the current government programs actually achieve something. Usually, they don't -- whether it's disaster relief, international security, or help to the aged.

Q: >How do you handle pirates?<

A: Pirates should be handled by the companies transporting products internationally. We have no idea how much a gallon of gasoline _really_ costs, because so much of the cost is buried in the military budget. The oil companies should pay to keep the oil flowing and add it to the cost of the product -- just as domestic companies add security services into the costs of their products.

Q: >You and your party don't believe that our country is worth fighting for, for any reason.<

A: I am trying desperately to fight for my country -- by trying to stop policies that result in the killing of thousands of Americans. Those who accept whatever the government does obviously don't care enough about their country to investigate the claims of politicians or do anything to try to stop them. 292,131 Americans died in WW2. Are we simply to blindly accept the "necessity" of that without investigating the events that led to America's involvement?

Q: >If we isolate ourselves like you advocate, who do we sell to?<

A: I believe you have the problem upside-down. When America stayed out of European wars, all the markets of the world were open to it. Now -- thanks to government-knows-best policies designed to remake the world -- there are dozens of countries that are off-limits to Americans.

If you have lived your entire life believing that your government was always right in prosecuting wars, you should have no trouble believing that it's capable of running the health-care system, the schools, the charities, and every other important aspect of our lives. But if you don't believe government has the ability or moral purity to run those areas effectively and justly, why would you believe its foreign policy is pure as the driven snow?

Reining in the War Crusaders

Every person we persuade that war should always be the last resort, rather than the first, is one more person no longer reciting the trite slogans of war, one more person who understands that our Keystone Kops can't make the Middle East safe for democracy, one more person who understands that giving up our liberty for a government-promised security will mean we have neither liberty nor security.

And the next time a President wants to dray us into a dangerous war, that one more person will be on our side from the beginning. And he'll be pointing out the dangers to *his* friends and associates.

And among all the people we talk to, there may be someone who *does* have the power, the ability, and the influence to create a tidal wave of opposition that will force the politicians to quit putting us at risk.

Having lived with the Cold War from the time I was 12 years old, I came to assume it would last for the rest of my life. I was happily amazed when the communist Hungarian government opened its border to allow vacationing East Germans to flee into Austria. A few weeks later the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, and a year later the Soviet Union disintegrated.

Miracles do happen.

I don't know that a miracle will happen, but I know that it *can* happen. So it's important to take every opportunity to *allow* it to happen.

Embargoes & Sanctions

What's wrong with them.

Hurt Americans and the wrong foreigners.

War Is Good for the Economy

Cover this one.

Duty to Rescue Others

Do Americans have a duty to rescue people in other countries from invaders or oppressive dictators?

Should be voluntary.

The Costs of War

The death toll, war by war.

The residual losses of liberty ~ such as the Trading with the Enemy Act from World War I.

Ignorance of Foreign Policy

Why the events of September 11 shouldn't have been a surprise. How ignorance has made it easy for Americans to be lured into previous wars.

Epigram

“Most wars are begun for reasons which have nothing to do with justice, have results quite different from those proclaimed as their objects, if indeed they have any clear-cut result at all, and visit during their course a great deal of casual suffering on the innocent.”

John Keegan

The Face of Battle

Quoted by Matthew Stevenson

“Hello Again to All That”

The American Spectator, July 1999, page 70.

APPENDICES

A**Indian & Mexican Wars**

I haven't included the wars with American Indians in this book. There are two main reasons for that.

The first is that there is very little literature available to document lies about the Indians that may have been told by American politicians. The Indians had no archives, no written documents, or other evidence to refute what American politicians may have said.

There were some claims of Indian atrocities that were fictitious. But they're already common knowledge, and I don't want to take up space in this book reiterating what is commonly known.

The second reason is that the Indian Wars probably involved fewer lies than most U.S. wars. The wars were wars of conquest by the American government and no one pretended they were anything else.

There were no cries that the Indians were planning to conquer America — and then the world. There were no claims of secret plots by Indians to assassinate American Presidents.

The wars were rationalized by saying that America had a "manifest destiny" to rule the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific — and so the Indians had to be subdued. Whether or not that was a proper attitude is debatable, but at least very few people — especially those in power in the U.S. government — pretended otherwise.

I've started this coverage of American wars with the Civil War, rather than the Mexican War.

Part of the reason is that there are no long-standing myths about the Mexican War. No modern history book claims that the U.S. had to fight the Mexican War in order to preserve "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," or to keep Mexico from conquering the U.S. and the world.

B**The Spanish-American War****Liberation**

Begin and end the chapter with liberation.

Sinking of the Maine

Although Rickover's inquiry didn't occur until 1976, his report shows that the inquiry board of 1898 was prejudiced. He isn't relying on technology available only today. See the summary of his report in the S-A war folder.

In 1897 the American steamship *Olivette* was about to leave Cuba. Spanish police suspected that three young American women might be carrying messages from Cuban rebels, and searched them.

The *New York Journal* newspaper ran a lurid story titled, "Does Our Flag Protect Women?" It included a sketch by Frederic Remington showing a naked, helpless young woman being searched by three men.

A rival newspaper found one of the women, who said that a police matron had searched the women with no men present and no impropriety.¹

NUMBER OF TROOPS IN PHILIPPINES

There were 70,000 American troops in the Philippines at one point in the war. The final casualty total was 4,243 dead and 2,818 wounded.²

¹ "The Needless War with Spain" by William E. Leuchtenburg, *American Heritage Magazine*, February 1957, page 35; cited in *World War I: The Rest of the Story* by Richard J. Maybury, page 135.

² *World War I: The Rest of the Story* by Richard J. Maybury, page 139.

C

The Civil War**Emancipation Proclamation**

The Emancipation Proclamation not only didn't free the slaves, it specifically guaranteed that any state that rejoined the Union by January 1, 1863, would be allowed to keep its slaves.

Gettysburg Address

In his famous Gettysburg Address, Lincoln said the war was being fought so "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Of all the enduring myths of the Civil War, this is one of the most egregious lies.

In the first place, the American government was in no danger of perishing. Despite the lies circulated in the North during the war, the South had no designs on conquering the North. Quite the contrary, they were trying to escape from Northern domination in order to set up their own government.

But how in the world can you have a government "of the people" when Abraham Lincoln forcibly shut down 100 Northern newspapers? Were the editors of these papers revealing military secrets? Were they advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. government?

No and no. They were merely pointing out that the Southern states had a perfect right to secede and/or that it would be the advantage of the North to allow the Southern states to secede. Whether or not you agree with that position, the First Amendment — which contains no exceptions for wartime — is supposed to guarantee that a "government of the people" will allow the people to speak their minds.

How can you have a government "by the people" when Abraham Lincoln forcibly shut down the Maryland legislature when it was considering secession? Lincoln replaced the Maryland legislators with politicians of his own choosing — politicians who agreed to be loyal to Abraham Lincoln.

How can you have a government "for the people" when over 618,000 of those people were killed in order to satisfy Abraham Lincoln's personal whim that secession was illegal?

The Gettysburg Address is held up as a paragon of great oratory and sentiments. But if you read it, you have to wonder what the point was. And when schoolchildren are taught that it was a great speech, they have to grow up thinking that “great oratory” consists of a lot of empty phrases delivered in a somewhat poetic syntax.

Terrorism

“If Lincoln had lived, he would have imposed a merciful peace on the South, and Reconstruction wouldn’t have been so brutal.”

The idea that Lincoln was basically a peaceful man is belied by the tactics he condoned during the war.

One of the worst outgrowths of the Civil War was the acceptance of terrorism as a wartime strategy.

The common definition of terrorism (when anyone bothers to define the term) is the killing and intimidation of innocent civilians in order to influence a government to change its policies.³

³ Terrorism is defined in the *Code of Federal Regulations* as “...the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” (28 C.F.R. Section 0.85)

The FBI further describes terrorism as either domestic or international, depending on the origin, base, and objectives of the terrorist organization. For the purpose of this report, the FBI uses the following definitions of terrorism:

- Domestic terrorism refers to activities that involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state; appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. [18 U.S.C. § 2331(5)]
- International terrorism involves violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any state, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or any state. These acts appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping and occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum. [18 U.S.C. § 2331(1)]

THE FBI DIVIDES TERRORIST-RELATED ACTIVITY INTO TWO CATEGORIES:

- A terrorist *incident* is a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States, or of any state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.
- A terrorism *prevention* is a documented instance in which a violent act by a known or suspected terrorist group or individual with the means and a proven propensity for violence is successfully interdicted through investigative activity.

Prior to the American Civil War, civilians were considered completely off-limits to the military. War was between soldiers and sailors; non-combatants were not to be touched.

In fact, one of the first big battles of the Civil War was Bull Run on July 21, 1861. As the armies of the North and South got ready to fight, civilians poured into the area and camped on the hillside to watch the battle. They knew that, no matter who won the battle, the victors would not attack the civilians.

It also was understood that armies didn't confiscate the property of civilians, that they negotiated to buy the supplies they needed when invading enemy territory. War was between combatants and civilians weren't to be disturbed.

All that changed with the Civil War. Sherman's famous march through Georgia was the hallmark of the new kind of war. He burned the houses of civilians, slaughtered their livestock, stole their property, and even burned down entire cities — to intimidate the people, hoping they would prevail on the Southern government to surrender.

General Grant did the same thing in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

And Lincoln was all in favor of these tactics. He commended them for their "victories." {See if there's a quote available.}

Eventually, the Southerners retaliated in kind. War had been transformed from what had been considered an honorable (if misguided) endeavor into animal savagery.

To think that Lincoln could condone this, but would have been merciful in the war's aftermath is naïve. After having imposed his way through brute force throughout the war, do you think he would condone any deviation from his post-war desires without continuing to use brute force to enforce his way? That doesn't seem plausible.

Today, terrorism comes in many forms, but it is still the killing and intimidation of innocent people in order to force a government to change its policies. We see that terrorism in Middle-East suicide bombers, in Chechen rebels holding Russian civilians hostage in a Moscow theater, in American bombing of innocent Iraqis, and in countless other forms.

Acts have consequences. The terrorist acts in the Civil War have led eventually to terrorist acts all over the world (with politicians selectively condemning those that aren't to their advantage).

And people don't change suddenly when wars end. A bloodthirsty dictator doesn't become a man of peace and mercy once a war ends. He continues to impose his way by

brute force.

The War Necessary?

“If the Civil War hadn’t been fought, we would still have slavery.”

{ Show a table of the countries that ended slavery peacefully. A footnote can mention the slave revolt in Haiti — which was a revolution, not a war. }

Slavery is an unmitigated evil. But it was just as evil in the XX other countries that ended slavery during the 19th century without killing people to make it happen. In the mid-1800s, the U.S. — apart from slavery — comprised one of the freest countries in the world. So why did America need a bloody slaughter, killing 600,000 people, in order to end slavery — when no other country required such savagery to do so?

No one can know for certain what would have happened if Abraham Lincoln had allowed the South to secede in peace. Other than knowing that 600,000 people wouldn’t have died, we can only speculate on an alternative history. But it does seem logical to suppose that:

- The North and South would have coexisted, and probably established a free-trade zone — with people and products passing back and forth between the two countries without tariffs, passports, or other interference.
- Slavery would have died out eventually. Only a small minority of Southerners held slaves and they became a greater and greater embarrassment to Southerners as other countries found ways to end slavery peacefully. Most likely, the Confederate government would have reimbursed slave-owners for freeing their slaves. When might this have happened? Probably sometime before the end of the 19th century.
- By the time slavery ended, there probably would have been agitation to reunite the North and South as one country again. To make that happen, the North would have had to agree to forgo protective tariffs and corporate welfare — a change that would continue to be a blessing today.
- If the reunion didn’t occur, the two countries would have continued to live in peace — just as Canada and the U.S. have done. In the 19th century, many Americans believed it was necessary for America to conquer Canada and make it a part of the United States of America; it never happened, but that hasn’t prevented the two countries from enjoying each other’s company.

Slavery

I abhor slavery.

I abhor the Negro slavery that existed in America until the mid-1800s.

I abhor the slavery that still exists in some parts of the world — such as the Sudan.

I abhor the conscription of young men to be slaves of the government during peacetime or wartime.

I abhor the imprisoning without trial of people — in America or elsewhere.

I abhor any kind of slavery.

Most Americans would agree with me on these points — especially about Negro slavery in America.

But public opinion wasn't always that way. In the 1800s, despite the fact that only a very small minority of Americans owned slaves, most Americans — North and South — accepted slavery as a fact of life. After all, slavery had existed for thousands of years.

Labor wasn't the same then as it is now. Farming and manufacturing were tedious, slow processes. There were no motorized plows, no cotton gins, no assembly lines, no machine tools, no computers. Almost everything relied on brute strength and human exertion.

As a result, everything was costly in terms of human effort and it took far more hours of work than it does today to earn the money to buy something.

One way around some of these costs was the use of human slavery, by which people could be forced to work for little more than room and board. Some Americans wouldn't engage in slavery for moral reasons. Some wouldn't do so because the particular community in which they lived frowned on it. Many wouldn't do so because they didn't have the capital to purchase slaves. But very few people opposed the general institution.

The New World

During the 1800s, however, attitudes toward slavery throughout the world were changing. In effect, a revolution was taking place. During that century, XX countries did away with any form of slavery.

That in itself was good news. But even better news was the fact that slavery was being abolished peacefully. There were no wars, no violent uprisings. In most cases, slave-owners were compensated for the loss of their slaves, and thereafter it was

understood that no one could own another person.

Outside the United States, Haiti was the only country to experience violence in doing away with slavery. And the violence there involved a slave rebellion that overthrew the existing regime system.

Getting rid of slavery in the United States was not an easy task. But it was obvious that the end of slavery was coming. The use of steam energy was transforming manufacturing, and the introduction of the cotton gin was making labor on Southern plantations much more productive. Because of these innovations, the labor cost per unit of product was declining — making slave labor seem much less a necessity.

There were problems, however. Northern politicians didn't want slavery extended to new territories, because they didn't want ex-slaves undercutting the labor markets there. But they also didn't want to see all the slaves freed, allowing them to pour into Northern states and offering their services to undersell Northern laborers.

Jim Crow Laws

There also was the problem that strong prejudices existed against Negroes both in the North and South. Throughout the North there were laws as onerous as the infamous "Jim Crow" laws the Southern states had in the 1950s.

For example, in Abraham Lincoln's Illinois, XXXX. [other examples]

Alternative History

No one can say for certain how slavery would have ended if there hadn't been a Civil War. But it seems almost certain that slavery would have ended anyway — and most likely before the end of the 1800s.

I realize that to any individual slave, another 20-40 years of slavery is too much to bear. And I wish slavery had ended peacefully in 1860 — or even centuries before that.

But I also wish that slavery had ended without causing the deaths of over 600,000 Americans in the process.

It is one thing to want to free the slaves. It is another to want to free them at the cost of the lives of hundreds of thousands of non-slave-owning people — including women, children, and other civilians.

And the fact that we don't know today exactly how the end of slavery would have been handled peacefully is no reason to accept the idea that there was no alternative to a brutal, devastating war.

The Election of 1860

{The existing system of protective tariffs and public works. How this affected the South.}

Southerners spread the idea that Lincoln would try to end slavery. Most non-slave-owning Southerners didn't want to see the end of slavery because they were afraid it would disrupt the labor market in the South.

Although Lincoln had recently decided he was an abolitionist (someone who wants to end slavery), he had made it very clear that he had no idea how to end slavery and had no intention as President to force the end of slavery on anyone.

Instead, his platform was very clear: he wanted to raise tariffs even higher, he wanted to spend even more on pork-barrel projects in the North, and he wanted to foster the production of "easy money" — inflationary paper money, printed by the government with no gold behind it.

{Quote his inauguration address.}

Secession

The colonial states seceded from Great Britain. The word "revolution" in Revolutionary War is a misnomer, in that a revolution implies that the existing government is overthrown and replaced with another.

The "Revolutionary War" was actually "The War of American Secession." The U.S. favored secession for Panama from Colombia in order to build the Panama Canal.

The Letter

From *Faith must be Tough* by Dr. James Dobson
Adin Ballou, compiler and editor, *History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America* (Providence, R.I.: E. L. Freeman & Sons, 1888), pp. 1058-1059.

"...written by Major Sullivan Ballou of the Union army to his wife, Sarah, on July 14, 1861, one week before the Battle of Bull Run. They had been married only six years. These powerful words still touch my soul:

My Very Dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days ~ perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more . . .

I have no misgivings about or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. And I am willing, perfectly willing to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this Government and to pay that debt . . .

Sarah, my love for you is deathless: it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break, and yet my love of country comes over me like a strong wind, and bears me irresistibly on, with all these chains, to the battlefield.

The memories of all the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most deeply grateful to God, and you, that I have enjoyed them so long. And how hard it is for me to give them up, and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood around us.

If I do not (return), my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle-field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless, how foolish I have often-times been . . .

Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth, and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you in the gladdest day, and in the darkest night, amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours ~ always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath: or the cool air cools your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.

Sarah, do not mourn me dead: think I am gone, and wait for me, for we shall meet again

Sullivan

Major Ballou was killed one week later at the first battle of Bull Run. I wonder, don't you, if he did indeed utter Sarah's name as he lay dying on the battlefield."

D

The Myths of War

Some of this chapter needs to be transferred to the recap of the previous war chapters, which should draw conclusions from it all.

This chapter is solely on the myths of war itself that are specific to any war.

The Myths

War is last resort.

Efficient fighting force. (soldiers not firing guns)

Politicians want peace.

War Is First Resort

When the incident occurs, the politicians immediately respond with the assumption that "We have no choice but to go to war." No attempt is made to understand what provoked the incident — or even to determine exactly what happened — let alone to find a peaceable solution. Instead, the U.S. is at war.

BILL OF RIGHTS DOESN'T APPLY TO FOREIGNERS

Why are the Bill of Rights, open trials, the rule of law, and the traditional American rules of evidence important?

Two reasons:

If an innocent person is convicted and punished, it's an injustice to that person — and the Founding Fathers were determined that Americans wouldn't suffer the injustices that had oppressed so many innocent people in the Old World. If an innocent person is convicted, the real criminal will be free to commit more crimes.

So it misses the point to say the civil liberties of individuals must be balanced against the safety of the community. If individual civil liberties aren't protected, the safety of the community is endangered by putting the wrong people in prison — allowing the guilty to continue to function.

It's vital that only the guilty be convicted — whether the accused is suspected of a petty theft, a terrorist act, or mass murder.

It's vital that only the guilty be convicted — whether the accused is an American citizen, a green-card resident, or an outright foreigner.

Whatever the crime, whoever the accused, your safety requires that only the guilty be convicted.

Each Rule Is Important

The Bill of Rights and the rules of evidence were developed to assure that only the truly guilty are convicted.

The right to a trial by jury: A defendant must be tried by "a jury of his peers" so that he isn't judged by people who can gain personally by convicting him.

The right to a public trial: If the prosecutors, judges, and juries can't be seen and judged by the public, they can short-circuit a fair trial.

The right to counsel: A defendant isn't likely to have the talent and skills necessary to call the jury's attention to logical gaps in the prosecution's case. So the defendant must have a skilled lawyer. To assure that the right person was convicted, appellate courts have ordered retrials when the accused didn't have competent counsel.

The right to confront one's accusers: No evidence is valid if the person offering it can't be cross-examined by the defense. Hearsay evidence is worthless because you can't be sure what someone meant by what he said if you can't question him.

The right to remain silent: If you're nervous or inarticulate, a skilled policeman or prosecutor could cause you to say something that's incriminating but not literally true.

The right to private consultation with an attorney: To mount a competent defense, a defendant must be able to speak freely to his attorney — confident that his words won't be taken out of context or otherwise misinterpreted.

These are just some of the rules that are vital to assure that the innocent aren't convicted while the truly guilty go free.

If these rules are discarded — as the Bush administration proposes to do with secret military trials — we have no guarantee that the people convicted, and possibly executed, will be the true villains. And if the wrong people are convicted, the guilty ones can continue terrorizing Americans.

And those who say "terrorists have forfeited their rights" are forgetting the most important point: Without a fair, open trial, you can't be sure the accused person really is a terrorist. Allowing government employees to act as investigators, prosecutors, judges, and juries isn't the same as conducting a fair, open trial.

Why the Bill of Rights Is Ignored

The Bill of Rights, the rule of law, and the rules of evidence are there to protect both individuals and society. If the individual isn't safe from false prosecution, society isn't safe from criminals.

Saying the terrorist danger justifies tearing up the Bill of Rights makes as much sense as saying a threat of invasion justifies disbanding the military.

It's a shame that schools don't show children why the Bill of Rights is so important. But then, why would government want to teach children that it's important to protect individuals from government?

CONSEQUENCES

The lies allow various consequences to occur. Among them . . .

War Is First Resort

When the incident occurs, the politicians immediately respond with the assumption that "We have no choice but to go to war." No attempt is made to understand what provoked the incident — or even to determine exactly what happened — let alone to find a peaceable solution. Instead, the U.S. is at war.

Trivialization of Human Life

Dead people become transformed from human tragedies into simple statistics.

When a plane crash or train wreck causes 50 people to die, it's an important news story for days afterward. When 150 soldiers die in a single battle, it's just a statistic — a necessary "cost" in the war for Good against Evil.

The 150 battlefield deaths may even be considered a triumph if they're accompanied by a much larger death toll for the enemy.

And needless to say, no one much cares how many people in the enemy nation die. In fact, the more, the better. A bombing raid that kills thousands of civilians is considered a success.

Non-War Legislation & Power Increased

The politicians immediately pass legislation and assume powers that don't help prosecute the war, but that they've wanted all along and weren't able to pass in peacetime.

Rapid Growth of Government

The government is expanded at an unprecedented rate. After the war, there usually is a retrenchment, but spending, taxing, regulations, and power never go back to their previous level.

Historical Record of the War Changes

The generally accepted interpretations of the causes and conduct of the war change some time after the war is ended. Sometimes the revisions reveal truths that weren't known by the general public during the war; sometimes the revisions fashion legends quite contrary to what actually happened.

Foreign Policy Failures

Foreign policy failures that are ignored after attention has been diverted elsewhere:

Corruption in South Africa.

Reign of terror in Zimbabwe.

Corruption in the Philippines.

Destruction of Panamanian defense against drugs.

Foreign Policy Aftermath

Results of American foreign policy . . .

Kosovo: See NATO crimes & aftermath - Malic, 02-03-14.doc in Kosovo folder.

Panama: destroyed defense system, opened nation to drug smuggling.

Rhodesia: Zimbabwe reign of terror.

Afghanistan: Help for Osama Bin Laden and others against the Soviets.

Philippines: Ousted Marcos, corruption continued.

Aided dictators in China, Cuba, and Vietnam, all of whom fell to the communists — turning over resources and military supplies.

Sacrifice

"It is not until a nation is willing to sacrifice its own flesh and blood that conflicts can be resolved."

A "nation" can't sacrifice flesh and blood. Only individuals can make sacrifices. When someone makes a statement like the foregoing, he really means he's willing to sacrifice someone else's flesh and blood.

Brute Force & World War II

"Sometimes only brute force will work."

Did brute force work for the Nazis and Japanese?

Political Leaders Running the War

The assumption that the war is being run efficiently.

Lincoln, Roosevelt, Johnson

Bush spent all his time fund-raising or giving cheer-leading speeches.

The Common Elements of War

Lay out at the start the common elements of each war. Refer back to them in the recap of each war. (1) Reasons for the war change often (indicating that the real reason may be something never raised); (2) Heavy propaganda that is found to be untrue after the war; (3) Criticism of the all-powerful leader is considered close to treason; (4) Contradictions occur (the things supposedly being fought against are imposed at home); (5) The aims of the war aren't met; (6) New government programs are initiated that aren't abolished after the war.

One War Leads to Another

The Treaty of Versailles made World War II almost inevitable — by creating the terrible conditions that encouraged the German people to go along with Hitler. How often have we heard that "Hitler should have been stopped at Munich." Whether that was possible at that point in history is debatable. But what is almost certain is that Hitler could have been stopped at Versailles.

Commercial Imperialism

The traditional leftist view is that America fought foreign wars to promote commercial interests (as in Central America and to provide a base in the Philippines for the Navy to protect commercial shipping). This leads too easily to the idea that American companies in foreign countries are bad. They aren't.

If American companies go into a country without the backing of the U.S. military, they will have to abide by local laws and make their peace with local customs. Tie this with protecting oil supplies, etc.

Duty to Rescue Others

Do Americans have a duty to rescue people in other countries from invaders or oppressive dictators?

Should be voluntary.

The Costs of War

The death toll, war by war.

The residual losses of liberty — such as the Trading with the Enemy Act from World War I.

Ignorance of Foreign Policy

Why the events of September 11 shouldn't have been a surprise. How ignorance has made it easy for Americans to be lured into previous wars.

Miscellaneous Lies

Dishonest reasons for American military intervention:

Defending human rights,
protecting American interests,
keeping the oil flowing,
stopping the next "Hitler,"
taking a moral stand, and so on.

What War Really Is

How war differs from the glorious national enterprise portrayed in John Wayne movies; it is the physical and mental destruction of families, homes, and cities.

Embargoes & Sanctions

What's wrong with them.

Hurt Americans and the wrong foreigners.

War Is Good for the Economy

Cover this one.

E

SELLING WAR

Every war comes with a package of propaganda campaigns — basic themes that are used to get Americans to support the war:

1. Good vs. Evil: Evil people are trying to conquer and oppress good people. Stronger good people (that's us) must respond in the name of humanity.
2. Freedom vs. Slavery: The good people who are being attacked are brave, free, heroic people. They are led by a great "freedom-fighter."
3. The domino effect: If we don't stop the evil people now, they will conquer other countries and eventually take over most of the world — leaving the U.S. isolated and facing an overwhelming foe. We would suffer incalculable damage, if we even survived.
4. No background: There is virtually no recognition of the historical context in which the war is taking place. It's as though history began the day the war started.
5. Sacrifice: We must give up more of our freedoms — economic and personal — in order to remain free.
6. No dissent: We must all pull together to defeat this wicked foe. We shouldn't be questioning our leaders now; we can do that after the war. Now, we must obey them, do our patriotic duty, and win this war. To do otherwise is anti-American.
7. When the war is over, we will have a better world — better than it was before the war.

One or two of the elements of the package might be omitted for a given war, but the overall approach is always there. It's a tried-and-true formula. We will see how it has been employed in each of America's wars over the past century.

Of course, when the war is over, most Americans aren't interested in questioning whether our leaders did the right thing. People are relieved the war is over, glad to get back to normal and on with their lives. It's left to the historians to dig up the truth years after the fact — at a time when few people care what the truth is.

But when that truth surfaces,

Our schools give our children an Aesop's-fable picture of each war: bad guys wanted to take over the world, Americans stopped them.

There's no discussion of the events that led up to the war — the long-standing feuds between nations, the previous oppressions that may have provoked the attack that supposedly started the war, the nature of the governments who are pictured as our heroic allies.

If Americans had been taught how politicians have sold previous wars to the public, they would be much less susceptible when they see the propaganda pattern being used to sell whatever is the current war.

And if children had been taught in school that the Founding Fathers devised the Constitution as a way to limit government, not the people — and why it's so important to limit government — those children would be much less willing as adults to give up their own freedoms in wartime.

Perhaps the greatest mistake Americans have ever made was in letting government educate their children.

We will look at the lies, exaggerations, and omissions that have been used to draw Americans into war over and over again — and to keep up their support during each war. After each war, the lies have lived on as myths that make it easier to sell succeeding wars (“I suppose you would have done nothing about Hitler”).

Despite the propaganda, some wars have remained controversial. The promises made for World War I were so thoroughly refuted by events that the war doesn't stand as a shining moment in American history. The Vietnam War has a very poor reputation. Even the Gulf War of 1991 has faced widespread criticism in the press.

But one war has stood the test of time. No matter how much cynicism prevails about American wars in general, World War II maintains its reputation as the one “just war.” So I think it's fitting that we begin our examination of the wars with the big one — WWII — because a closer look reveals that it was sold to the American people as deceptively as any other war.

F

THE RECURRING LIES

1. No Threat to America

The U.S. was not threatened by a foreign power that might attack or invade America.

2. Incident Necessary to Build War Fever

It was necessary to maneuver a potential enemy into firing the first shot in order to rally the American public to go war.

3. War goals change

Both in preparation for war and as the war progresses, the goals of the war change frequently. “Defending freedom,” “protecting human rights of foreigners,” “resisting attack,” “creating a new order.”

4. Demonization of the Enemy

The people in the enemy nations are demonized as whole people or a race — soldiers and civilians alike. This, of course, is collectivism — assuming that everyone of one color, economic class, or nationality is responsible for some good or bad deed.

Atrocity stories are circulated by our government to enhance this image of the enemy as pure evil.

Because the enemy has been demonized, our government abandons the principles of civilized war — attacking civilians and private property.

The people in the enemy country leaders, soldiers, and civilians — all deserve whatever barbarities are inflicted upon them.

5. Intrusions on Civil Liberties

“If you aren’t an enemy you have nothing to worry about.”

6. Historical Record of the War Changes

The generally accepted interpretations of the causes and conduct of the war change some time after the war is ended. Sometimes the revisions reveal truths that weren’t known by the general public during the war; sometimes the revisions fashion legends quite contrary to what actually happened.

7. Sacrifice

“It is not until a nation is willing to sacrifice its own flesh and blood that conflicts can be resolved.”

A “nation” can’t sacrifice flesh and blood. Only individuals can make sacrifices. When someone makes a statement like the foregoing, he really means he’s willing to sacrifice someone else’s flesh and blood.

8. Political Leaders Running the War

Need a construct about the wars being prosecuted efficiently.

The constant pep talks that the tide is turning, etc. — when the war is actually run by politicians. We’ll see in the ensuing chapters how efficient they are.

MISCELLANEOUS LIES

Dishonest reasons for American military intervention:

Defending human rights,
protecting American interests,
keeping the oil flowing,
stopping the next “Hitler,”
taking a moral stand, and so on.

G

POWER

We hear of atrocities and aggression committed by foreign autocrats — Saddam Hussein’s torture chambers, Josef Stalin’s killing of innocent people, Adolf Hitler’s aggression against peace-loving countries. We accept the fact that such inhumane people — committing such inhumane crimes — do exist in the real world.

But we refuse to believe that American leaders would authorize similar crimes — attack a foreign country without just cause, authorize torture and other atrocities, intentionally bomb innocent civilians.

Why wouldn't our leaders do such things? Because Americans have a different culture. We're peace-loving and we believe in the dignity and sovereignty of individual human beings. So our leaders are more humane than the foreign dictators we hear about.

But the foreign autocrats don't commit atrocious acts because they come from a different culture. They commit them *because they have the power to do so*.

Because you've never had that kind of power yourself, it may be difficult to understand how intoxicating it is — how much it can change you, change your values, change your priorities.

Once you have the power to send your countrymen into war and thereby stand a chance of becoming a "great" President, you can always find people who will justify your going to war.

Once you have the power to kill civilians as a way of winning a war, it is easy to believe you have a moral duty to do so.

Once you have the power to authorize torture as a way of getting information from captured prisoners, it is easy to convince yourself that you're doing it to save lives.

And it doesn't matter what country you grew up in. It doesn't matter what your religious beliefs are. It doesn't matter what your countrymen believe is acceptable behavior.

None of those things matter because the deciding factor isn't culture; it's power. If the power is there, it will be abused. And it doesn't matter whether you're Iraqi, German, Russian, African, or American.

As Michael Cloud has said, "The problem isn't the abuse of power; it's the power to abuse." Give politicians the power, and it's only a matter of time until it will be abused.

That's why it shouldn't be a shock that nine out of ten reasons George Bush gave for attacking Iraq have proven to be false — or that Assistant Attorney General Alberto Gonzales was able to convince George Bush that the nature of terrorism justifies using torture on captured prisoners — or that 1,200 American deaths and 100,000 Iraqi deaths are a small price to pay to bring democracy to Iraq (even if there's absolutely no evidence that Iraq will be democratic or that democracy could make Iraq a better place).

And it shouldn't have been a shock if John Kerry had been elected and abused power in the same way George Bush has.

The problem is not the man. The problem is the power he has.

We have to find a way to take that power away from every President to come.

H Miscellaneous Notes

WHAT WAR REALLY IS

How war differs from the glorious national enterprise portrayed in John Wayne movies; it is the physical and mental destruction of families, homes, and cities.

COLLECTIVE GUILT

There is no such thing as collective guilt, because only individuals think and act. They may join together in a group, but each is responsible for his own actions.

And those who have taken no part in an action cannot be held responsible for what some other individual or group does.

Thus not all Germans killed Jews, or even sanctioned the killing of Jews.

Not all Americans killed Branch Davidians at Waco in 1993, or even sanctioned the killing of anyone.

Not all Arabs attacked Israel. Not all Afghans or Saudis attacked the World Trade Center.

ISOLATIONISM

I continually see remarks that isolationism has failed — usually accompanied by one-liner such as “Look at what happened with World War II” or “Pearl Harbor.” Take a few examples of those and show that each case it wasn’t isolationism, it was interventionism that caused the problem.

The Three Elements

Liberty - Security - Empire.

We're told that we must give up some liberty for the sake of security. But that's not true.

For most of our history, Americans enjoyed both liberty and security from foreign threats.

But, as Tim O'Brien has pointed out, while it's possible to have both liberty and security, you can't have an empire as well. Once the American government decided to run the world, Americans were forced to choose between liberty and security – because you can't have all three. Once you become an empire, either liberty or security must go.

Most likely, however, we will lose both liberty and security. We're losing our liberties, but innocent Americans will continue to be hurt by terrorists because of what our government is doing overseas.

History of Intervention

It isn't necessary to determine whether America was traditionally interventionist or isolationist. It is only necessary to determine whether intervention is right or wrong for America.

However, it is also true that as America became stronger, politicians saw intervention as more likely to be successful — and thus a useful road to bigger government.

War & Civil Liberties

Losing freedom is inevitable once you allow the President to decide we're "at war."

WEBSITE WITH LINKS

In the book, refer to a website that will have links to sources referenced in the book, arranged by chapters.

TERRORISM WAR

See two articles in Ideas\Terrorism Reactions saying the World Trade Center attacks were the worst in history.

WORLD WAR II

"The atomic bombs had to be dropped to avoid an invasion of Japan that would have cost 100,000 American lives."

Britain and France declared war on Germany because it invaded Poland, but didn't declare war on the Soviet Union two weeks later when it invaded Poland. (The Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations because of the invasion.)

WHY POLITICIANS LIE

See graphs in Freelance: d:\freelance\work\fdb-n18.pre on how the growth of government accelerates with each major war.

DOES THE TRUTH MATTER?

For each war, the politicians' lies create a contrast of white and black, good vs. evil, the righteous vs. the depraved. Everything our side does is well-intentioned and humanitarian. Everything the other side does is cruel and base.

It might be argued that this is necessary in order to rally the American people to support a necessary war.

But politicians are human beings. If you hand them a blank check — the power to go to war against anyone they choose and the freedom to lie about the facts without suffering bad consequences — you can expect the worst. Not just the worst for innocent foreigners who will be bombed — but the worst for the American people who will have to pay for the war, in lives and money, and who will be put at risk when enough foreigners become so angry at the U.S. that they start supporting thugs who want to commit terrorist acts against American citizens.

By not demanding strict evidence of the truth, we have allowed the politicians to define what a “necessary war” is. As a result:

- Americans invaded Panama, kidnapping its dictator, but making Panama's drug situation (the ostensible reason for the war) worse than before.
- Americans bombed Serbs, supposedly to stop “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo — and then left the scene to the Albanians who “ethnic cleansed” the Serbs.

1990s

The 1990s were the interim between the Cold War and the so-called War on Terrorism. You would think that this would be a period of relative peace.

No chance. War is too valuable to politicians. So . . .

- New “Hitler's” were found everywhere you looked.
- “It's still a dangerous world out there.”
- “America is now the world's only superpower and we have a responsibility to keep the peace everywhere.”

One reason after another was given to allow the politicians to make war on Panama, Iraq, Bosnia, Serbia, Somalia.

WHY POLITICIANS LIKE WAR

The department of Defense bureaucracy has to have something to do.

The government rewards friends of the administration with military contracts. And once the arms are built, they have to be used in order to justify the expenditure and to keep the thought of threats alive.

Most people believe war is good for the economy. It's actually good economically only for those who receive the government contracts. But politicians aren't economic geniuses, and they believe a war can get the country out of a recession.

In the so-called War on Terrorism, the politicians have given blanket immunity from private lawsuits to any countries contracting with the Homeland Security Department. This includes airline security companies and vaccine manufacturers. This couldn't be justified in peacetime.

MONROE DOCTRINE

Not a part of the Constitution.

Didn't cause the U.S. to intervene when the British fought over the Falkland Islands.

PRESS COVERAGE

Chapter on press coverage of American foreign policy.

JEWS

"The U.S. had to enter the war to stop the Holocaust."

MORE THAN A TRUTH SQUAD NEEDED

The politicians will always be able to get away with lying. We can never hope for the press or the opposition to be strong enough and efficient enough to see through and

debunk the lies. And even if the press and opposition could do so, they couldn't hope to compete with the enormous amount of noise emanating from the government.

It is only after wars that the whole truth comes out and we learn that thousands (or millions) of men and women died for nothing.

That's why we need some sort of peace enforcement on our government. No, not the United Nations. But a constitutional amendment that makes it much harder for the politicians to put Americans in harm's way.

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS WATCH

Examine this in the War on Terrorism chapter. See the website in the War bookmarks.

IRAQ — GLASPIE REASSURANCE

She says the Iraqi transcript is a lie. But there must have been an American there taking notes, or a taped record of the meeting. Why hasn't the U.S. government issued any kind of official rebuttal?

LIFE

Life is the most precious thing there is. Without life, there is no love, no morality, no patriotism, no charity, no religion, no property. Life is everything because without life there can be nothing else.

When you ask for war, knowing that people will die, you ask people to give up everything.

EXAMPLE OF KILLING

See the story of the Iraqi woman who lost her child when an American missile hit a civilian neighborhood in 1999.

\\Iraq\\Bombings prior to war\\Summary, very good, of no-fly zones and bombings - IraqJournal, 02-12-10.doc

FOREIGN POLICY CHAPTER

Perhaps a separate chapter is needed for a foreign policy that doesn't lead to war.

The futility of retaliation and containment can be discussed there.

RETALIATION

It is very easy to believe that retaliation is essential when attacked. But retaliation achieves nothing except a brief emotional release at a cost of many innocent lives.

If retaliation were successful, the Israelis and Palestinians would be at peace, the Indians and Pakistanis would have stopped fighting long ago, the Serbs and Albanians would never have battled in Kosovo.

But in reality each act of retaliation calls forth retaliation by the other side. And so the death toll is more than just those killed in the retaliation; it must include all those killed in the endless cycle that follows.

Americans like to believe that they are exempt from this principle — that Americans overwhelming might can so devastate the enemy that no further retaliation against the U.S. is possible. But America's might is really a paper tiger.

- The U.S. Air Force destroyed North Korea, but had to settle for a tie — leaving the Korean peninsula just as it was before the 3-year war began.
- America might overwhelmed the North Vietnamese, but still America lost the war.
- American might devastated Afghanistan, but it failed to bring peace, liberty, or stability to the country.
- America quickly defeated the Iraqi army, but as I wrote this Americans were still dying there, the people weren't free (being occupied and ruled by a foreign power), large sections of the country were without electricity, clean water, or medicines, and there was no victory in sight.

CONTAINMENT

The policy of containment is equivalent to signing up for life-long service in a never-ending war. Americans must be on call continually, taxed and conscripted to fight an enemy that can choose all the battlefields.

HISTORIANS ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRUTH

Referring to the blackout and then criticism in 1947 of one of the early books, George Morgenstern's *Pearl Harbor: the Story of the Secret War* revealing the truth about American entry into the war, historian Harry Elmer Barnes said that one historian reviewing it:

. . . concluded that all or most of the statements in the book were true but that the book as a whole was a "great untruth." This reverses the usual line of the current apologists for the Roosevelt foreign policy, like Thomas A. Bailey and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who now agree that most of Roosevelt's public statements thereupon were untrue but that his program as a whole was a great truth which exemplified the desirable procedure of the "good officer" — the conscientious public servant.⁴

REALITY OF WAR

It requires a determined mental act to recall that what happened was not an entry on a tally sheet but the violent death of a human being, loved and cared for by a mother and father, and full of hope and possibility, torn apart by lead balls or shreds of sharp metal, his intestines hanging open, or his mouth coughing blood, in a last paroxysm of pain and fear. And then to recall that any justification for a war has to be a justification for this reality.

Adam Gopnik
"The Big One"
The New Yorker, August 23, 2004.⁵

⁴ "Revisionism and the Historical Blackout" by Harry Elmer Barnes in *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, page 30.

⁵ http://www.newyorker.com/critics/atlarge/?040823crat_atlarge

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Recommended Reading

Include anti-war movies and books.

The Americanization of Emily

J

WAR ARTICLES

What is war?
by Harry Browne

[From *Why Government Doesn't Work*, pages 144-145.]

The politicians' stirring phrases are meant to keep our eyes averted from the reality of war -- to make us imagine heroic young men marching in parades, winning glorious battles, and bringing peace and democracy to the world.

But war is something quite different from that.

It is your children or your grandchildren dying before they're even fully adults, or being maimed or mentally scarred for life. It is your brothers and sisters being taught to kill other people -- and to hate people who are just like themselves and who don't want to kill anyone either. It is your children seeing their buddies' limbs blown off their bodies.

It is hundreds of thousands of human beings dying years before their time. It is millions of people separated forever from the ones they loved.

It is the destruction of homes for which people worked for decades. It is the end of careers that meant as much to others as your career means to you.

It is the imposition of heavy taxes on you and on other Americans and on people in other countries -- taxes that remain long after the war is over. It is the suppression of free speech and the jailing of people who criticize the government.

It is the imposition of slavery by forcing young men to serve in the military.

It is goading the public to hate foreign people and races -- whether Arabs or Japanese or Cubans. It is numbing our sensibilities to cruelties inflicted on foreigners.

It is cheering at the news of foreign pilots killed in their planes, of young men blown to bits while trapped inside tanks, of sailors drowned at sea.

Other tragedies inevitably trail in the wake of war. Politicians lie even more than usual. Secrecy and cover-ups become the rule rather than the exception. The press becomes even less reliable.

War is genocide, torture, cruelty, propaganda, dishonesty, and slavery.

War is the worst obscenity government can inflict upon its subjects. It makes every other political crime -- corruption, bribery, favoritism, vote-buying, graft, dishonesty -- seem petty.

Government's Role

If government has a role to play in foreign affairs, it isn't to win wars, to assure that the right people run foreign countries, to protect innocent foreigners from guilty aggressors, or to make the world safe for democracy -- or even a safer place at all.

If government has a role, it can be only to keep us out of wars -- to make sure no one will ever attack us, to make certain you can live your life in peace, to assure you the freedom to ignore who is right and who is wrong in foreign conflicts.

The only reason for military power is to discourage attackers, and -- if they come anyway -- to repel them at our borders. Such things as stationing troops in far-off lands, meddling in foreign disputes, and sending our children to foreign countries as "peacekeepers" only encourage war.

To make America safer and to assure that we stay at peace, we don't need to put more weapons in the hands of government employees, or to reform military purchasing methods, or to make more treaties with other governments, or to increase the military budget.

In fact, we need just the opposite of these things. We need to make it as hard as possible for politicians to involve us in war. And we need to create a defense system that relies as little as possible on the normal workings of government.

American Foreign Policy Hasn't Changed in 25 Years
by Harry Browne

October 20, 1976

(The article excerpt below was published in 1976 in Harry's investment newsletter, Harry Browne's Special Reports. It is in the context of a discussion of the presidential debate between Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. At that time, the U.S. government was leading an international coalition to overturn the government in Rhodesia, because the government was run by white politicians, while the majority of the population in Rhodesia was black .

(The effort succeeded. Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, ruled by Robert Mugabe, and all the concerned citizens of the world immediately turned their attention to the next place to impose their utopian ideas.

(Robert Mugabe still rules Zimbabwe. And today it is a land of terror. Roving bands of thugs, supported by the government, kill farmers and businessmen and steal their property. As you might expect, American politicians and diplomats have long since lost interest in Zimbabwe; they completed their "good works" there decades ago. Today they are busy bringing "peace" and "justice" to Serbia, Afghanistan, or Iraq.)

. . . When a reporter asked [President Gerald] Ford if the U.S. intervention in Rhodesia meant that American foreign policy now called for unseating dictators everywhere, I thought he was laying a trap. When the President said, in effect, that the answer was yes, I expected the reporter to ask if that included the communist countries.

Of course, the reporter didn't ask that. But surely, I thought to myself, Carter wouldn't pass up such an opportunity. What better way to get Ford tongue-tied and trapped in a corner? But Carter, too, let it pass.

The whole subject of communist countries would have been ignored if Ford hadn't lost his head and blurted out that the Eastern European countries were free of Soviet influence. Apparently, no one wanted to win the election.

I wish the U.S. government would keep its paws out of all foreign countries — communist or noncommunist. But I can't understand why no public figure has pointed up the inconsistency in U.S. foreign policy. The politicians count it a matter of morality to strong-arm the governments of Rhodesia and South Africa — but not any communist governments.

Apparently, it's a sin for white men to rule black men — but not a sin for white men to rule white men or black men to rule black men.

Overlooked are the Rhodesians, black and white, who have worked so hard for so many years and generations to create some property for themselves. The odds are overwhelming that the country will be in a shambles in ten years — as has been the case after so many other "liberation" movements.

Do you remember the dreaded Mau Maus — the sadistic guerrillas who were in the news in the 1950s for slaughtering people in Kenya? Their leader was Jomo Kenyatta. Do you remember him? Have you ever wondered what happened to him? Was he executed for murder? Were the Mau Maus stamped out?

No. Jomo Kenyatta is today the president of Kenya — and is one of the African leaders whose opinions appear to be so vital to American foreign policy experts. Does America's future really require catering to such people?

The meddling in Africa is justified by saying that it will bring peace to Africa. But where is the war? Only guerrillas are invading Rhodesia. Then why not go after the guerrillas?

It's interesting to note that part of Henry Kissinger's deal with the Rhodesian government is a U.S. guarantee that the guerrilla attacks will end. If the U.S. has the power to make good on such a guarantee, why hasn't it already stopped the guerrilla attacks? Doesn't its humanitarian concerns extend to the innocent farmers who have been killed?

All supposed justifications for U.S. intervention contain one unspoken assumption — that the U.S. will be successful in its objectives. But where has it been successful before? In Vietnam? In Angola? Anywhere? And next year, when the bully has moved onto some new failure and is beating up on someone else, we will have forgotten the promises for peace by which the 1976 bullying was justified.

And American foreign policy is a bully policy. Bullies don't pick on anyone of equal size. That's why the U.S. isn't bullying the Soviets — or Red China — or even Castro. . . .

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Was the Gulf War a Just War?
by Harry Browne

February 20, 1991

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.

John F. Kennedy, 1961

President Kennedy's ringing declaration of war against the enemies of liberty has echoed down the decades.

Unfortunately, it's difficult to know which are the friends and which are the foes, because the U.S. government keeps shuffling them around.

Although Joseph Stalin had already established his credentials as a mass murderer, the Soviet Union was pictured as our heroic ally during World War II. But after the war it was once again the enemy — the justification for trillions of dollars in defense costs. The Germans, every last one of whom had been considered morally responsible for the Holocaust, became our friends and the bulwark of freedom in Europe. And the "dirty yellow devils" of World War II were de-colored and made our allies in Asia.

Throughout the Cold War the roles kept shifting. Richard Nixon, who had opposed Red China for so many years, wound up drinking champagne with Mao Tse-tung and Chou En Lai — and he joined forces with them against the Soviet Union. (This in turn caused the Chinese on Taiwan to be reclassified from brave freedom-fighters to predator merchants who flood the U.S. with cheap goods.)

Then Mikhail Gorbachev showed up, and the Soviet Union was our friend again. The U.S. accepted him as an ally because he claimed he was replacing the old Soviet system of rule by the whim of a dictator with a state governed by "carefully drafted laws."

Now the laws have been carefully drafted and implemented. They allow the state to seize anyone's property at will and the president to rule by decree, while private business can operate only within the most narrow bounds. Dissent will be allowed, but only when it doesn't bother the dictator. When the new laws were announced, Soviet tanks and soldiers invaded Lithuania to deliver the news. (1)

Mr. Gorbachev's new oppression is particularly awkward for us because it's too soon after the Tiananmen Square massacre to embrace the Chinese again.

Assuring the Success of Liberty

During the past 45 years, the U.S. government has perceived threats to freedom and peace in virtually every corner of the Earth and reacted accordingly. The government has shipped money, equipment, and soldiers to over a hundred nations.

There have been U.S. military campaigns in Greece, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Lebanon, Libya, Grenada, and Panama — plus, I'm sure, other countries that I've forgotten. In addition, there has been less-direct meddling in Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Philippines, and dozens of other countries.

In every case the cause was just, and the issue was a clear-cut, black-and-white case of good vs. evil. Each crusade had a limited and specific goal — which would be achieved quickly and at no great cost.

FUTILITY

But, in fact, no lasting victory has ever been accomplished.

After every crusade, the evil that justified the bloodshed remained — or, as in the destruction of Germany and Japan in World War II, was replaced by an even greater danger. Every temporary burden has become permanent, and has been piled on top of all the temporary burdens we were already suffering.

The U.S. invaded Panama ("Operation Just Cause") to capture Manuel Noriega and round up the drug-smuggling evidence necessary to convict him in an American court — an unprecedented act. It turns out that no evidence was found, and Mr. Noriega still hasn't been tried. It appears that a lot of people died in Panama for nothing more than a boost in George Bush's approval rating.

The Panamanian outcome wasn't unique. The Korean stalemate, undertaken to demonstrate that aggression can't succeed, didn't deter the communists from invading — and eventually conquering — South Vietnam and Cambodia.

Nor did the Vietnam war accomplish anything. The dominoes kept on falling — with or without American resistance.

U.S. Marines died to save Lebanon, but the Syrians overran it anyway. After all the U.S. maneuvering in the Philippines, the government there is still worthless and corrupt. After years of U.S. military aid to force a free election, Nicaragua continues to be run mostly by the hated Sandinistas.

The U.S. is still sending foreign aid to African dictators, bribing other governments to participate in the Middle East Coalition, and keeping troops at outposts all over the world. American soldiers still patrol the streets of Panama and Grenada. And even though the Cold War was declared to be finished a year ago, American troops remain hunkered down in Europe.

Every campaign began with the assumption that the crusade would be brief and the benefits lasting. But after sacrificing millions of lives and trillions of dollars, what does the U.S. have to show for it?

The Perpetual War Continues

Now America is at war in the Middle East.

What will it cost in lives and dollars? When will it end? After the war, how long will U.S. troops have to remain in the Gulf to keep the peace? For how many years will American taxpayers be bled for the costs? George Melloan, a Wall Street Journal columnist, has suggested that:

Iraq should be occupied, primarily by the U.S., Britain, and France, with sufficient power retained to intimidate Syria and, if necessary, Iran. . . . Military government of the type that established democracy in West Germany and Japan after World War II is what is needed. (2)

Even if that suggestion is ignored, American troops probably will remain in the Mideast for years — possibly decades. But that doesn't mean there will be peace, freedom, or "democracy" in the region.

And since the causes and crusades never stop, there will be another urgent need somewhere else as soon as this one gets stale — or maybe even before then. Wherever the battlefield, the justification will be so compelling that we'll have no choice but to fight — to repel aggression, to defend freedom, or for some other cause. This is what historian Charles Beard in 1947 so prophetically labeled the "perpetual war for perpetual peace." To the war-makers, there will always be an urgent reason to go to war to secure the peace. (3)

PEOPLE ARE DYING

What if it had been your son or daughter who died in the invasion of Panama? Would you feel today that he had died in a worthy cause?

Suppose a loved one had gone with the U.S. Marines to keep the peace in Lebanon and died there. What would his death have accomplished?

Now Americans are dying in the Arabian desert. For what great purpose are they giving their lives? Five years hence, what could be said to a wife to make her husband's death in 1991 seem to have been necessary? If the Middle East continues to be a cauldron of dictators and wars, how could you persuade her that her loss served a higher objective than the love of a man and a woman for each other?

The Middle East casualties are human lives — as precious to other people as those of your children, your relatives, and your loved ones are to you. People are dying, and the survivors will be no better off for the sacrifices.

Of course, the war-makers consider the deaths to be "regrettable," but they don't volunteer to sacrifice themselves. It's just too easy to talk about the necessity of "dying for a principle" when they aren't the ones who will die.

So often I've heard someone say "there are some principles we should be willing to die for." Or "I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees." Such statements roll off the tongue easily because the speaker assumes that he won't be the one to die. What he's saying is that his objectives are important enough for someone else to die.

And if someone would choose to die for his country, I would pity him. Life is the most precious thing there is. It's sad to think that someone's life held so little pleasure and meaning that he would willingly sacrifice it for a cause.

Iraqi People

Volunteer soldiers are a minority among the casualties. The biggest devastation is being visited on innocent civilians and on foreign soldiers who've been drafted — people who didn't ask to be part of a war.

So far, most of the dying people are Iraqis. Since their religion and culture are so alien to us, it's easy to think of them as being somehow less human than the people we know.

Both the U.S. and Iraqi governments have strong propaganda motives to exaggerate the differences between them and us. Both governments would like us to think that the Iraqis are fanatics who will fight to the death to support Saddam Hussein.

But most likely the majority of Iraqis live in terror of their own government — just as the majority of Germans did during the reign of Adolf Hitler.

The Iraqis are human beings like us — people with families, striving for life and love. And they are dying in greater and greater numbers as the war rolls on. Even those who survive will have had their homes turned to ashes and their lives devastated.

Are we so godlike that we can condemn innocent people to die for the Emir of Kuwait and his 70 wives, for Saudi Arabia's borders, for George Bush's vanity, or for other causes they never agreed to support?

It's easy to be cavalier about the casualties. But, at the very least, your homeland or family ought to be at stake before you would consider taking the life of even one innocent person.

Glibness & Death

To personalize the war, describing it as not against the Iraqi people but against Saddam, is morally equivalent to bombing a prison because one has a grievance against its sadistic warden. (4)

Robert Higgs, 1991

One of the worst things about war is the hysteria it feeds — leading people to say and do things that ordinarily would shock them.

The common "man-on-the-street" sentiment seems to be "I think they should level Baghdad to get that S.O.B."

One columnist put it this way:

There hasn't been much reason to say, "I'm proud to be an American" lately, but the bombing of Baghdad provided one. (5)

People talk about what must be done to Saddam Hussein. But the people being hurt are the innocent civilians and soldiers who would prefer to have nothing to do with either side of the argument.

To carpet-bomb Baghdad would be to murder thousands of innocents — merely for the satisfaction of getting Saddam Hussein to (as George Bush put it) "leave Kuwait with his tail between his legs."

Understand how politicians think: They've passed laws to prohibit the military from sending an assassin into Iraq to kill Saddam Hussein, but they have no qualms about killing the thousands of innocent people who are forced to serve him.

WHY WE FIGHT

[George Bush] was clearly bent on war all along. But he got his foot in the door by pretending otherwise. First he put troops in Saudi Arabia on the pretext that his sole purpose was to prevent an Iraqi invasion. Once they were there, he switched to a new goal: the "liberation" of Kuwait. Now he says his purpose is not the destruction of Iraq, even as he hints of a war crimes trial for Saddam Hussein and Baghdad is close to starvation and epidemic.

Mr. Bush's rationales for war — stopping aggression, protecting our vital interests, oil, jobs, New World Order and sheer altruism — have been notoriously kaleidoscopic. The sheer abundance of reasons implies that none is the real reason. Yet even this incoherence served a purpose: It prevented debate from focusing on any single argument. His critics were forced to run around stamping out one verbal brushfire after another, as he kept starting more. If he had stuck to one clear reason, he would have lost the debate. (6)

Joseph Sobran, 1991

If you're going to kill a lot of people, you'd better have a good reason.
So why is America at war?

There seems no shortage of reasons. In fact, George Bush has come up with dozens of reasons.

Secure Borders

Fantastic political boundaries are set up carelessly and arbitrarily, but once they are established, however casually and lightheartedly, they take on some mysterious sanctity; to violate them "breaks the heart of the world." Every border war becomes a world war, and world peace disappears from the scene.

By this absurd policy, internationalism and interventionism invite and insure "perpetual war for perpetual peace," since any move which threatens petty

nations and these mystic boundaries becomes an "aggressive war" which must not be tolerated, even though to oppose it may break the back of the world. (7)

Harry Elmer Barnes, 1953

The first reason given for the aggressive U.S. response was that Iraq had outraged the world by failing to respect the Kuwaiti border.

And thus began the moral posturing.

President Bush requires that the sovereignty of Kuwait be inviolate, but not the freedom of Lithuania or Latvia. The reason for his Baltic pacifism, of course, is that he wouldn't dare pick a fight with a power big enough to fight on equal terms. You call Saddam Hussein a "Hitler"; you call Mikhail Gorbachev "Sir".

I'm not suggesting he should challenge the Soviet Union over the Baltic states. But it's fraudulent to claim there's a sacred principle at stake in Kuwait, but not in Lithuania.

Our Ally Kuwait

But, we are told, Kuwait has been our friend – often siding with the U.S. in quarrels involving other Middle Eastern states.

But why was the U.S. involved in those quarrels in the first place? And what future quarrels do we have to prepare for? The Middle East has been a center of turmoil for hundreds of years — and especially since 1945. But every new president brings into office the colossal conceit that he can sort things out and make them right for everyone. Prior to being invaded last August, Kuwait was the second largest donor to the Palestinian Liberation Organization — the terrorist PLO. And until Yassir Arafat took the side of Iraq in the current conflict, the largest donor was Saudi Arabia. (8) The fact is that there is no "right" or "wrong" side among the endless quarrels and shifting political sands of the Middle East. The whole business is none of our business.

Oil

The only practical reason offered for our intervention is the idea that we need Middle East oil.

Oil is vital to the world. But does it justify killing thousands — or millions — of innocent people?

Will the U.S. go to war if the Soviet Union decides to withhold platinum from the market? Or if South Africa chooses not to sell us any more uranium?

Actually, as columnist Stephen Chapman has pointed out, neither the supply of oil nor the price of it was altered by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. What caused the price of oil to soar was the rash U.S. response — which threatened a Gulf war that would endanger the supply of oil. Even with all the blustering, however, the price of oil eventually settled down.

The assumption — as faulty here as in so many amateur economic analyses — is that owning or controlling the oil makes Saddam Hussein rich. It doesn't. Selling the oil would make him rich. He has as much reason to price it at the market and make it available to us as we have to buy it.

But even if he were crazy enough to blow up all the oil fields of the Middle East, America could survive without them.

What makes it difficult to survive without imported oil are the absurd U.S. environmental policies that preclude drilling for oil in pristine U.S. areas that only one American in a thousand will ever see.

If George Bush would stand up to environmental fanatics as fearlessly as he does to desert dictators, we could have both oil and peace.

The New World Order

We call Saddam Hussein or Manuel Noriega a serious threat to our interests because he is manifestly not a serious threat at all. If there were any chance that he could light up the skies over Washington as we are lighting up the skies over Baghdad, Mr. Bush would not be taunting him and calling him a Hitler; he would be negotiating and posing for photographers with him, and calling him "our partner in the peace process." (9)

Joseph Sobran, 1991

Eventually President Bush lit upon the idea that this crusade is to establish a New World Order — one in which aggressors will know that they face sure and swift retaliation.

But we already have that. We've had it since 1918, when World War I made the world safe for democracy (at a cost of 26 million lives), and the League of Nations was established to guarantee peace and the security of all boundaries.

If not since then, at least since 1945 when the winning of World War II bestowed the Four Freedoms upon everyone (at a cost of 36 million lives), and the United Nations guaranteed the safety of all people.

Or at least since the U.S. proved in Korea and Vietnam (at a combined cost of 112 thousand American lives alone) that no boundary could be violated with impunity. (10)

To enforce the New World Order, we have the Coalition.

It includes the Soviet Union — which unfortunately can't send troops to help repel the evil Iraqis because the troops are busy right now tyrannizing Lithuania.

The Coalition also includes Syria, which thoughtfully interrupted its destruction of Lebanon long enough to send its respects (but not its money or much of its manpower) to our crusade. Maybe if Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad continues to hold Mr. Bush's coat, the president will remove Syria from the State Department's list of terrorist countries.

The U.S. has had to buy the support of almost every government that has either joined the Coalition or agreed not to oppose it — from bribing Egypt with \$7 billion to giving trade concessions to the Chinese. Your tax dollars at work on behalf of the New World Order. The surprising thing is not just that the president can speak of a New World Order with a straight face, but that so many people actually take him seriously.

The Modern-Day Hitler

George Bush has labeled Saddam Hussein the new Hitler, creating a further reason we have to stop him now — right now — because if we don't, he'll take over the whole world tomorrow. Remember Munich.

Neville Chamberlain performed an invaluable service to war-makers. By agreeing at Munich to Adolf Hitler's conquest of part of Czechoslovakia a year before the outbreak of World War II, he provided a metaphor that every war-maker can use with impunity: "Don't let Kuwait [or Vietnam, Korea, Grenada, South Africa, the North Pole, you name

it] be another Munich." We either stop the madman now, or we'll have to do it later when it will be much harder.

No one has to bother proving that Mr. Chamberlain's actions at Munich led to — or aggravated — World War II; it is simply assumed that they did. However, some people have suggested (also without convincing proof) that the Munich agreement gave England time to prepare itself for World War II, and thereby prevented a Nazi victory.

Whatever the case, Hitler and Munich provide the perfect metaphors whenever anyone wants to meddle in a foreign dispute.

The argument always assumes that the new Hitler will be stopped. But many of the previous Hitlers (in Korea and Vietnam, for example) managed to survive such attempts. The original Hitler was stopped, eventually, but at a cost of millions of lives.

Stopping Aggression

Another reason George Bush has offered for his crusade is that we must establish the precedent that aggression of any kind will not be tolerated.

It's ironic that the first Allied gain of the war was the retaking of the Kuwaiti island of Qaruh — which Coalition member Saudi Arabia then claimed for itself.

Six days before Iraq invaded Kuwait, the Saudi and Iraqi oil ministers held a public meeting to announce that they were deciding which of the two countries would get each of the Kuwaiti islands. (11)

And now Syria, Iran, and Turkey are eagerly awaiting the end of the war so that they can fight over the remains of Iraq.

So which aggressor will the New World Order have to repel next — Syria, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia?

Choose for Yourself

Of course, reasonable people can disagree about any of these points.

And if someone believes strongly enough that war is justified, I wouldn't try to stop him from volunteering or hiring out for a campaign to liberate Kuwait. Nor would I object if he wants to contribute money to the project.

But I don't believe that anyone's belief is justification for sending others to die, nor for confiscating the money of others to finance the war.

FOREIGN WARS & SANCTIONS

America can only be harmed by this war. Our kids killed, our liberties suppressed, our taxes raised, the government engorged, the recession deepened, our Constitution shredded — and you can hardly wait for the shooting to start.

Ad by Jews & Christians Against a Mideast War, 1990

Is there an alternative to this war?

Yes, there is. But it isn't the sanctions that were imposed by the U.S. and the United Nations. Sanctions are ridiculous. Like war, they're a way that one group of people forces another to pay for a cause favored by the first group. The sanctions hurt innocent people in Iraq and innocent businessmen elsewhere. Why should they have to sacrifice for someone's political objectives?

Sanctions are an instrument of selective indignation. Whenever they're invoked against anyone, similar villains are conveniently ignored.

No sanctions were considered when Soviet tanks rolled into Lithuania and Latvia. George Bush was too busy giving speeches against aggression to pay much attention to the Baltics. He had time only to ponder whether to reconsider sending the billions of dollars worth of free food he'd promised to Mr. Gorbachev.

The alternative to war is to do nothing. There is no reason for the U.S. to make things right in the Middle East — nor is there any hope that it can do so. If Saddam Hussein is dispatched to Moslem Hell and Iraq becomes a model democracy, there will be another crisis somewhere nearby next year.

No Foreign War Is a Just Cause

I'm not saying I'd support the war if the situation were different.

I don't believe in killing innocent people. And I don't like to see anyone deciding under what circumstances other people should die for a cause. (12)

The only time to consider force is when the United States people are threatened directly. Short of that, I'm not likely to be persuaded that force of any kind is called for.

An attack on the U.S. is more likely to come by missile than by an invading armada. If someday Saddam Hussein will have missiles, then someday we should have a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). If there is a valid reason to have a government, it must be to defend against intruders — not to become an intruder.

SDI would cost a fraction of the bill we're paying for troops, bombers, missiles, and the like. But politicians apparently reject it precisely for that reason — because it would be less likely to become the boondoggles that national defense and worldwide alliances have become. (Those who laughed at "Star Wars" and now praise the Patriot anti-missile missiles are trying very hard to avoid making any connection between the two.)

MARCHING ON TO VICTORY

This Administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America, and I urge Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort. It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won.

Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964 (13)

All the reasons discussed for sending America to war assume that the U.S. government will achieve its objectives, that no unintended consequences will ensue, and that the only question is whether a particular motive is sufficient reason to start a war.

But this is government we're talking about.

The War on Poverty has been raging for 25 years, but now we're told there are more poor people than ever. For almost as long, our privacy and money have been sacrificed to wage the War on Drugs, but not one city has been liberated. There are hundreds of gun-control laws in the country, but murders with firearms continue as always.

The government can't seem to educate our children, it certainly won't make the environment pristine, and it doesn't deliver the mail on time.

And yet, for some reason, people who know all those things believe this same government will accomplish its military and diplomatic objectives in the Middle East

perfectly. Even though every other government program produces terrible side effects, somehow this one will miraculously achieve just what you want (whatever that is) without lighting the fuse for World War III (or Police Action #79) in the process. People thought the same about Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Nicaragua, and many other places.

WHY IS THERE A WAR?

War is the health of the State.

Randolph Bourne, 1917

Perhaps I'm overreacting, but I find it hard to escape the conclusion that the only benefit of the war has been to provide a diversion from George Bush's domestic problems. The war has given him a sky-high approval rating and taken the recession off the front page. In November his reelection seemed unlikely; today it seems assured. (However, the election is almost two years away, and by then today's euphoria may have long since been forgotten.)

George Bush has his own reasons for war, and only he knows what they are. The stated objectives — reacting to atrocities, guaranteeing low oil prices, and the like — are merely window dressing.

The Unfolding of George Bush

It is difficult for men in high office to avoid the malady of self delusion. They are constantly and, for the most part, sincerely assured of their greatness. They live in an artificial atmosphere of adulation and exhilaration which sooner or later impairs their judgment. They are in grave danger of becoming careless and ignorant.

Calvin Coolidge, 1929

During the presidential campaign of 1988, I considered Mr. Bush to be an intelligent man — a gentleman in fact (even though the press tried to portray his campaign as mean-spirited).

During his first year in office, I continued to consider him a gentleman, although I regretted his lack of firm principles. His highest ambition apparently was to please special-interest leaders and set a record for approval ratings in the opinion polls.

Last year, when he retracted his "no new taxes" pledge, I thought he was an idiot for discarding the only campaign issue that distinguished him from his opponents. I had to seriously question the intelligence of a man who could so easily be taken in by a gang of Congressional con men.

Now I consider him dangerous. He doesn't have the courage to say no to environmental busybodies and assure that America produces sufficient oil, but he's willing to have hundreds (perhaps thousands) of Americans and tens of thousands of innocent civilians die in order to obtain foreign oil.

He has demonstrated that special-interest support is more precious than human life. He has already invaded Panama and the Middle East, and he has at least two more years to continue playing God.

I guess we should have stopped him at Munich.

RESPONDING TO WAR

My opposition to the war isn't based on the fact that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia support the PLO, that Coalition-ally Syria is a terrorist state, that sufficient oil is available within the U.S. without fighting over Gulf oil, that President Bush is spouting dangerous nonsense about a New World Order, or that Saudi Arabia itself is salivating over Kuwait like a mongoose at a cobra convention.

All these contradictions and hypocrisies are standard procedure for politics and international relations. President Bush, Saddam Hussein, Yassir Arafat, and the other actors in this dreadful tragedy are simply doing what they were born to do. And we can't stop them.

But we debase ourselves when we support their schemes — when we nod our heads and pretend we don't really see the contradictions and self-interest lurking under the high-minded oratory. And that is why you should separate yourself from all this — from their world, a world in which coercion, intrigue, double-dealing, violence, and lies are the rule.

You don't resort to deceit and violence to get what you want in your business or your personal life. Why should you respect people who do? You're better than the politicians and the war-makers; there's no reason to sink to their level and endorse their jingoism. I'm not suggesting that you join the protestors. (You can meet a better class of people at a massage parlor.) I'm not even suggesting you write letters to the editor or your Congressman. In fact, it doesn't matter whether you ever say a word out loud in opposition.

What's important is that you don't allow yourself to be one of them — that, for your own self-respect, you don't lend your support to the hysteria of the lynch mob.

What is important is that you can still distinguish between what is true and what is deceitful, between those who are your equals and those who have no respect for the lives and property of others.

It's what you believe that's important. What others believe is their problem.

THE LAST BEST HOPE

By following the policy we have adhered to since the days of Washington we have prospered beyond precedent; we have done more for the cause of liberty in the world than arms could effect; we have shown to other nations the way to greatness and happiness. . . .

But if we should involve ourselves in the web of European politics, in a war which could effect nothing . . . where, then, would be the last hope of the friends of freedom throughout the world? Far better it is . . . that, adhering to our wise pacific system, and avoiding the distant wars of Europe, we should keep our own lamp burning brightly on this western shore, as a light to all nations, than to hazard its utter extinction amidst the ruins of fallen or falling republics in Europe.

Henry Clay, 1852

Seldom in history has a country emerged that was free, prosperous, and peaceful amidst a stormy, poverty-stricken world of virtual slaves.

You would think that Americans would be so thankful to live in an isolated country without war that they'd react bitterly to any motivation to go looking for trouble overseas. But reformers are never willing to leave well enough alone. Instead of enjoying the privilege of living in a country that could be an example to the world, they want to take away more of our freedoms in order to "defend freedom" — or nibble away at our prosperity on the pretense of making us even more prosperous.

Or condemn innocent people to death so that the world will be safe for innocent people.

Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne, 1624

Somebody quiet that damn bell.

Harry Browne, 1991

Notes

- (1) *San Francisco Examiner*, January 27, 1991, page A1.
- (2) "What Mideast Arabs Need Is a Real Peace," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 28, 1991, page A13.
- (3) *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, page viii, Caxton Printers 1953 edition.
- (4) *Liberty magazine*, February 1991, page 19.
- (5) Bill Mandel, *San Francisco Examiner*, January 27, 1991, page B3.
- (6) Syndicated column, January 31, 1991.
- (7) *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, page 657, Caxton Printers 1953 edition.
- (8) The PLO's finances are discussed in "PLO, Inc." by Daniel Pipes, *The American Spectator*, February 1991, page 27.
- (9) Syndicated column, January 24, 1991.
- (10) The World War deaths are for all participating countries, and are from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1971 edition. Korean and Vietnam deaths are for U.S. forces alone, and are from *The World Almanac*, 1991.
- (11) *San Francisco Examiner*, January 26, 1991, page A1 & February 3, 1991, page A1.
- (12) In the interests of full disclosure, I should state that I'm not sure I believe in killing anyone.
- (13) State of the Union Message, January 8, 1964.

Top 10 Reasons To Get The U.S. Out Of Yugoslavia
by Harry Browne

May 3, 1999

10. You can't save innocent people by bombing innocent people. If that seems to be the only way to solve a problem, you're in the wrong place at the wrong time.

9. The man in the White House leading the fight against the Serbs is well known to be a congenital liar. Why in the world would we fight and die based on his version of the facts?

8. U.S. intervention hasn't brought us a single unqualified success in decades -- not in Somalia, Rwanda, Libya, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam, Korea, Cuba, or anywhere else. In every case, the original reason for the intervention still exists (as with Saddam Hussein) or the enemy has been replaced by one that's equally bad (as in the case of Afghanistan or South Africa).

7. The U.S. armed the Afghan "freedom fighters," Saddam Hussein, and Manuel Noriega (among others) -- all of whom became enemies that had to be attacked. Now the U.S. is supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army, which people in our own government have called a terrorist organization. Does this mean we will be attacking the Kosovars next?

6. When Benjamin Franklin said the Constitutional Convention had given us "a republic, if you can keep it," he was reminding us that the Roman Republic became the Roman Empire and collapsed. The Romans gave too much power to their leaders, who used it to create an Empire through foreign conquest. The American Republic has long since become the American Empire. It's time to return to the peace-loving Republic.

5. The foreign adventures of our Republican and Democratic leaders have led to people in all parts of the world hating America. Don't we have enough enemies by now? Or must we turn our few remaining friends against us?

4. It may have been "a dangerous world out there" for others, but it wasn't for us until the meddling of our leaders made it so. Now it is extremely dangerous to be an American -- thanks to a series of Republican and Democratic Presidents. How long will it be before Serbs start smuggling bombs into America? (Doesn't anyone ever wonder why terrorists target us and not Switzerland?)

3. American intervention escalated a stupid, endless European conflict into World War I - which then devastated Germany, creating the despair that led to Adolf Hitler and World War II. Have our leaders learned nothing from history? (The answer isn't just "no;" they deliberately ignore any history that interferes with their lust for more power.)

2. By allowing the President to fight undeclared wars, the Republicans and Democrats in Congress have violated their Constitutional oaths. It's time to respect the Constitution and stop allowing Presidents to suck us into wars that are none of our business.

And the No. 1 reason to get the U.S. out of Yugoslavia completely and immediately. ...

5. If we have a moral responsibility to fight every evil in the world, you'd better kiss your children goodbye and prepare for wars in Rwanda, Zaire, China, Russia, Croatia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Turkey, the Sudan, Algeria, Kashmir, Angola, Sierra Leone and many other countries. Our volunteer military can't handle them all, encouraging a return of the draft -- and your children and your grandchildren probably won't be exempt next time. Airstrikes can't do the job, so your children will be slogging through the mud of Europe, Asia, or Africa -- sleeping in filthy foxholes, risking their lives as they become hardened killers. Is that what you want?

Here's a bonus reason to get out of Yugoslavia -- the most important reason of all. ...

War is almost always the first resort of politicians. But for a free country, it should be the very last resort. America should be the symbol of liberty and peace -- not big government and war-making. Why does it seem that only Libertarians understand this on issue after issue after issue? Why is it so hard for Democratic and Republican politicians to resist war consistently? Are they so in love with big government that they will use any excuse

to make it bigger?

You don't need to reply to the question. We all know the answer.

Murdering for Morality
by Harry Browne

June 03, 1999

I recently received a letter from a Libertarian who supports the NATO war against Serbia.

He writes:

"I see that the Libertarians are against the 'war' (or whatever it is) in Serbia, lest as ol' Abe Lincoln did some years ago, the state would grow. Gladly do I appreciate the fear of a growing state.

"Yet to leave a mad dog such as Milosevic alive after such a butchery shows a level of callousness that I can not accept and still consider myself as moral.

"True, there are other places such as the Sudan where we are not intervening. That absence is no excuse not to intervene somewhere. That somewhere at present is Serbia. And if nothing is done and Milosevic keeps his job, that means that in this evolving New World Order, the institution of government has the acknowledged, if unofficial, right to butcher its own citizens, to kill 'we the people.'

"That can not be tolerated: mad dog governments must pay a price, even if there is a fear of enlarging governments."

I understand your concerns, but I believe that, in your sympathy for some people, you're overlooking many other people -- and overlooking the consequences that would flow from getting what you want.

First, if you believe everything you've read about the "butchery" and "callousness," and if you feel that your ability to "consider [yourself] moral" hinges on your doing something, then do it.

But do you consider it moral to condemn to death other people, who are as innocent as you are, to satisfy your moral outrage? Do you consider it moral to force Americans who don't agree with you to pay for the instruments of death and destruction that are currently raining down on the guilty and innocent alike in Yugoslavia?

Second, how did you arrive at your understanding of the "butchery" and "callousness"? Your appraisal necessarily is based mostly on what has been filtered through the Clinton administration and NATO headquarters.

Bill Clinton's reputation for veracity is probably the worst in the world. This is the man who told you "the era of big government is over" and "I did not have sex with that woman," and who made up tales about church-burnings in his childhood and dozens of other fantasies you're probably well acquainted with. Is this the source for your knowledge about "brutality" and "callousness"?

NATO has violated its own charter by waging war when none of its member nations has been attacked. So it is under strong pressure to demonize its enemy -- and can hardly be considered a reliable source of information.

You were told by NATO that it had not bombed a train carrying Kosovar refugees, that Milosevic himself had done it -- but then NATO admitted it had bombed the train, but claimed that Milosevic had used the refugees as human shields. And then NATO admitted that everything it had said was wrong, and that NATO had caused "a tragic accident."

You were told by NATO that the reason it has caused many innocent people to die in embassies and civilian installations is because it is using out-of-date maps.

You were told by NATO that tens of thousands of young men had been murdered by the Serbs -- but, when pressed for evidence, NATO backed up this claim by saying a pilot had seen a freshly plowed field from thousands of feet up -- a field that NATO, with no further evidence, declared to be a mass grave.

You were told by NATO that Milosevic has murdered all the leaders of the Kosovo Liberation Army -- but then the Los Angeles Times (May 17) reported that all the dead leaders were still walking around villages in Kosovo -- and that even the Kosovars discount most of the news of Serbian atrocities.

This isn't to say that Slobodan Milosevic is really a good guy. He's a political thug, like so many world leaders. But what source of information has caused you to decide that thousands of innocent people must be put to death in order to make this particular thug pay a price?

Third, have you considered how this war will set a precedent for future wars?

The pundits applauded when Harry Truman illegally committed American troops to fight the Korean War. But that just made it easier for John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson to illegally commit troops to fight in Vietnam -- which made it easier yet for Richard Nixon to illegally bomb Cambodia, a neutral country. And that made it still easier for George Bush to commit troops to fight illegally in Iraq.

And these precedents removed all possible restraints on Bill Clinton, so that he could willy-nilly bomb and kill innocent people in Iraq, the Sudan, Afghanistan, and now Serbia, Kosovo, Bulgaria, and Albania.

How easy it will be now for the next president to bomb presumed drug fields in Mexico - or terrorists supposedly hiding in Canada. Or perhaps he'll start a nuclear war with China, based on classified, non-public information that China is about to invade Taiwan.

Or what happens when China decides some future Branch Davidians are being oppressed by the American government? On what moral basis could you argue that China has no right to rain bombs on innocent people in Texas, in order to make our "mad dog government" pay a price?

Fifth, note something very closely: North Korea remains an apparent threat almost 50 years after Truman's bold stroke to involve America in Korea. North Vietnam won its war against America and today controls all of Vietnam -- despite the death and destruction unleashed by Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. And in spite of America's great "victory" in Iraq, Saddam Hussein remains on the throne there -- to be used as a bogey-man with which our government can threaten its own people. So what did all those illegal interventions achieve? And what will the illegal destruction of Yugoslavia achieve?

What I'm asking is simply this: On what basis do you decide that other people must die in order to satisfy your sense of morality? Isn't your morality something that is supposed to govern your conduct, rather than decide the fate of others?

Statists have always justified "collateral damage" -- the killing of innocent people -- by saying, "You can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs."

But it's always someone else's eggs that get broken. And no matter how many eggs are destroyed, the omelet never materializes.

And thus we have perpetual war for perpetual peace -- a peace that is always promised, but never arrives, no matter how much killing and killing and killing is justified by the search for peace.

If Slobodan Milosevic truly were threatening America, an American President could post a reward of, say, \$250 million -- to be given to whoever in the world succeeded in assassinating him. But, whatever he really is, we know one thing for certain: Milosevic isn't threatening us.

Your concern for some people entitles you to do -- on your own -- whatever you can for those people. But I don't believe it entitles you to condemn innocent people to their death -- or to force the rest of us to pay for those executions.

To most people who call themselves libertarians, force is the last resort for any problem -
- not the first.

Who gave the OK on Kosovo?
By Harry Browne

July 6, 1999

Many Americans objected to President Clinton's bombing of Yugoslavia -- without a declaration of war by Congress and with no threat of attack against the United States. You might be one of those who think it's wrong to bomb innocent Serbs for the alleged sins of one man.

By attacking a smaller country without provocation, our president invited the resentment of hundreds of millions of people worldwide, as well as the active interest of terrorists who might want to react to such a dangerous foreign policy.

Who gave President Clinton the authority to jeopardize our future in this way? Well, maybe you did. Even if you opposed Clinton's bombing campaign, you still may have authorized it.

If you cheered when President Reagan sent troops into Grenada, you endorsed the idea that the president of the United States -- at his own discretion -- is free to wage war against anyone he chooses, for any reason he chooses. He need not get a declaration of war, and America need not be threatened with attack.

If you thought President Bush was "standing tall" when he sent troops to kidnap Panama's Manuel Noriega or rescue Kuwait from Saddam Hussein, you said, in effect, that presidents should be free to attack anyone they want.

"But," you say, "those were different circumstances. We can't allow a communist government in the Western Hemisphere, or a drug dealer to rule Panama, or naked aggression to succeed in the Middle East."

Or a dictator to oppress his subjects in Kosovo?

The circumstances may seem different to you, but no one asked you -- and no one ever will. When you supported the previous U.S. attacks, you said that a president should be free to choose his own targets -- without the constitutional requirement that Congress deliberate long enough to issue a formal declaration of war, without the commonsense requirement that our land and lives must be threatened, and without asking you first. I don't say these things to reproach you, but rather to warn you to beware in the future when you're tempted to hand your favorite politician the power to do good. You will simultaneously be handing some future reprobate the power to do bad.

If you approved when President Reagan took a stand against terrorism by bombing Libya, you shouldn't have been surprised when President Clinton took a stand against terrorism by bombing a Sudanese perfume factory.

If you give a "good" president the power to do good, you are paving the way for a bad president to exploit that power to do bad. You won't always have your choice as president, and you will never get to choose his targets.

Power doesn't distinguish between right and wrong. Once the power is granted, it will be used -- and used for whatever purpose pleases whoever has it. And the greater the power, the more likely that ruthless people will seek control of it. So why should you give such power to any president? As P.J. O'Rourke said, that's like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.

Politicians will always use your support as a precedent to do whatever they choose. And this doesn't apply only to war making.

Give the politicians the power to ban assault rifles and you give them the power to ban any kind of self-protection you might want to rely on.

Grant the politicians the power to give vouchers for private schooling and you grant them the power to tell private schools what to do.

Do these examples seem far-fetched? Such possibilities always do when raised in advance. But when you give politicians the power to do anything, they never stop at the point where you think they've done enough.

Libertarians know the goal isn't to assure that only the right people get elected to positions of power. We realize that's impossible. The goal is to minimize the politicians' power as far as possible. What they don't have, they can never misuse.

Almost all Republican and Democratic politicians are more eager to increase government's ability to do "good" than in limiting power. So until all politicians are bound down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution (as Jefferson put it), we aren't safe from any politician.

Missing the Point in the Kerrey Controversy

By Harry Browne

May 04, 2001

It has been revealed that former Sen. Bob Kerrey led a Navy unit that killed 13 women and children in a Vietnamese village in 1969.

Mr. Kerrey has claimed that he and his men were returning fire in the night and didn't know they were killing civilians.

The argument over whether his actions were justified misses the point.

It has been said over and over that in war terrible things happen sometimes. I agree, but why don't we draw the obvious conclusion from that?

If war produces such terrible events, why do our politicians keep dragging us into wars?

We were told we had to "draw the line" in Vietnam. Well, we drew the line and the communists crossed it because we couldn't stop them. Over 47,000 Americans and God-only-knows-how-many Vietnamese died there, and still Vietnam fell to the communists.

But that hasn't stopped our politicians from rushing Americans to fight or otherwise be killed in Panama, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Colombia, and plenty of other remote places in the world. Not one of these little adventures achieved the goal the politicians gave for going there in the first place. Or haven't you noticed that Saddam Hussein still sits on the throne in Iraq and drug-dealing still permeates Panama?

What is war?

The politicians tell us how essential each war is -- and they try to make us imagine heroic young men marching in parades, winning glorious battles, and bringing peace and

democracy to the world. But their stirring phrases are meant to keep our eyes averted from what war really is.

War is your children or your grandchildren dying before they're even fully adults, or being maimed or mentally scarred for life. It is your brothers and sisters being taught to kill other people -- and to hate people who are just like themselves and who don't want to kill anyone either. It is your children seeing their buddies' limbs blown off their bodies.

It is hundreds of thousands of human beings dying years before their time. It is millions of people separated forever from the ones they loved.

It is the destruction of homes for which people worked for decades. It is the end of careers that meant as much to others as your career means to you.

It is the imposition of heavy taxes on you and on other Americans and on people in other countries -- taxes that remain long after the war is over. It is the suppression of free speech and the jailing of people who criticize the government.

Often it has been the imposition of slavery by forcing young men to serve in the military.

War allows the politicians to goad us to hate foreign people and races -- whether Arabs or Japanese or Cubans -- so we become insensitive to cruelties inflicted on them. It is cheering at movies or news footage of "their" pilots killed in planes, of "their" young men blown to bits while trapped inside tanks, of "their" sailors drowned at sea.

Other tragedies inevitably trail in the wake of war. Politicians lie even more than usual. Secrecy and cover-ups become the rule rather than the exception. The press becomes even less reliable.

War is genocide, torture, cruelty, propaganda, dishonesty and slavery.

War is the worst obscenity government can inflict upon its subjects. It makes every other political crime -- corruption, bribery, favoritism, vote-buying, graft, dishonesty -- seem petty.

Government's role

If government has a role to play in foreign affairs, it isn't to win wars, to assure that the right people run foreign countries, to protect innocent foreigners from guilty aggressors, or to make the world safe for democracy -- or even a safer place at all.

If government has a role, it can be only to keep us out of wars -- to make sure no one will ever attack us, to make certain you can live your life in peace, to assure you the freedom to ignore who is right and who is wrong in foreign conflicts.

The only reason for military power is to discourage attackers, and -- if they come anyway -- to repel them at our borders. Such things as stationing troops in far-off lands, meddling in foreign disputes, and sending our children to foreign countries as "peacekeepers" only encourage war.

To make America safer and to assure that we stay at peace, we don't need to put more weapons in the hands of government employees, or to reform military purchasing methods, or to make more treaties with other governments, or to increase the military budget.

In fact, we need just the opposite of these things. We need to make it as hard as possible for politicians to involve us in war. And we need to discover a defense system that relies as little as possible on the normal workings of government.

Government is no more able to achieve military goals than it is to end poverty or stop drug use or run our health-care system. And it's time we started questioning why we allow politicians to continually drag us into unwinnable and fatal conflicts.

More important than asking whether Sen. Kerrey's actions in Vietnam were justified is the question: Why was he there in the first place?

When Will We Learn? - Part I
by Harry Browne

September 12, 2001

The terrorist attacks against America comprise a horrible tragedy. But they shouldn't be a surprise.

It is well known that in war, the first casualty is truth – that during any war truth is forsaken for propaganda. But sanity was a prior casualty: it was the loss of sanity that led to war in the first place.

Our foreign policy has been insane for decades. It was only a matter of time until Americans would have to suffer personally for it. It is a terrible tragedy of life that the innocent so often have to suffer for the sins of the guilty.

When will we learn that we can't allow our politicians to bully the world without someone bullying back eventually?

President Bush has authorized continued bombing of innocent people in Iraq. President Clinton bombed innocent people in the Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Serbia. President Bush, senior, invaded Iraq and Panama. President Reagan bombed innocent people in Libya and invaded Grenada. And on and on it goes.

Did we think the people who lost their families and friends and property in all that destruction would love America for what happened?

When will we learn that violence always begets violence?

Teaching lessons

Supposedly, Reagan bombed Libya to teach Muammar al-Qaddafi a lesson about terrorism. But shortly thereafter a TWA plane was destroyed over Scotland, and our government is convinced it was Libyans who did it.

When will we learn that "teaching someone a lesson" never teaches anything but resentment – that it only inspires the recipient to greater acts of defiance.

How many times on Tuesday did we hear someone describe the terrorist attacks as "cowardly acts"? But as misguided and despicable as they were, they were anything but cowardly. The people who committed them knowingly gave their lives for whatever stupid beliefs they held.

But what about the American presidents who order bombings of innocent people – while the presidents remain completely insulated from any danger? What would you call their acts?

When will we learn that forsaking truth and reason in the heat of battle almost always assures that we will lose the battle?

Losing our last freedoms

And now, as sure as night follows day, we will be told we must give up more of our freedoms to avenge what never should have happened in the first place.

When will we learn that it makes no sense to give up our freedoms in the name of freedom?

What to do?

What should be done?

First of all, stop the hysteria. Stand back and ask how this could have happened. Ask how a prosperous country isolated by two oceans could have so embroiled itself in other people's business that someone would want to do us harm. Even sitting in the middle of Europe, Switzerland isn't beset by terrorist attacks, because the Swiss mind their own business.

Second, resolve that we won't let our leaders use this occasion to commit their own terrorist acts upon more innocent people, foreign and domestic, that will inspire more terrorist attacks in the future.

Third, find a way, with enforceable constitutional limits, to prevent our leaders from ever again provoking this kind of anger against America.

Patriotism?

There are those who will say this article is unpatriotic and un-American – that this is not a time to question our country or our leaders.

When will we learn that without freedom and sanity, there is no reason to be patriotic?

When Will We Learn? – Part 2 **by Harry Browne**

September 12, 2001

My article last Tuesday “When Will We Learn?” provoked more controversy than anything I've ever written. In case there was any misunderstanding, here is what I believe:

The terrorist attack was a horrible tragedy and I feel enormous sympathy for those who were personally affected by it. I wrote my article hoping that, however unlikely, it might be possible to prevent such a thing from ever happening again.

I hope anyone responsible for the attack who didn't die in it will be found, tried, and punished appropriately.

Terrorism by definition is the killing of innocent people in order to bring about some political or social change.

Terrorism may cause some changes in the short term, but it never leads to a conclusive victory, because it provokes a never-ending cycle of escalating violence on both sides.

The U.S. government has engaged in acts of terrorism over the past few decades – bombing and starving innocent people in foreign countries, supposedly to force their leaders to make changes the U.S. government desires. Terrorism doesn't become "policing" or "justice" merely because it is our government doing it.

All Iraqis are not Saddam Hussein; all Serbs aren't Slobodan Milosevic; all Afghanis (or Saudis) are not Osama Bin Laden.

Killing innocent people in retaliation for the sins of other people isn't justice – it is terrorism. The terrorists were wrong to kill Americans to satisfy their grievances against American foreign policy. And to react to them by killing innocent foreigners would also be terrorism.

You can't make productive decisions at a time when your mind is clouded by anger resentment, or thoughts of revenge.

The reactions I've received have been roughly 50-50 regarding my position. Here are some of the objections people have made against my position.

Timing

"This was a bad time for you to say, 'I told you so' in such a poor fashion."

I'm not saying, "I told you so." I'm trying to stop future madness – against Americans and against foreigners. Should I wait until after our military invades Afghanistan before speaking out?

"Now, of all times, is the time when we must support one another for the best."

That doesn't mean supporting the ill-conceived policies that led to this event.

"It is time for our people to pull together against these sick terrorists. We could use your help too."

To do what? Encourage our politicians to continue doing the very things that led to this? You're demonstrating why I had to write the article. If we stand behind our leaders now, letting them speak for us "as one voice," nothing will change. We will continue to see more acts by our government that will lead to more terrorist attacks on the U.S.

"Don't tell me to 'stop the hysteria.' This event merits hysteria, anger, sadness, and fear. I will be hysterical because it is the only thing I can do to show my countrymen that I mourn them."

Hysteria creates lynch mobs and more killing of innocent people. Grief, anger, and resentment are all natural reactions to what happened. But letting your emotions make bad decisions is not a productive reaction.

"What's done is done and now we're in the middle of this terrible mess. Maybe you're right, maybe we should not be surprised that something was bound to happen. But, now what? We don't need people criticizing our past mistakes at this moment. Save that for later. Right now we need immediate action."

If we don't understand the past mistakes, the "immediate action" taken will simply repeat those mistakes. Is that what you want?

My Motives

"You have lost my support by your political posturing in a time of crisis."

Political posturing? Do you really think I expected to receive adulation for writing an article that goes so sharply against current public opinion?

"It sickens me that you would use this tragedy this way."

In what way? To try to stop it from happening again? To try to stop our politicians from running off and bombing more innocent people? As a normally public voice, should I sit quietly by and not point out that our politicians are continually putting innocent Americans in harm's way by terrorizing innocent foreigners?

I understand your outrage and emotional reaction, but we must hold our own politicians accountable for the anger they are causing around the world with their careless, dangerous, show-off tactics.

"Please leave the United States. You do not deserve to remain here with this type of un-American diatribe which only serves to support the voices of moderation."

I thought this is supposed to be a free country in which everyone was allowed to speak his mind. I guess I misunderstood. I didn't realize it was a crime to try to stop a lynching.

The Libertarian Party

"Using this event as a means to bolster the Libertarian party is despicable and it is disgusting."

It appears that standing up for what one believes isn't a way to bolster the popularity of the Libertarian Party. But that's what Libertarians often do – especially when no one else will.

"You have forever ended any chance of my supporting the Libertarian party, unless you resign from any and all leadership positions immediately."

You'll be pleased to know I don't hold any leadership position in the Libertarian Party. I am a private citizen who grieves for what the politicians have done to my country and to the innocents who die in America and abroad. Many Libertarians disagree with my position, so you shouldn't judge the Libertarian Party by me.

Retaliation

"We must deter the next attack with the fiery sword of vengeance, not some limp, liberal, why-can't-we-be-let-alone weak response."

We have done that already – bombing Libya, invading Panama, bombing a perfume factory in the Sudan, bombing Afghanistan. Did those "fiery sword(s) of vengeance" deter the next attack?

"Bomb Kabul into oblivion."

As I recall, Kabul is the capital of Afghanistan, which is run by the same "Freedom Fighters" our own government gave so much money and military hardware to in the 1980s. Before we run off bombing innocent people (or is every Afghani guilty of the World Trade Center bombing?), shouldn't we question the American foreign policy that put those people in power in Afghanistan? Or is it bad timing to bring that up now?

"Once you know the face of your enemy destroy him completely and you will never need fight him again. America is at war. To win a war it must be fought in totality."

A war against whom? Against people like the one million Iraqis who have died of starvation or disease because of the American blockade? Against people like the innocents who died in the bombings of the Sudan and Afghanistan?

Everytime our leaders say, "We must make sure this will never happen again," they do something to assure that it will happen again. I wrote my article in the vain hope it might help people to think twice before demanding the wrong action.

"Do you think these terrorists can really be reasoned with?"

I didn't say they could. I said we shouldn't give them legitimate reasons to direct their misguided zeal at the U.S.

"Don't you think a soft response would just encourage more terrorism?"

I hope the people who were involved are found, tried, and punished. I don't consider that a soft response. But I don't want any more innocent people hurt – Americans or foreigners.

"This is not the time to run and bury our heads in the sand. Someone has to stand up to bullies wherever they are! Like the Nazis; the only good Religious Fundamentalist is one that is in heaven! Not only is it a time for the U.S. to take action but to OCCUPY ALL ARAB LANDS, since their Religious leaders 'preach' the Jihad."

Did I mention that there was a lot of hysteria and a lynch-mob sentiment right now?

"You totally lost your credibility with me when you suggest that any military response will basically serve no purpose."

The U.S. went to Vietnam to stop the Communist dominos from falling, and the entire region fell to the communists. The U.S. invaded Panama, supposedly to end drug-dealing there, and today Panama is more overrun with the drug trade than ever. After years of arming Saddam Hussein, the U.S. invaded Iraq to get rid of him, but he is still held up as a terrible threat to the world. The U.S. bombed Libya to teach terrorists a lesson; so the terrorists hijacked the Pan American plane over Scotland.

Perhaps you could give me an example of where U.S. military response in the past several decades has achieved any purpose.

Obviously, the individuals involved in the attacks should be found, prosecuted, and punished. But going to war against another country or some vague conspiracy will solve no more than the examples I just gave.

"At this time, past wrongful deeds committed by Americans should not play a role in our reaction to this horrible event. We have to retaliate once we confirm who is responsible. Otherwise, even more horrific events are sure to occur in the future."

We have retaliated in the past, and still horrific events followed. What I'm hoping for is a different kind of reaction this time – one that will actually change American policy so that we never again suffer what happened this week.

Corrections & Caution

"I would like to point out that the airliner destroyed over Scotland was a PanAm plane, not TWA."

You are right. In my haste to get the article finished, I was careless in relying on my imperfect memory and not looking it up.

"I put my Harry Browne for President stickers back up in my dorm room yesterday."

Please, take them down before you get lynched.

More to come.

When Will We Learn? – Part 3
by Harry Browne

September 12, 2001

In my last commentary, I pointed out that killing innocent people is terrorism, no matter who does it – free-lance terrorists, an international conspiracy, a foreign government, or our government.

It would be wrong for our government to respond to last week's tragedy by committing further acts of terrorism against innocent foreign people.

Find the terrorist conspirators and punish them – yes. Bomb innocent people – no.

Friday I commented on some of the common themes we're hearing now to justify rash action by our government against foreign countries. Here are some more of what I've received in my mail:

Civil liberties

"I don't mind giving up some more of my liberty in order to put a stop to these despicable acts."

I understand your sentiments, but I respectfully disagree with them – for two reasons:

First, you have no idea what liberties are going to be taken from you. And whatever they are, you can have no expectation of ever getting them back – even if the underlying

problem goes away completely. For just one obvious example, income tax withholding was instituted as a war measure in 1942, and it is still with us today.

Second, taking away our liberties rarely achieves the goals used to justify the new oppression. Because of the drug war, our government now rummages through your bank's records, looking for suspicious transactions you may have entered into; you and your property can be searched and seized without a warrant, without being convicted of anything, without even being accused of anything. And yet drugs are as widespread today as when these intrusions were put in place.

It's easy to say you support intrusions that you believe aren't likely to affect you personally. But I can assure you that any invasion of civil liberties will affect you more than they do the truly guilty (who will quickly learn about the invasions and how to circumvent them).

World War II

"What about the situation in the 1930s, where the British under Chamberlain tried to appease rather than oppose Hitler, with horrible results?"

Many historians believe that if Chamberlain hadn't signed the Munich pact in 1938, but had instead gone to war immediately with Germany, an unprepared England would have been defeated easily. Instead, the delay gave England time to get ready to resist Hitler – and even then, a better-prepared England just barely survived.

But "Munich" has become an all-purpose cliché to justify striking out violently against any foreign power that displeases our politicians: "If only Hitler had been stopped at Munich!" (as though at the time anyone had the resources to stop him). We need something more substantial than clichés to prevent future terrorist attacks.

"There are people like Adolf Hitler who are pure evil. You can't hide your head in the sand and pretend they don't exist. Our government must intervene overseas to root them out – just as we did in World War II."

There are people with diseased minds in every part of the world – from your neighborhood right on up to heads of state. Once you accept the idea that a preemptive strike is justified, where do you stop?

It is easy to cite World War II as an example of our government's proper intervention in world affairs – but only if you start the story in the 1930s, just as people are starting the terrorist story at last Tuesday.

In 1917 World War I was winding down to a close. Germany was suing for peace. A negotiated settlement was close, and the world could have returned to its pre-war borders and peace. But it was not to be.

At that point Woodrow Wilson took America into the conflict. That intervention changed history irrevocably for the worse. Millions of fresh American soldiers streamed into Europe – tipping the balance of power and overwhelming an enemy exhausted from three years of war. Germany and Austria surrendered, the German emperor fled to the Netherlands, and the Allies imposed devastating conditions upon a defeated Germany.

America's action transformed a functioning Germany with Kaiser Wilhelm on the throne into a prostrate Germany eager for revenge. And so a nation of great artistry that had produced the likes of Goethe and Wagner was willing to accept a dictator who promised to help them get even.

The humanitarian spirit that propelled America into a war to "end all wars" laid the groundwork for two of history's worst murderers – Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler.

Although no one can say for sure, it seems very likely that if America had stayed out of World War I there would have been no World War II. And without that war and without a Soviet Union, there would have been no Cold War, no Korean War, no Vietnam War. The 20th century wouldn't have been an era of perfect peace, but it would have avoided being history's bloodiest 100 years.

Could Woodrow Wilson – or anyone else – have foreseen all this in advance?

No, and that's the point.

Once you embark on the use of force – for any purpose – you have no idea what will fly up out of Pandora's box.

If you don't look for the causes that precede the events, you have no hope of ever preventing a repetition of the events.

What the terrorists did last Tuesday was wrong. But if we don't inquire into the background, and instead go off around the world on a holy jihad of our own, we will unleash consequences none of us can predict. But we can be almost positive that they won't be to our liking.

"Don't you think that if we were to withdraw from the Mideast, that eventually some Arab dictator would unite the Arab-Islamic world (violently) and pose a real threat to us?"

Arab dictators aren't going to give up their fiefdoms to a single ruler. Nasser tried it with the United Arab Republic, but it lasted only a year or two. Bureaucrats in Europe love a central authority because it gives them more dictatorial power. But that isn't likely to happen in the Middle East.

And what you suggest could be possible anywhere in the world. Does that justify the U.S. running the entire world? (Speaking of a single dictator!)

"Isn't it occasionally right to intervene on the behalf of people that are being massacred, such as in Serbia?"

In a free country, you should be free to send money – or even yourself – to any country in the world to aid any cause you believe in (which, incidentally, isn't completely legal under federal law today). But the American government shouldn't use your money to intervene or stir up resentments for causes you may not believe in.

"The world is our business, we all live here. Should people be suffering in East Timor or Iraq or Ethiopia/Eritrea and we just stand by and let it happen if we can do something? I don't think so. Taking more responsibility for all the people of this planet and all the nations of the world would be a better stance."

That should be your choice. You should be free to help anyone anywhere in the world. But our politicians should not have the power to inflict violence on people in other countries in your name – making you a target of retribution.

"We are a world power and we must act like one. This means being unpopular. This means intervening in the world because we have a responsibility to the world."

And it means having people attack us violently – no matter how many security measures are taken and no matter how many liberties you give up. Is that what you want?

"You speak of our government meddling in other people's affairs. Give some specific examples."

Our government has been giving money and military hardware to prop up dictators for over 50 years – including people like Manuel Noriega of Panama, whom our government then kidnapped and put in prison in America. And supporting the very Afghanistan government that supposedly today is harboring Osama bin Laden. Although a lot of the support for dictators was explained as a way of fighting communism, it continues today.

Yes, I know that often the people who eventually replace the dictators are just as bad ? but that doesn't justify our government giving your money to either the dictators or their replacements.

Did you know that our government still gives foreign aid to Afghanistan? Yes, the same country Bill Clinton attacked with Cruise missiles.

And we have troops stationed in almost a hundred countries even today.

If dictators took over America, how would you feel about foreign countries that helped keep those dictators in power? How would you feel if foreign troops were stationed in your city?

Do you really think there's anything strange about foreigners who love McDonald's but hate our government?

Good words

I'm thankful to everyone who took the time to write me to voice a personal opinion – for or against what I've said. I'm sorry that the volume of mail is so great that I couldn't possibly respond and thank you personally.

Although I've focused here on a sampling of the many complaints I've received, I've also received many supportive comments. Here is one from Katie Sweeney that makes an additional point:

"Thank you for asking the question that none of the 'experts' or politicians or news media will ask, which is: Just what have we done to make these people hate us so much?

"The politicians say it is just because we're a free country. That is the propaganda needed to get everyone riled up to join the military and give their lives in 'a battle of good vs. evil.' But the truth is what you said, 'We can't allow our politicians to bully the world without someone bullying back eventually.'

"Today, I am filled with tremendous sadness. I am sad for the people who lost their lives and for their families and loved ones. But I am also sad because I know that nothing is going to be solved, and it will only get worse. The leaders will not speak the truth, and I don't even think the people want to hear it. The only talk is of revenge, not of following your three wise suggestions of what we should do. I feel very powerless to change the course that history is taking ? and very vulnerable to its consequences."

More to come, including what I believe we should do.

When Will We Learn? – Part 4
by Harry Browne

September 12, 2001

I now have received over a thousand e-mails in response to my articles on the terrorist attacks. I regret that I can't reply individually to them. Nor is it possible even to reply in print to many of the thoughtful suggestions, complaints, or proposals that readers have offered.

But there is one common theme I can deal with here – one that runs through all the proposals for retaliation – the assumption that the retaliation can be done in a way that achieves many good purposes with no bad consequences.

It can be summarized in the statement, "I believe we can retaliate with few innocent people killed, and Afghanistan may be a better place when we leave."

But something very important is overlooked in almost every proposal I've received: When you believe the U.S. government can eradicate the terrorist threat, you're assuming it will design, create, and carry out the plan the way you imagine it.

When you endorse the idea that our government should invade Afghanistan, or occupy the Middle East, or conduct "surgical strikes" against terrorist sanctuaries, or round up a particular class of people within the U.S., you automatically assume it will be done as you imagine – with no bad side effects.

(This is a problem common to all government programs. You see suffering or danger, and in your imagination you see a government program eliminating it. But in the real world

the program could operate as you expect only if you were a dictator – having at your disposal all of government's power to compel everyone involved to do things your way.)

Never happen

But in fact it won't be done your way. This isn't Burger King.

The program you support will be carried out by the same kind of people who bombed a pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan, who fired cruise missiles into the terrorist camp that wasn't there in Afghanistan, who saw American troops humiliated in Lebanon and Somalia, who went to war with Iraq to keep oil plentiful but then forcibly prohibited the buying of most Iraqi oil afterward, who were going to stop Panama from being a drug conduit and instead left Panama completely defenseless against the drug trade.

That doesn't mean the same kind of failures will happen again, but it does mean almost certainly that what you propose is not what you'll get.

What's overlooked in the support for unleashing the military, the FBI, the CIA, and other crime-fighting or war-making agencies is simply this: The government that's supposed to win the War on Terrorism is the same one that's been waging the War on Drugs, the War on Poverty, the War on Crime, and the War on Illiteracy. Perhaps we should pay more attention to its track record.

President Bush said, "We will rid the world of the evil-doers." Perhaps he could start with Washington, D.C. – and if he gets rid of the evil-doers there, he could move on to some other part of America – and if he succeeds there, he could extend the program to the rest of America – and if he succeeds there, he could ask the Canadians if they want our help – and if he succeeds there, he could go on to the Mexicans, the Haitians, the rest of Latin America, and then the Europeans, and so on.

But start with the whole world? Doesn't that seem a little pretentious for a government with such a sorry record of failures?

If that sounds flippant, I'm sorry, but I get pretty tired of hearing all these promises made to justify taking more of my life away from me – when none of the thousands of promises made already has come even close to being fulfilled.

Why government fails

Why does government fail to keep its promises?

Whenever you ask the government to do anything, you transform what had been a financial, scientific, military, moral, or social matter into a political issue.

The program you propose will turn into one more Christmas tree on which every politician can hang his favorite pork-barrel boondoggle – and can use to sneak through his favorite scheme for controlling your life and money.

Government programs too often wind up doing the opposite of what their original supporters had expected. Look how programs to end racial discrimination have produced racial quotas, how federal programs to improve education have turned schools into laboratories for crackpot social theories, how "welfare reform" has greatly increased the cost of welfare, how "good works" to foreign countries have produced such ill will.

Political programs produce such strange results because the "public servants" who design and execute the programs have a wholly different agenda from the public who support them.

You aren't a dictator

You don't control the government. And your dreams of what government can achieve are just that – dreams. They bear no resemblance to what government will really do if your program is enacted.

If government is going to do someone's bidding, is it likely to be your bidding – or that of people far more determined, far wealthier, and far more influential than you are – people who see the operation as a chance to further their own self-interest?

That's why libertarians are so all-fired determined to reduce government to as small an entity as we can – where it can do as little damage as possible and be used as little as possible for someone's gain at someone else's expense.

That's why it makes no sense to entrust government with the job of bringing peace to the world. It can no more do that than Caesar could. And it can no more rid the world of evil-doers or make it "safe for democracy" than it can stamp out drugs or poverty.

So long as government is supposed to be the instrument of our protection, we can ask it to seek out, capture, try, and punish the specific people involved in the specific attacks – and hope that it doesn't kill too many innocent bystanders in the process. But think twice – no, think a hundred times – before sending it on a mission to cleanse the world of evil.

For our long-term safety, we must quit entrusting our government with world with world police powers.

When will we learn that government is not our salvation?

What Can We Do about Terrorism? – Part I of III**The Ground Rules for Fighting Terrorism**
by Harry Browne**October 4, 2001**

This 3-part series will propose the actions I believe our government should take to fight terrorism.

Before looking at those proposals, however, we need to establish some ground rules.

Perfection Isn't an Option

Rule #1: No solution is going to be perfect.

Our government has created ill will in many parts of the world. It has bullied smaller countries, imposed new governments upon people who didn't want them, and demanded that other governments do what our government wants. It's unrealistic to think that there's anything that can be done now to quickly undo all the ill will.

I have been criticized for dwelling on what our government has done that led to the terrorist attacks. But if we don't understand what provoked this, we can't evaluate any response to it — and we can expect that the faulty policies will continue and provoke more such attacks against Americans.

Foreign Policy Is the Issue

Rule #2: It is American foreign policy that has provoked the attacks, not anything inherent in Muslim fundamentalism.

There are hundreds of millions of Muslims in the world who don't believe in killing non-Muslims. In fact, Muslims have been killed in Arab terrorist attacks, just as non-Muslims have.

In an interview conducted by John Miller for *Esquire* in February 1999, Osama bin Laden said: "This is my message to the American people: to look for a serious government that looks out for their interests and does not attack others, their lands, or their honor. And my word to American journalists is not to ask why we did that but ask what their government has done that forced us to defend ourselves."

The fact that bin Laden uses bad means to achieve his ends doesn't excuse our own government's mistakes; nor does it justify our government doing the same things he does.

Bombing Doesn't Work

Rule #3: Bombing foreign countries doesn't end terrorism, it provokes it.

Our government has bombed Libya, Iraq, the Sudan, and Afghanistan, among other countries, supposedly to teach terrorists a lesson. But the bombings haven't caused terrorists or foreign governments to change their policies.

This Is a Crime, Not War

Rule #4: The terrorist attacks are a criminal matter, not a war.

War is by definition an armed conflict between governments. No government has claimed responsibility for the September 11 attacks, and no government has been so accused.

Calling the present situation a war is an excuse to impose wartime policies against Americans and foreigners — including violations of the Bill of Rights and killing foreign civilians.

Because the September attacks were a crime, the government's job is to locate and bring to trial any perpetrators who didn't die in the attacks. If some of them are located in foreign countries, our government should request extradition — not threaten to bomb the foreign country if we don't get our way.

If not all the criminals are found and brought to trial, it doesn't mean that bombing innocent people would have brought the criminals to justice.

Reverse Positions

Rule #5: If you think you or America is entitled to something, reverse the positions and see how you'd react.

If Afghanistan doesn't turn bin Laden over to our government, ask yourself whether you'd want your government to turn *you* over to the Iranian government if it accused you of a crime.

If you don't think that American troops in almost a hundred foreign countries are a source of resentment, ask yourself how you'd feel if Chinese troops were stationed in your city.

If you believe America has a right to bomb foreign countries for the actions of a few, ask yourself whether you'd want foreign governments to bomb your city because of something Bill Clinton did. (Haven't we already established that the terrorists were wrong to kill innocent civilians because of their hatred for American foreign policy?)

Government Is Incompetent

Rule #6: Government does not do anything well — even those functions delegated to it by the Constitution.

The government has the constitutional authority to operate a Post Office. But if it's urgent that a package get to the other side of America by tomorrow morning, will you trust the constitutional Post Office or will you use Federal Express?

Don't assume that just because the government has the legal authority to do something that it will actually succeed. So be careful what you ask for.

What Is the Object?

Rule #7: There's no way to eliminate all terrorism in the world.

Terrorists have existed since Biblical times. There will always be such criminals — people who will kill innocent bystanders to make a social or political statement, or to bring pressure on a government to change its policies.

Saying that terrorism will be eradicated is not only unrealistic, it is asinine. It indicates that the speaker shouldn't be trusted in anything else he says.

What *is* realistic is the goal of *reducing* considerably the threat of terrorism against the U.S.

In my next two articles, I'll present proposals for achieving this.

What Can We Do about Terrorism? – Part II of III

Do We Choose Death or Peace?

by Harry Browne

October 15, 2001

"All that's necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do the wrong thing."

. . . Lawrence Block, *The Evil Men Do*

Americans have been sold a fantasy by their government and by the "experts" on television.

The fantasy is that our government will flex its muscles overseas, make demands, kill a lot of people, demonstrate that we don't tolerate terrorism, "bring the terrorists to justice," and end terrorism forever.

But for decades, our government has been flexing its muscles overseas, making demands, killing people, and teaching terrorists a lesson. And what did it achieve?

It brought about the deaths of 3,000 Americans on September 11.

Those policies by our government have brought us to where there now are only two choices for the future. And you may not like either one of them.

The Choice for War

Choice #1 is to bomb Afghanistan "back to the stone age," and maybe Iraq, and maybe any other country our government accuses of harboring terrorists. (Except the U.S., of course, where many of the terrorists lived safely for several years.)

This choice won't eliminate all the terrorists. It probably won't eliminate any of them. But it will make the politicians feel good. And it will satisfy the understandable lust for vengeance that so many Americans feel right now.

But not only will foreigners die by the thousands, it will feed the desire for vengeance on the part of the terrorists — and inspire other people to help them. The result? . . .

- We will be attacked on planes, in subways, buildings, schools, sports arenas — in any place innocent Americans can be cornered like lab rats.
- Our economy will sink further and further downward as people become more and more afraid to lead normal lives.
- We will see Americans die from bombs, from biological warfare, from assassinations, and from causes we can't even imagine now.

Our government will react by escalating the violence still further. And that will cause the terrorists to escalate their violence. And with every escalation, more of our friends and relatives will die — and more people around the world will come to hate America.

Choice #1 doesn't lead to anything very pretty. It will be disastrous for America. But that's where our politicians are taking us right now.

The Choice for Peace

Choice #2 is for our President to be a man and acknowledge to the world that our government has made some horrible mistakes in the past — but that our policy is changing.

He must tell the world that our government will no longer impose its will on places like Iraq, Serbia, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Colombia. He must say that we're returning to the peaceful foreign policy that America followed for its first century — until President McKinley took the country into the Spanish-American War and down the road to empire.

Americans are loved all over the world for what they've done — producing low-cost food and medicines, great entertainment, and the kind of voluntary charity that only free and prosperous people can bestow.

At the same time, foreigners hate our government because it uses "foreign aid" and military muscle to impose its way upon the rest of the world.

Our politicians say that most of the world supports the American military campaign. But what they mean is that our government is bribing foreign governments to support the military campaign. Meanwhile, a recent Gallup poll revealed that individual human beings in 35 major countries oppose American military retaliation by better than 3 to 1.

If American leaders would call a halt to the violence, condemn the terrorist attack, and condemn the killing of innocent foreigners by previous U.S. administrations, there's a very good chance the cycle of death and destruction could end immediately.

We're at a Crossroads

Can I guarantee that Choice #2 will lead to peace? Of course not, but it is very likely to do so. And what terrorism remains will be relatively minor compared to the awful future we face now.

And I can assure you that Choice #1 will lead to the deaths of many more Americans — most likely, tens of thousands (or hundreds of thousands) of Americans, in ugly and tragic ways.

It's very possible the terrorists who weren't killed in the September 11 attacks will never be caught — whether we pick Choice #1 or Choice #2. So let's focus instead on assuring that such a thing never happens again.

But first we must recognize that the fantasy our government is peddling now — of bringing peace by killing foreigners — is just that: a fantasy.

We have only two choices — death or peace. It's unfortunate that it will take far more courage to choose peace.

What Can We Do about Terrorism? – Part III of III

Preventing Future Terrorism

by Harry Browne

October 31, 2001

Government's role shouldn't be to police the world — or even to win wars. Government's role should be to *keep us out of wars* — to *protect* us from foreign enemies, not *create* them.

In fact the main reason most people tolerate high taxes and invasions of our liberty is because they hope the government will protect them from domestic criminals and foreign problems. And yet, despite a \$2 trillion budget, our government protects us from neither.

A libertarian foreign policy would rest on a simple principle:

We're always ready to defend ourselves, but we threaten no one.

Such a foreign policy should have four elements.

1. Non-Interference

Our government should never interfere in other countries' disputes, never arm nor aid foreign governments, and never give terrorists a reason to pressure our government.

When the politicians drag us off to someone else's war, they offer plenty of reasons. The reasons usually include: stopping the conflict from spreading, heading off the emergence of a new Hitler, protecting our allies, doing the moral thing, and ending violations of human rights.

But rarely do they come even close to achieving any of the goals.

Any American who wants to volunteer to fight for a foreign government or revolutionary movement, to negotiate its peace, or to send money to help it should be free to do so. (It is currently illegal for you to help a foreign government or revolutionary movement.) But our government should stay out of such battles.

2. No Foreign Aid or Military Assistance

The Constitution grants our government no authority to use your money for the support of foreign governments.

Not only is it unconstitutional, it is unfair by almost any standard. As Fred Smith pointed out, foreign aid taxes poor people in rich countries for the benefit of rich people in poor countries.

Foreign aid originally was justified as a way of arming countries against Communist aggression. But Cuba, China, and Vietnam all became Communist *after* receiving American money and weapons.

And so much money and military hardware have been given to Israel's enemies that it allows the politicians to say we have to give massive aid to Israel to keep it from being destroyed.

Every American should be free to send money or weapons to any government in the world. But you shouldn't be taxed for the benefit of any foreign government.

3. Security against Attack

How could the bad people of the world conquer America?

They'd have to pulverize American cities to the point that we submit to being occupied — or they'd have to threaten to do that.

In 1983 Ronald Reagan made the most sensible military suggestion of the past 50 years — that America should protect itself against missile attacks. Unfortunately, he gave the job to the Department of Defense — which is really the Post Office in fatigues. And so 18 years later we're no closer to being protected than we were in 1983.

We should rely as little as possible on politics and bureaucracy to achieve anything. The government should simply post a reward — say, \$25 billion — to go to the first private company that produces a functioning, fool-proof missile defense. With such an offer, we'd probably have a missile defense within five years.

Will that make us perfectly secure? Of course not. Nothing will.

But it will make us far safer than we are today and eliminate a principal excuse for meddling in other countries' affairs.

4. Target the Aggressors, Not the Innocent

Even with a missile defense, suppose America truly were threatened by a foreign ruler.

A Libertarian President would target the aggressor himself. He wouldn't order bombers to kill the aggressor's innocent subjects.

He would warn the ruler that an actual attack would trigger the posting of a reward of, say, \$100 million for the person who kills the ruler. Everyone would be eligible to collect the reward — including the ruler's guards and wives.

This response would spare both innocent foreigners and innocent Americans. Only those who try for the reward would be at risk. Americans wouldn't be drafted to fight and die invading a foreign country — nor taxed to pay for volunteers.

This isn't a way to force dictators to change their spots or submit to U.S. dictation. It's only a way to discourage a direct attack on America. If the dictator withdrew his threat, the U.S. would withdraw the reward.

With a libertarian foreign policy, it's unlikely any foreign ruler would threaten us. So such a reward probably would never be posted. But if a foreign ruler *were* tempted to threaten us, the fear of assassination would be more of a deterrence than the threat to bomb his civilian subjects.

If you don't believe assassination is a nice way to handle this, what's the alternative? Would you rather kill thousands of innocent foreigners and innocent Americans?

Peace for All Time

When America can defend itself against missile attack, the politicians will lose their best excuse for butting into the affairs of other countries and making demands upon you.

And when our government no longer interferes in other countries with military adventures and foreign aid, foreign terrorists will have little reason to threaten your city.

If some foreign leader still tried to make trouble for America, we should target the leader for assassination, not target innocent civilians for bombing. But an American government that minded its own business and had a secure defense isn't likely to need to resort to assassination.

The policies I've outlined are the only ones that will produce a strong national defense, instead of a strong national offense, and leave terrorists with no reason to attack us.

Once they're in place, we must find a way to keep politicians away from loaded weapons forever.

Here's a start — a proposed constitutional amendment:

Section 1. The United States shall be at war only after a declaration of war, naming the specific enemy nations, is approved by the President and by a two-thirds vote of the eligible members in both houses of Congress.

Section 2. The only members of the House of Representatives and the Senate eligible to vote on a declaration of war are those who are between the ages of 18 and 35, or who have children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren between those ages.

Section 3. In the absence of a Congressional declaration of war, the President may deploy the military to repel an invasion of United States territory, but may not deploy troops or engage in hostilities outside the United States.

Section 4. The United States shall enter into no treaty with any nation or organization if such treaty could oblige the United States to be at war without a declaration of war by Congress, and the United States shall not be bound to engage in war by any action taken by any organization of which they are a member.

Section 5. Except in time of war, as specified in Sections 1 and 2, the United States will provide no weapons or other resources to foreign governments, will engage in no military action outside the borders of the United States, and shall deploy no military personnel or weapons outside the boundaries of the United States except that at any one time up to one thousand members of the military may be outside the United States for no longer than thirty days.

Section 6. Upon any violation of this article by the President, Congress shall institute impeachment proceedings within 14 days.

Sections 3 and 5 don't preclude a missile defense or any other kind of defense of this nation. It requires only that the President wait before attacking a foreign nation until a declaration of war has been issued. Even if some incapacity prevents Congress from making a declaration quickly, America could still defend itself. It just couldn't attack anyone else.

War is too dangerous an enterprise to leave in the hands of people who routinely lie in their own self-interest.

Isn't It Time For The Truth?
by Harry Browne

November 13, 2001

It is time for President Bush to stop cheerleading and speak the truth.

He said last Thursday, "This great nation will never be intimidated. Life in America is going forward."

Who is he trying to kid? Last Friday, at Los Angeles airport, I saw people trying to check their baggage – standing in a line that was at least 200 yards long. I stood in five separate lines to identify myself and my carry-on luggage. The soldiers in fatigues with sub-machine guns reminded me of a Third World country.

The politicians live in their own unreal world, with no idea of what's happening in America. How many times has Air Force One been late taking off? How many security lines have Donald Rumsfeld, Tom Ridge and Dick Cheney stood in?

They care little about the traveling businessman who now must cut his work short at lunch time in order to catch a 5 p.m. flight. Or the individual who must get up at 4 a.m. to catch a morning flight.

Has the president noticed the hundreds of billions of dollars being added to federal, state and local government budgets – spending piled on top of previous budgets, spending that's causing huge deficits and tax increases, spending that's coming out of the hide of American taxpayers?

When will he say straight out: "America rules the world by force, and the price of that is for you to pay high taxes and live in a nation that looks more and more like a police state."

No neutrals President Bush says, "You're either with us or against us."

Does that mean he'll bomb neutral Switzerland – the island of freedom, privacy and security in the midst of socialist Europe – if it doesn't confiscate private bank accounts and otherwise act on every whim of our president?

Why doesn't he simply tell the truth: "America rules the world and I rule America. You will do as I say, or I'll kill your people."

Opposition

The president keeps telling us that the world supports the American war against Afghanistan. But the truth is that he has bought the support of foreign leaders with your money – while public opinion polls show people in foreign countries are overwhelmingly opposed to American military attacks.

Why doesn't he just tell the truth: "We are destroying the last vestiges of love for America around the world – but that's the price we must pay for me to become powerful and popular at home beyond my wildest dreams."

Time for the truth

When you know some of what politicians tell you are lies, you have to wonder how many of their other statements are lies as well.

What I want is the truth. I'd like to think I'm mature enough to handle whatever that may be. And I could prepare for the future much better if someone told me the truth – instead of all this rah-rah stuff.

America isn't leading the world. Leaders lead by example. And America is providing no example of individual liberty, personal responsibility, small government or peace.

America rules the world. Rulers rule by force. They may succeed temporarily, but at an awful cost.

It is long past time for the truth – the truth that many more Americans will have to die to satisfy the politicians' lust for power.

I love America – Do You?

By Harry Browne

November 19, 2001

I love America.

I love every concept the Statue of Liberty stands for – that individual liberty is held above the objectives of government – that, as Washington and Jefferson said, America imparts good will toward all and threatens no one – that this country is so big-hearted and prosperous it can welcome people from all over the world fleeing oppression or poverty.

I love the Bill of Rights – the most noble document ever written to define the limits that government should obey.

I love the concepts of free speech, absolute privacy and religious freedom embodied in our traditions and our Constitution.

I love the rule of law – the right of accused persons to confront their accusers, the right to an attorney, the right to remain silent, the right to refuse admission to government officials wanting to enter your home or office.

These are just some of the things that have made America unique in the history of the world. They are a direct cause of America's prosperity, of our security, of what makes America attractive to so many would-be immigrants.

The "hate America" crowd

Unfortunately, too many Americans seem to have little love for that America.

They are quite willing to throw away the concepts I've described – in order to satisfy a lust for revenge against the September terrorists.

They're willing to abandon our cherished liberties – giving the government the power to do anything it wants. They assume – falsely – that such invasions of liberty and privacy

won't affect themselves, even though the history of government demonstrates that what's applied against suspected terrorists today will be applied against innocent Americans tomorrow.

They're willing to abandon free speech – wanting to shut up those who don't join in the rah-rah cheering as President Bush abandons the essence of what made America unique and great.

They're willing to abandon the rule of law and transform America into a police state – where any law-enforcement agency, military court or intelligence agency can act as prosecutor, judge and jury to decide your future.

They're willing to let innocent Americans die – by encouraging our government to bomb innocent foreigners at will, almost guaranteeing that there will be further terrorist attacks against us.

They're willing to continue transforming what was once a worldwide love of America into a hatred for America – caused by the correct perception that American presidents believe they can force any foreign nation to do their bidding.

They make no objection when congressmen pass bills – without reading them first or having any idea what's actually in them – bills that take away your liberties, pile more government debt on your family, and give the president the power to do whatever he wants, as though he were a Roman emperor.

Words and deeds

These people may not actually hate America. They may even profess to love America, but they show no understanding of what made America the precious nation it is. Here is what some of their sentiments amount to:

- Contrary to the American respect for peace-loving people, they think our hurt entitles us to hurt others – even people who didn't hurt us.
- Contrary to the American tradition of individual responsibility, they want to treat all Afghans as though they're bin Laden, and all Iraqis as though they're Saddam Hussein – making no distinction between the innocent and the guilty.
- Contrary to the American ideal of individual liberty, they think freedom may be a nice concept but state security is more important.
- Contrary to the American tradition of independent thought, they assert that questioning your government is unpatriotic, paranoid and tantamount to treason.

- Contrary to the distrust of government that marked the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, they think that – despite all the mistakes our government has made – allegiance to the fatherland is your highest duty.
- Contrary to the American way of good will toward all, they acknowledge that America is being transformed into an armed fortress, but say that's the price we must pay to be a superpower.

Those aren't the sentiments of people who recognize what made America the most attractive place on earth to live. But in the supreme irony, these people label those who protest against the destruction of American ideals "America-haters."

Where do you stand?

Do you love America?

If so, isn't it time you spoke out on behalf of America – before the president and Congress take away the rest of what made this the land of the free?

Or are you just as happy to see America transformed into one more bureaucratic warrior state, like so many of those in Europe and Asia?

I love America – the one symbolized by the Statue of Liberty – the America that was the beacon of liberty, providing light and hope and inspiration to the entire world. I want that America back.

The war-mongers may say they're patriotic Americans, but they're willing to discard everything unique about America in order to satisfy their lust to avenge the September tragedy.

The desire for revenge is understandable. But the rush to permanently abandon the wonders of America to satisfy a temporary rage is not.

Who Gave Your Rights Away? **by Harry Browne**

November 27, 2001

Many conservatives, liberals and libertarians are protesting the numerous invasions of your liberty that Congress and the Bush administration have imposed during the past two months.

But without realizing it, many of the protestors brought these invasions on themselves.

This is America?

I do share their concerns, however.

First, Congress rammed through an “anti-terrorism” bill that violates the civil liberties of all Americans, not just terrorists.

The new law allows federal officials to search your home when you're not present and not even tell you your home has been searched. You could come home one day and find your computer, file cabinets and legal papers have disappeared. You'd naturally think it was a burglary, but the burglars would be government employees (shades of Watergate).

Warrants can be issued in secret, and you may not be allowed to see a warrant – or contest it – covering a search of your property.

This is America?

Government officials can go into any company anywhere and search records of your purchases and credit history, discover the websites you've visited, or monitor your e-mail – without evidence of a crime and without telling you, and they can order the companies not to tell you about the search.

Then the Bush administration, apparently invoking the divine right of kings, decided that people can be tried and executed by secret courts (using secret evidence not available for you to refute), that government agents can eavesdrop on attorney-client conversations, and that federal agents can conduct searches without judicial oversight.

This is America?

And understand that the so-called "War on Terrorism" is only two months old. This is just the beginning. What's still to come?

In previous wars, citizens were imprisoned for speaking out against the government, newspapers were closed for protesting the war, private publications were censored, and people of foreign ancestry were put in concentration camps. We have a lot to look forward to.

Don't be deceived!

The press implies that the new civil-liberties invasions will apply only to terrorists.

Not true.

They apply to you, because anyone can be suspected of being a terrorist – including you. In fact, the new definition of "suspected terrorist" includes people speaking out against government policies.

And if law-enforcement officials are to decide whose civil liberties will be denied, one of them may become convinced you're connected to the terrorists in some way, try you in a secret court, sentence you, imprison you and even execute you – with no opportunity for you to appeal the verdict or your sentence.

This is America?

An administration official told The Washington Post "The U.S. Constitution doesn't protect anyone hiding and planning acts of violence." But what he meant was, "The U.S. Constitution doesn't protect anyone we suspect of hiding and planning acts of violence." They don't know who's actually guilty until after a civil, public trial – conducted with all the traditional rules of evidence. What they have arrogated to themselves is the power to decide whether or not you will be protected by the Constitution.

This is America?

If you're not frightened by this, you're simply not paying attention.

Won't be limited to a few people

Have you been told that some of these invasions apply only to aliens – or some other small group of people?

Don't be reassured. When has any invasion of liberty not been expanded to cover all people eventually?

The clearly unconstitutional RICO laws were supposed to apply only to organized crime – but hardly a single Mafia kingpin has been prosecuted using RICO, while abortion protestors and stockbrokers have been jailed by these laws. The clearly unconstitutional asset-forfeiture laws were only to nab big-time drug dealers, but all across America the property of innocent people has been seized.

It's only a matter of time until every new oppression applies to all Americans.

Why this happened

I said that many of those protesting these invasions brought this on themselves. How?

It's very simple.

Attorney General John Ashcroft justified the unconstitutional police-state tactics by saying, "I think it's important to understand that we are at war now."

And there you have it. As Randolph Bourne said, "War is the health of the state." Once you grant the government war-making powers, you grant the politicians the power to do anything they want. After all, you can't put your own personal liberty ahead of the good of the Fatherland, can you?

Congress didn't declare war. There were none of the usual pre-war negotiations to try to avoid going to war. We're not even at war with any specific nation. But just utter the magic word "war" and all your rights can be stolen from you.

So if you hollered for war, you hollered to have your rights taken away from you.

Who gave your rights away? You did – if you supported the idea that the politicians should be free to do anything they want to satisfy a national lust for revenge.

Isn't it time to start taking back your liberty?

Brute Force Not A Solution

by Harry Browne

December 06, 2001

The attacks between Palestinians and Israelis this past week have dominated the news. There are two very important points we can learn from these events:

Israelis and Palestinians have been using force to retaliate against attacks for over 50 years – each seeking to teach the other "a lesson" whenever attacked. But none of the lessons seem ever to have been learned. Forcible retaliation has failed completely to deter further violence.

Whenever there's a "terrorist" attack in the Middle East, our president (whoever he may be at the time) always counsels "restraint." So why don't our presidents ever practice restraint themselves whenever they claim that American interests have been hurt?

Forcible retaliation never "teaches a lesson" because the people whose behavior you're trying to change aren't the ones who get hurt by the retaliation.

Ronald Reagan bombed Libya to teach Muammar al- Qaddafi that he shouldn't promote terrorism. A year later, a Pan Am plane crashed over Scotland. Our government is convinced the crash was caused by Libyan terrorists who apparently skipped school the day the retaliation lesson was taught.

In fact, I can't think of a single case in which our government retaliated for terrorist acts and actually put a stop to them.

Middle East should be a lesson to us

The eternal Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be a lesson that brute force doesn't solve problems.

The United Nations created Israel by force in 1947, arbitrarily dividing an area in two – one part to be a Jewish state, the other to be an Arab state. By forcibly displacing people, the U.N. provoked festering resentment and permanent conflict.

But whatever should have been done at the time, what was done is now a fait accompli and isn't likely to be changed. And most of the people displaced by the mandate are no longer alive. You'd think people in the Middle East today would prefer to forget how Israel was created, accept the current situation, and get on with their personal lives.

But there always will be fanatics perpetuating resentments and calling for forcible revenge. And so the Middle East remains a hotbed of conflict – and probably will remain so for decades to come. (Is this what we want for America as well?)

Obviously, all the money and military weapons the U.S. has poured into the Middle East (to all sides), all the treaties U.S. presidents have brokered and all the demands made by American foreign policy have done nothing to bring peace to the region.

Holy shrines

Part of the reason that no solution seems satisfying is that too many people make the Middle East conflict a religious matter. And yet religious considerations should produce peace, not conflict.

- Would Moses think it worth killing thousands of Jews and Arabs to keep Israel based in Jerusalem?
- Would Mohammed approve of the fanatical violence displayed by modern Arabs over Jerusalem and Mecca?
- Would Jesus have wanted the Christian Crusades to slaughter Saracens in order to keep Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre in Christian hands?

It's hard to believe these religious leaders would have considered any religious artifact or location worth the murder of a single soul.

Force the first resort

But not so for political leaders. Throughout history, they have always turned to brute force as the first resort for settling problems. Force should be the very, very, very last resort.

I find it ironic that the U.S. government extracts \$2 trillion from the American people. We put up with these taxes and with all sorts of boondoggles, political frauds and broken promises because we want government to protect us.

And yet government doesn't protect adults on the streets, it doesn't protect children in government schools, and – despite having \$2 trillion to work with – it didn't protect New Yorkers from the Sept. 11 attacks.

And despite having the money available to hire the best minds in the world, the best intelligence, the best knowledge and the best wisdom, our government instead responds to the September attacks with the same brute force governments have used for thousands of years.

Microsoft doesn't operate in the same way it did 10 years ago – let alone the way companies operated a hundred years ago. Neither does Fedex or AT&T or Sony. But politicians are stuck in the same rut politicians have been in for thousands of years: Use brute force to solve every perceived problem.

I think with \$2 trillion at your disposal, you could come up with a successful approach.

So isn't it time we started looking for better solutions?

The Bush Coup d'Etat

by Harry Browne

December 20, 2001

In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected promising a 25 percent reduction in the federal budget, an end to deficits and the restoration of a sound dollar.

Within eight years, the federal budget tripled, federal debt increased 155 percent and the gold standard was repudiated – making the U.S. dollar a fiat currency.

Roosevelt's New Deal transformed America from a unique country in which everyone could live his life as he saw fit into a welfare state in which most business was supervised from Washington.

No longer was America run by the people – or even by Congress. Instead, it was now directed by bureaucrats operating in regulatory agencies like the AAA, FCA, CCC, FCI, SMA, FSA, NLRB, PWA, WPA, FDIC, FSLIC, SEC, SSA, REA, EHFA – directing when we shall sow and when we shall reap.

Effecting a revolution

Why would Americans give up their freedom for a system that had never worked well in the Old World?

They did it because Roosevelt never attacked the American Way head-on. Instead,

He praised the Constitution, but said it must be updated from "horse and buggy" days.

He never discussed the liberties he was stealing – talking instead about government's power to do good.

Any objectors were challenged to prove that some other program could cure the Depression perfectly overnight.

Those who protested the loss of freedom were dismissed as alarmists and "economic royalists" who wanted to continue exploiting their neighbors.

The magic words were "recovery" and "emergency." They justified everything – even though the New Deal produced no recovery, and there were far better ways to deal with the emergency.

The Mess of Pottage

The writer Garet Garrett called the New Deal "The People's Pottage." Esau had traded his birthright for a mess of pottage. And now the American people had traded their birthright – the freest nation the world had ever known – for a mess of pottage.

And what did that pottage consist of?

In 1940, the unemployment rate was still 15 percent, the Depression was still severe and Roosevelt was maneuvering America into war to distract attention from the New Deal's failures.

The Bush Revolution

In 2000, George Bush won the presidency promising "limited government," reading the Constitution literally, and rejecting the concept of "nation-building" – the practice of imposing pro-American governments on foreign nations.

But, once in office, he produced a federal budget limited by nothing. And now he's making the Constitution an instrument of his own power – even as he imposes a new government on Afghanistan.

The Last of the Bill of Rights

The Roosevelt coup d'etat destroyed the Ninth and 10th amendments – the ones limiting the government's functions.

The First and Second Amendments remained in form – although the Supreme Court now decides when they can be overruled by the government's "compelling interest."

Amendments 3 through 8 have survived, although considerably battered. But now, the Bush coup d'etat is aimed at erasing these last restrictions on government power.

Bush wants to decide when people can have a jury trial, be safe from cruel and unusual punishment, be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures and able to confront their accusers.

When the Bush New Deal is completed, the Bill of Rights will survive in name only. And you will live and breathe only by the sufferance of the all-mighty government. Your fate will be in the hands of people like George Bush, Hillary Clinton, Al Gore, Teddy Kennedy and Strom Thurmond.

Of course, George Bush is doing this to save America.

But what is America if there's no individual liberty?

Effecting revolution II

Like Roosevelt, George Bush isn't attacking the Constitution and the American way head-on. Instead,

He claims to want to preserve the Constitution, but says we must put security first.

He diverts attention from our lost liberties by talking about ridding the world of evil-doers.

Objectors are challenged to provide another program that can destroy terrorism perfectly.

Those protesting the lost liberties are dismissed as unpatriotic, paranoid or "America-haters" – who are aiding the terrorists by "scaring peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty."

The magic words are "security" and "emergency." They justify everything – even though Bush is increasing the world domination that made us vulnerable to terrorism in the first place.

If George Bush were a Democrat, many conservatives would be fighting him to the death. But too many conservatives have abandoned their principles and begun deciding right and wrong on the basis of party labels.

More pottage

We, too, are trading the last remnants of America for a mess of pottage.

The War on Terrorism has no more chance to succeed than the New Deal, the War on Drugs, the War on Poverty, or the War on Illiteracy.

The first revolution for big government was effected by a man who railed against big government and said he wanted to save capitalism. The second revolution is being engineered by a man who claims to be for limited government and the preservation of freedom.

Even as he seeks to destroy the last vestiges of a free America.

What Has 'Victory' Achieved?

by Harry Browne

January 10, 2002

On September 11, foreign terrorists killed several thousand people by destroying the World Trade Center and damaging the Pentagon.

Some people considered this a criminal act — not an act of war by a foreign nation. They said the U.S. government should concentrate on finding, capturing, and bringing to trial anyone connected with the attacks.

The people who wanted war said this approach was laughable. They demanded that the doves lay out a fool-proof plan that would guarantee the capture of Osama bin Laden and anyone else involved in the attacks.

Of course, no one could do that. And so the warmongers carried the day — and the U.S. went to war against Afghanistan.

What Has Happened?

Now, four months later, what has been achieved?

Many things . . .

1. Afghanistan has been bombed and bombed and bombed, just as many people wanted. The entire village of Kama Ado was wiped out, for example, killing 115 people who had nothing to do with the September 11 attacks. Reporters visited the remains and saw the fragments of U.S. Air Force bombs. Another bombing, at Qalaye Niazi, killed at least 50 civilians — apparently because a local anti-Taliban tribal leader, trying to intimidate local citizens, told the U.S. military that Al-Qaeda forces were there. (For some reason, these events hold little interest for the American news media.)
2. Throughout Afghanistan, thousands of people have died from the U.S. bombing — even though American TV news channels rarely report these deaths. No one has claimed that a single one of the dead people had anything to do with the September 11 attacks. Their guilt lies in not overthrowing the Taliban or in possibly being members of Al-Qaeda — not in any knowledge that they participated in the attacks.

3. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans have fled their homes — trying to get into Pakistan to escape the American bombing. Imagine how you'd feel if you had to leave your home and all your possessions to avoid being killed.
4. Tens of thousands of Afghans are starving to death — in many cases eating grass to stay alive as long as possible. Afghanistan has always been a poor country; now it is a devastated one.
5. Because of the destruction, Afghanistan will have to be rebuilt — at a cost of billions of dollars. And guess who's going to pay for it. That's right — you and
6. Tens of millions of people around the world have been added to those who believe the U.S. is a big bully that tyrannizes small countries.

Eggs & Wars

According to the brave warriors, all these tragedies are the necessary collateral damage that occurs in a war. After all, you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.

(Did you ever notice that the people who believe this rarely volunteer their own eggs? It's almost always someone else who must suffer the "collateral damage"?)

But where is the omelet?

Despite all the deaths and destruction, the devastation hasn't produced the capture of a single person claimed to be involved in the September 11 attacks. In fact, the only arrest so far of an actual suspect occurred in the United States, not in Afghanistan.

Was the Right Choice Made?

On September 12, America faced two choices:

Treat the attacks as a crime, recognizing the possibility that the perpetrators might never be captured.

Treat the attacks as war — and rain death and destruction on a backwards, third-world country that was powerless to fight back.

Because choice #1 couldn't guarantee the capture of those responsible for the September 11 attacks, America went to war and decimated another nation. But that choice didn't produce the capture of a single perpetrator.

And so we have nothing to show for all the death and devastation — nothing except the increased hatred of millions more people around the globe.

Retaliation?

We're told the U.S. has simply acted in self-defense. After all, America was attacked.

But what we've seen wasn't retaliation. If you hit me and I hit you back, I'm acting in self-defense. But if you hit me and I respond by hitting your sister, that isn't self-defense — it's aggression against your sister.

The U.S. hasn't retaliated against the people who caused the September 11 attacks. It has attacked an innocent nation and achieved nothing for it.

And if retaliation is the right way, why is President Bush pressuring India and Israel *not* to retaliate for terrorist acts?

Eliminating Terrorism?

Our government says the war in Afghanistan is wiping out Al-Qaeda, so that there can be no more terrorist acts. But our government also says Al-Qaeda has members in 60 countries around the world. Does that mean there are only 59 more countries to bomb?

So long as we're bombing defenseless countries, there will be widespread resentment against the U.S. — and there will be terrorist acts against us, with or without Al-Qaeda.

Teaching a Lesson?

It is also said that, if nothing else, the bombing of Afghanistan will make would-be future terrorists think twice about attacking us.

But why should the bombing intimidate a terrorist? After all, terrorists don't care when innocent people die. And no evidence has been presented that anyone involved in the September 11 attacks has been killed by the bombings.

Certainly Osama Bin Laden has no reason to feel intimidated by the American response. After all, the September 11 attacks have caused us to spend tens of billions of dollars in warfare and new domestic security procedures, turn our lives upside down, give up portions of the Bill of Rights, and delegate vast new powers to the government. What more could he want?

Freedom for Afghans?

TV news clips show happy Afghans shedding their beards and veils — while providing little or no coverage of the refugee camps and villages where people are starving.

Even if we could be sure that a majority of Afghans — or even all of them — approve of what the U.S. has done, the question remains: is it the responsibility of America to

replace all the world's tyrants? If so, when does the bombing of Saudi Arabia or Zimbabwe begin? And is the U.S. going to invade China to supervise its "human rights" activity?

And who could be so naïve as to believe the Northern Alliance is going to rule Afghanistan in a more kindly way than the Taliban did? U.S. troops will no more guarantee a free country than do the U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. But once the war is over, our government and the press will no longer pay attention to the Afghans.

(The Kosovo Liberation Army — on behalf of which the U.S. bombed Serbia in 1999 — has driven Serbs, Gypsies, Jews, Turks and other non-Albanians out of Kosovo, "ethnically cleansing" the area far more efficiently than Slobodan Milosevic ever did. But how much interest have TV journalists shown in returning to Kosovo to see what the U.S. intervention achieved?)

Revenge?

Lastly, has the bombing of Afghanistan at least given people the feeling they've avenged the Americans who died on September 11?

No. Revenge can be achieved only by hurting those who have hurt you — not by killing innocent bystanders.

The U.S. war on Afghanistan has produced nothing but misery.

I don't know about you, but I feel no pride in knowing my government has slaughtered a lot of innocent people in my name.

What to Do

We will end the terrorist threats to America only when America changes its foreign policy.

Our President must assure the world that he's repudiating the foreign policy of his predecessors — which rained bombs on countries like Serbia, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the Sudan — and has propped up tyrannical dictators in countries like Iran, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia — and invaded countries like Iraq, Nicaragua, Somalia, and Lebanon.

When America becomes a friend to the world, rather than a dictator, evil people will no longer be able to rally the support they need to commit evil acts against us.

When America is no longer a threat to the world, the world will no longer threaten us.

Ignorance Is Dangerous

by Harry Browne

January 17, 2002

Recently, in an article pointing out that less government would lead to less crime, I wrote:

In 1943, there were 44 murders in New York City. In 1995, with roughly the same population, New York City had 1,499 murders — and this was celebrated as an improvement.

I was surprised to receive at least a half-dozen emails from people complaining that this was a misleading factoid. They said the statement ignored factors such as population growth (even though the population was roughly unchanged) or economic conditions.

But the complainers miss the point. I wanted readers to realize that there was once an America they know very little about. People born since the 1950s — before the Drug War, gun laws, and the Great Society — have little knowledge of the more peaceful, more widely prosperous, and more civil society that once was.

And most Americans know little about today's events outside our borders. The TV networks don't seem to publicize anything that doesn't advance the government's interest.

As for history, most people know little more than the one-liners they heard in high school.

In short, when Americans ponder such weighty matters as the War on Terrorism or other government programs, they often form important opinions from simplistic history stories, government press releases, and TV News.

The Other World of Knowledge

There's a whole world of knowledge to which most Americans have never been exposed.

For example, did you know that . . . ?

- It was only half-way through the Civil War that slavery became a significant factor. The major issue provoking the South to secede was the tariffs that benefited Northern manufacturers and forced Southern farmers to pay high prices for manufactured goods.
- Child labor began dying out around 1900 as expanding technology made workers more productive — enabling families to survive without their children having to work. But the first important child-labor law wasn't passed until 1938.

- For almost all of America's first 120 years, there was no federal income tax — and few people complained that the government didn't have enough revenue.
- For those same 120 years, there was no Federal Reserve System — and the federal government printed no paper money (except for Lincoln's Civil War "Greenbacks"). Consumer prices gradually dropped by a third between 1800 and 1913 — and banking crises were occasional and mild. But with the Federal Reserve in charge, prices rose 1,800% by 2000 and the country suffered its worst-ever banking crisis in 1933.
- If America had stayed out of World War I, there probably wouldn't have been a World War II. Without the U.S. to tip the balance of power in 1917, the European nations would have reached an armistice that probably would have precluded the Communist takeover in Russia, kept the Kaiser in power in Germany, kept German territory intact, and left no grievances for Hitler to exploit in the 1930s.

(Winston Churchill said: "America should have minded her own business and stayed out of the World War. If you hadn't entered the war the Allies would have made peace with Germany in the Spring of 1917. Had we made peace then there would have been no collapse in Russia followed by Communism, and Germany would not have signed the Versailles Treaty, which has enthroned Nazism in Germany. If America had stayed out of the war, all these 'isms' wouldn't today be sweeping the continent in Europe and breaking down parliamentary government, and if England had made peace early in 1917, it would have saved over one million British, French, and American and other lives.")

- The crime rate dropped by nearly 50% during the Great Depression — despite terrible economic conditions. The chief cause of the improvement was the end of Alcohol Prohibition in 1933. (Think how much safer your city could be today if Drug Prohibition ended.)
- Pearl Harbor wasn't an "unprovoked" attack by the Japanese. During the year before, Franklin Roosevelt pressured the Japanese to withdraw from China, East Asia, and Indochina —imposing economic sanctions and confiscating Japanese assets in the U.S. When the Japanese realized war was inevitable, they decided to begin by destroying the U.S. Pacific fleet.
- Almost every important American general or admiral said dropping the atomic bomb wasn't necessary to end World War II. The Japanese knew the war was lost and were already trying to surrender — but Roosevelt and Truman insisted on "unconditional surrender" and wouldn't agree to the Emperor remaining in power (even though he *did* remain in power after all). Well over 100,000 people died to no purpose.

- Because consumers wanted safer ways to smoke, in the 1960s tobacco companies offered filtered, low-tar, and low-nicotine cigarettes — and advertised the safer ingredients. But then the government prohibited such advertising — removing any incentive for tobacco companies to make their products safer.
- Also in the 1960s, pharmaceutical companies developed beta blockers that kept blood flowing to and from the heart. But the FDA held these products off the U.S. market for six long years — although there were no reported problems in countries where the drugs were already available. The delay caused an estimated 60,000 people to die prematurely from heart attacks.
- Prior to the 1970s anyone could carry a loaded gun onto a commercial air flight. There were no metal detectors and no security guards. And I don't recall a single report of a gun being misused on an airplane.
- The U.S. Air Force has been bombing Iraq several times every month for the past ten years, causing the deaths of thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens.
- The U.S. has blockaded Iraq — keeping food and medicines from reaching Iraqi citizens — causing a half-million Iraqis to die, according to the United Nations. In 1997 then UN Ambassador Madeline Albright said, "We think the price is worth it."
- The Kosovo Liberation Army (on behalf of which the U.S. bombed Serbia in 1999) was considered a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department as late as 1998. Since the Serbian war ended, the KLA has driven almost all non-Albanians out of Kosovo — "ethnically cleansing" the area far more thoroughly than the Serbs supposedly did.

Watch What You Ask For

It isn't that "America" is always wrong. Far from it.

It is that *government* is a powder keg. Whatever its alleged purpose — to disarm criminals, make America drug-free, bring peace to the world, alleviate suffering — it almost always makes things worse, and often creates enormous suffering.

America became great because it relied far less on government than other countries did. But during the 20th century, America coasted on its greatness — as government became bigger and bigger, and took control of more and more of our lives.

Most politicians, reporters, educators, historians, and even entertainers seem to hold a general bias in favor of bigger government. So what you hear through normal channels is too often only the "facts" that encourage turning to government for answers.

You can't spend your life searching out news stories that don't appear on the Nightly News. But you can get alternative news and viewpoints at websites like LewRockwell.com — and you can bookmark and revisit some of the websites from which these sites get articles.

And, most important, you should be very skeptical of any promise made by *any* President or Congress — Republican or Democrat — that your government is about to improve the economy, public safety, morals, or national defense.

Libertarians & Civil Liberties

by Harry Browne

March 9, 2002

I recently received a letter from a Libertarian who believes that invasions of our civil liberties are necessary to defend ourselves against the terrorists. The following dialogue provides his opinions (indented, in quotation marks) together with my replies, edited only slightly:

"I agree that rights should not be compromised and that exceptions should not be made. I do not agree that all rights are created equal and absolute. The right to life and, by extension, the right to defend ourselves must take priority over civil liberties.

"Let me illustrate. We defend free speech. However, if a person were giving a speech and someone threw a brick at the speaker, we would shout, 'Watch out!' We would try to save the speaker from harm even though we interrupted the speech. If the right to free speech were absolute and inviolate regardless of context, we would be committing a breach of ethics to interrupt the speaker under any circumstances. But it would be ethical to save the speaker's life even if it means abridging freedom of speech."

"Freedom of speech" does not refer to any relationship between you and the speaker. "Freedom of speech" means that "Congress shall make no law abridging" the freedom of citizens to express themselves on any subject. It has nothing to do with your interrupting the speaker. Rules governing that are set by whoever owns the venue in which the speech is taking place — just as you can decide for yourself what can be said in your own home.

"Here's another example. A man should not be putting his hands on a woman without her permission. But suppose that a lady is waiting to cross the street and decides to cross against the light. A man behind her sees a car bearing down on her just as she steps in its path. If the right to be free of physical harassment were absolute, the man would be ethically bound not to grab her and pull her back to the curb. But he should help her. Why? Because her right to life supersedes her right to be free of physical coercion."

You do not impede the woman because she has a "right to life," but because you want to save her life. You will experience the consequences of your act. The woman may have been intending to kill herself, in which case she may hate you and malign you publicly ever after. Or she may thank you profusely for the rest of her life. In either case, you make the decision, you take the risk, and you experience the consequences of your acts.

To transfer such an example to government is completely inappropriate. Politicians do not suffer the direct consequences of their own acts — and rarely even suffer indirect consequences. When they pass laws governing how people must act on public streets, they never suffer themselves if the laws lead to terrible consequences. And to use the example of your hoping to save the life of a woman on the street as an excuse to allow politicians to violate the Constitution supposedly for our own good is wholly inappropriate.

The principal problem with these examples is that they are about individuals, while you're trying to draw conclusions regarding a nation. We are not a collective. What one person does with another is of no relevance when discussing what the government does to individuals.

The Siren Song of Dictators

"I ask you: Is it better to torture a suspect to prevent your city from being consumed in a nuclear holocaust or to respect his rights of person and due process and thereby suffer the incineration of a hundred thousand innocents and the creation of a nuclear wasteland? The rights of the suspect are not equivalent to the right to life of me, my family, my friends, and my community. It would be immoral not to try to force the suspect to stop the detonation even though it violates the suspect's civil liberties."

It is examples like this that have allowed tyrants throughout history to arrogate to themselves the right to torture, to suspend due process, and to ignore any tried-and-true rules of evidence in order to get what they want. After all, you don't want your city incinerated, do you?

And don't forget that anyone can be considered a suspected terrorist. Once you give the government the power to torture, you could be the next "suspected terrorist" to be tortured. Why not? Are you going to have a court trial first, employing all the rules of evidence to be sure that some law-enforcement official hasn't fingered you because of his incompetence? And what happens when it turns out that you weren't guilty at all? Who will face dire consequences for having made "an honest mistake"? And how will you put your life back together after a week of sheer horror and a maimed body?

"It has been said that our rights are most essential when our neighbors think we do not deserve them. I answer that, if my neighbors have good reason to think that I am trying to murder them, they should stop me even if that means violating my rights. My civil liberties are subordinate to their right to life. They are doing the ethical thing to defend their lives. They are

placing their rights and mine in proper perspective. Life and defense of lives are the ultimate rights."

Once again, you are confusing your neighbors with the government. If your neighbors hurt you mistakenly, they will face direct consequences for their acts. To use this as an excuse to give unaccountable government officials the power to suspend your civil liberties (and there is no such thing as "accountable" government officials) is to go the way of the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany.

"I agree that if we allow our civil liberties to be subordinated to our self-defense, we will be in danger of all things being justified. We have currently before us a classic example of how the power-hungry try to feather their nests in the name of a worthy goal. In the name of campaign finance reform, incumbent politicians are trying to assure their re-elections by prohibiting paid political ads — a clear violation of free speech."

Then why don't you apply this principle to civil liberties? The politicians who are trying to ram campaign reform down our throats are the same ones who would have the power of life and death over you if you suspend the last effective elements of the Constitution.

Giving Them the Power to Do What They Want

"Government abuses and injustices will occur in the name of saving our lives. Those in power will sometimes be overzealous, dim-witted, inept, mistaken, corrupt, or ambitious."

Not "sometimes." Any power you give to politicians will inevitably be abused — if not today by the "good" politicians you give it to, then tomorrow by the "bad" politicians who will succeed them. As Michael Cloud has said, "The problem is not the abuse of power, it is the power to abuse."

"But is it not better to risk sliding down the slippery slope of allowing our government to infringe upon our civil liberties than to suffer terrorists throwing us off the cliffs and dashing us upon the rocks?"

Once on the slippery slope, when have we ever been able to climb back up to regain lost liberties?

"We must subordinate our civil liberties to our self-defense not only for the ethical and philosophical considerations above, but also because of practical considerations. First, it is clear that the fanatics who have attacked us will keep attacking until we or they are destroyed. I see no person or

group who has the investigative or military capacity to stop them except our government.

And with \$2 trillion at its disposal, our government has apparently achieved nothing. So what will the government achieve with \$2 trillion plus our lives?

"We have not turned overnight into a Nazi or Stalinist state. The government has not suspended all our liberties and has limited the detentions and interrogations to suspects rather than condemning all those of a particular group or religion to internment camps."

"Suspects" are by definition people that government officials don't like. Couldn't you be one of them once we descend another couple of feet down the slippery slope?

It Hasn't Hurt Yet

"So far, the government's violation of our civil liberties has amounted to minor inconveniences for most and major disruptions for a few."

This is the way these things always begin. "I haven't noticed any inconvenience." . . . "If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to worry about." . . . "Honest people aren't afraid of their own government." Eventually, everyone is inconvenienced, everyone has something to hide, and everyone is afraid of his own government.

"And I see ways that we as individuals can exert pressure on our government to moderate rights abuse."

This is another mistaken belief that makes it easy for government to grow — the idea that you can give politicians power and then draw a line at exactly where you think that power should end. But you won't get to draw the line, and the politicians' power will eventually be unlimited. That's why the income tax today is 39%, not the 6% it was at the start — why Social Security is 15%, not 2% — why every bank transaction is subject to government snooping, not just large transactions.

Why We Are Threatened

"I don't see how we can alter either the mind set or actions of those zealots who have been raised to hate us, who have devoted their lives to finding ways to destroy us, and who find their ultimate glory and fulfillment in our demise."

Here we come to what, in my opinion, is the most important issue in this entire War on Terrorism — the idea that we have no choice but to cede to our own government unlimited power to fight people who won't rest until they destroy us.

But there have always been thugs in the world who wanted to destroy others. There have always been people who hated America — for justifiable reasons or because they were loony. There have always been evil people, malicious people, brutal people. Why is it that only now do they represent such a grave threat to us that we must discard the last of what made America unique in all the world — the few remaining constitutional rights we possess?

The truth is that the evil, malicious, brutal people rarely have the ability to make any real trouble outside their own neighborhoods. The few exceptions, people like Adolf Hitler or Osama bin Laden, succeed only because they are able to get large numbers of people to support them — to provide the financing, the contacts, the networking and other resources necessary to cause noticeable trouble.

And that support comes from people who have been mistreated, as with the Germans after World War I — who had valuable pieces of Germany torn off and handed to France, Poland, or Czechoslovakia — who had all their foreign investments confiscated — who were told to pay astounding reparations, even though all their valuable assets had been taken from them — who were made to bear the entire guilt for a war they were only one part of.

Or the support comes from hundreds of millions of people around the world who resent American troops stationed in their country — who are appalled by the constant American bombing of Iraq — who have watched for 50 years as the Americans propped up dictatorial regimes in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and other countries.

The difference between relatively harmless brutes and brutes who are truly dangerous is that the latter have been handed real grievances to play upon. They are still brutes, but they gain the support of honest, peace-loving people who have been pushed to the limit.

You will never be able to subdue all the brutes of the world, especially if you kill more innocent people in the process — because the very act of trying will arouse even more resentments around the world.

If you want to make the brutes relatively powerless to hurt us, you can do it only by taking power away from our politicians to interfere in foreign countries — not by taking away the last remaining rights of American citizens.

(Incidentally, I find it hard to understand how so many Libertarians could have complained so loudly about American foreign policy for so many years, but now seem to refuse to pin any blame on that foreign policy for what happened on September 11. And even if they do say now the foreign policy was wrong, they also say that America is justified in bullying the world now, because of what happened on September 11, even though the current bullying is an extension of the very foreign policy they condemn.)

You Can't Control Them

"Therefore, we must support our government to stop these assassins by whatever means necessary. I don't see how our government can effectively find and stop these killers without being able to control entry to our country, without having data about those in the country, without being able to detain and interrogate suspects, and without proceeding immediately and secretly on occasion to foil them. Some of these activities will necessitate limitations on our freedoms."

In other words, give people like Teddy Kennedy, Newt Gingrich, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush a blank check — and then pray they don't abuse it.

"But we must not allow the government to do things in the name of our self-defense that are not necessary, especially if it means giving up our civil liberties. Our politicians are quick to grab power from us when emergencies arise and slow to return it when the crises pass. So we must closely monitor our politicians as they endeavor to win this war on terror."

Once again, you believe you will be able to draw the line — that you will be asked to determine what is "necessary" and what isn't. But you will never participate in such decisions. And as you "monitor" the politicians, what will you do when you see them crossing the line? How will you rally the American people to stop the abuse? If you know a way to do this, why aren't you using it to free us from the income tax, from Social Security, from the insane War on Drugs, and from other government abuses?

"One step that we might take immediately would be to insist that, whenever legislation is passed which grants emergency powers to our government, there would be an expiration date. I would propose that the term of such laws would be no longer than 4 years—one term of the presidency."

That's long enough to gain complete control of our lives.

"At the end of its term, if the law still seems sound and the emergency still exists, it can be re-enacted. If not, any powers lost to us under that law will automatically be returned to us. This is the exact opposite of what happens to us now. Long after emergencies pass or legislation stops making any sense, the law remains and the government indefinitely keeps the powers it took from us."

And you believe that, at the end of the 4-year term, you will be able to rally the American people to prevent an almost-automatic extension of one of these dreadful laws. If you

have that kind of influence, why didn't you rally the American people to stop passage of the campaign finance reform that you thought was so disgraceful?

Because you can't. And you won't be able to stop impositions on your liberty from becoming permanent — even if can be shown clearly that a particular imposition has achieved nothing. When has a government program been ended — no matter how destructive or unsuccessful?

In addition, you support taking away our civil liberties provided a 4-year time limit is attached. And who in Congress will see to it for you that the time limit is attached to new laws taking away our civil liberties?

I don't like to say this, but I believe you've fallen for the same pipe-dream that has deluded conservatives and liberals for the past hundred years or so. We are where we are today because citizens like yourself supported their favorite politicians as those politicians supported dangerous legislation, reassuring their supporters that the proposed legislation included valuable safeguards — and then the politicians compromised at the last minute to pass the dangerous legislation without any of the safeguards.

"Possibly, our current crisis can become a blessing in disguise. It is not just in the name of war that our liberties are infringed. With virtually every new law, policy, and court decision we are diminished. Hopefully, if we become conscious of not squandering our rights in one area, we can be moved to preserve and even enhance them in all."

Sorry, but I just don't see how we will preserve our rights by giving up more rights and then hoping people will help us get them back. This is exactly what Republicans have done — telling us they're for smaller government and proving it by making government bigger.

Once the liberties are gone, they aren't coming back. Liberty isn't saved by giving a blank check to those who want to take our liberties away from us.

I appreciate your thoughtful comments. I hope you'll continue to think about these issues. With best wishes, Harry Browne

**This Just In:
Bin Laden Wins the War in Afghanistan
by Harry Browne**

March 14, 2002

Osama Bin Laden has won the war in Afghanistan — the first big battle of the War on Terrorism.

Americans are claiming victory because American bombers have devastated Afghanistan, thousands of Afghans have been killed, and the already-impoverished country is now almost completely in ruins.

But most likely this is exactly what bin Laden wanted.

What has the devastation achieved? Osama bin Laden and Omar the Tentmaker are still on the loose. To the best of my knowledge, no one who had anything to do with the planning or execution of the September 11 attacks has been captured or killed.

(The chance that bin Laden was killed by the bombing is very remote. After all, he and his cohorts believe he's on a mission from Allah. So he probably left Afghanistan shortly after the bombing began, rather than risk being lost to the cause.)

And don't get the idea that American military might has shown Osama bin Laden that he can't get away with his nefarious deeds. That conclusion is 180 degrees off the mark.

Do you think Osama bin Laden cares how many innocent Afghans are killed?

Why would he? Every dead Afghan is another argument for his crusade.

Hundreds of millions of people in the Third World already hate the U.S. — for bombing Iraq, for interfering in the Middle East, for keeping troops in a hundred countries, for propping up dictators who support American policies.

And every bomb that fell on Afghanistan converted more people into America-haters. The U.S. military has been confirming bin Laden's argument that Americans are bullies.

Around the World

In the same way, ten years of U.S. bombing Iraq hasn't forced Saddam Hussein to change his policies. Why should it? The bombs make his stubbornness more popular at home.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel says he'll continue to attack the Palestinians until "the other side understands it cannot achieve anything by using terror; [then] it will be easier to start negotiations."

But why would terrorists care how many Palestinians die?

By definition, terrorism is the brutalizing of innocent people in order to cause changes in official policy. So terrorists don't care how many innocent people are killed on either side. And every one of their own who dies causes more people to support the terrorists.

Why We Are Threatened

The root fallacy in the War on Terrorism is the idea that we have no choice but to fight people who won't rest until they destroy us.

But there have always been thugs in the world who wanted to destroy others. There have always been people who hated America — for good or bad reasons. There have always been evil people, malicious people, brutal people.

Why is it that only now do they represent such a grave threat to us?

The truth is that the evil, malicious, brutal thugs rarely have the ability to make any real trouble outside their own neighborhoods. The few exceptions — people like Adolf Hitler or Osama bin Laden — succeed only because they can get the financing, contacts, networking and other resources necessary to spread trouble.

And they can get that support only if large numbers of people have been mistreated. That was the case with the Germans after World War I — who had valuable pieces of Germany torn off and handed to France, Poland, or Czechoslovakia — who had all their foreign investments confiscated — who were told to pay astronomical reparations, even though all their valuable assets had been taken from them — who were made to bear the entire guilt for a war they were only one part of.

Hitler could command a very advanced, literate country because of the terrible treatment the Germans suffered after World War I. He promised to avenge the wrongs done to them, and they responded enthusiastically. If he hadn't had that fertile ground to work with, we'd never have heard of him.

Today, Osama bin Laden couldn't get the worldwide support necessary to carry out his evil plans if there weren't hundreds of millions of people who resent American troops stationed in their countries, who are appalled by the American blockade that's starving Iraqis, who don't like American Presidents imposing their decisions on their countries.

The difference between relatively harmless thugs and truly dangerous thugs is the real grievances the dangerous ones can play upon. They are still thugs, but they gain the support of honest, peace-loving people who have been pushed to the limit.

You'll never be able to subdue all the thugs, especially if you kill more innocent people in the process because the very act of killing arouses even more resentments.

By bombing Afghanistan, by killing people who had nothing to do with the September attacks, George Bush has handed Osama Bin Laden exactly the victory he craved — the evidence that Americans don't believe innocent people have a right to live if they get in the way of American global ambitions.

The Terrorist Strategy

If Bin Laden could mastermind the September attacks, he must be smart enough to know that bombing the World Trade Center (or any future terrorist act) isn't going to defeat America. So why did he do it?

He could see an insecure American President, just barely elected and worried about his reelection, who might jump at the opportunity to demonstrate leadership, play the macho President, start bombing, and feed the worldwide resentment of American foreign policy.

And so bin Laden has maneuvered George Bush into destroying a poor, Islamic country — causing a further decline in support for America among the world's peoples (distinct from their leaders who feed at the American trough).

Round 1 goes to bin Laden by something close to a knockout.

Defeating Terrorism

We will never defeat terrorism by killing innocent people. That's exactly what the terrorists want us to do.

You can make the thugs powerless only by taking away their ability to gain the support necessary to carry out their plans. That means our government must get U.S. troops out of foreign countries, quit telling other nations what to do, and quit killing innocent people in a futile attempt to "rid the world of evil-doers."

Let there be no misunderstanding. I'm not blaming America. I'm blaming American foreign policy.

And I'm not talking about pacifism. I'm talking about protecting you and me and all of America by not provoking war.

Nor am I talking about poverty as a cause of terrorism. I'm talking about American foreign policy as a cause of terrorism. The answer lies not in foreign aid for the world's impoverished. Quite the contrary.

The answer lies in minding our own business.

The answer lies in ending 50 years of foreign policy failures.

Or are we going to let bin Laden win the rest of the war as well?

How Terrorists Profit From Drugs
by Harry Browne

March 21, 2002

During the last Super Bowl, you may have seen the government's TV ads (your tax dollars at work) claiming that teenagers who smoke marijuana help finance terrorists. Similar ads were published in newspapers.

The Libertarian Party responded with a takeoff on the government's claims. A USA today ad showed America's "Drug Czar" John Walters saying, "This week, I had lunch with the president, testified before Congress and helped funnel \$40 million in illegal drug money to groups like the Taliban." The ad said it's the Drug War that enables terrorists to raise large amounts of money.

Last week Drug War advocates tried to refute the Libertarian ad. Dexter Ingram of the Heritage Foundation wrote:

Like it or not, drug-users in America do help finance the terrorists who attack us. The sellers rely on volume for their profits; as long as we continue to purchase and use in bulk, they can count on steady and expanding profits as far as the eye can see.

With all due respect to Mr. Ingram (whose intelligence I have no reason to doubt) and the Heritage Foundation (which sometimes explains free market principles), I think Mr. Ingram has missed the point.

Why drug profits are big

If a large volume for some product is sufficient to finance terrorism, why don't terrorists raise money by selling computers or aspirin or food?

Well, why don't they?

The answer is that those products generate very small profits per sale, while drug profits are astronomical.

Whenever the profits in computers, aspirin or food increase, the supply of the item expands – pushing prices and profits back again to levels similar to those of other products.

And why are drug profits astronomical?

Because drugs are illegal.

If drugs were legal – if Smith Kline, Eli Lilly or Bayer could sell drugs – prices would be so low that the profit would be no larger than in computers or food. So how could the terrorists make big money in such a business?

The black market in drugs

When the government interferes with a product in wide demand – through price controls or outright prohibition – a "black market" develops.

A black market is a free market existing in defiance of the government.

Because it's illegal, a black market attracts only people willing to defy the government and risk going to prison. Since they're already outside the law, these people generally are quite willing to use violence to keep competitors out of their markets. The violence-

imposed monopolies cause prices and profits to be much higher than those in a legal, free market.

So the Drug War creates a logical way for terrorists to raise money.

The Drug War also encourages corruption – as some of the oversized profits subvert policemen, prosecutors and judges who will look the other way.

Trying to stamp out a popular product is like trying to hold back the tides. And so prohibition inevitably leads to more aggressive law-enforcement – violations of civil liberties, police raids that kill the wrong people, and sentences way out of proportion to the "crimes" committed.

Thus government interference in drugs leads easily to violence, the killing of innocent people, corruption, tyranny and injustice.

That's what happened with alcohol prohibition in the 1920s. That's what's happening with drug prohibition today.

Legal and illegal markets

The Drug Warriors try to scare us by pointing to conditions in today's illegal market and claiming they'd be even worse in a legal market: "If you think drugs are a problem now, imagine if they were legal – with pushers on every street corner harassing your children."

But when drugs were completely legal in America, there were no pushers. When people could go to the drugstore and buy Bayer Heroin off the shelf in a safe, measured dosage (for pain relief, as a sedative, or because of an addiction), the price was so low that no pusher could succeed selling drugs of unknown origin on the street.

If you haven't studied the history of drugs to be aware of how much safer (and less-often abused) they were when completely legal, I can understand why you're afraid of relegalizing them.

But by now you should be well aware that government uses self-serving propaganda to expand its own power. As the saying goes, "Truth is the first casualty of war." That applies to the War on Drugs and – yes – the War on Terrorism.

If you want to end the dangers of drugs, the violence, corruption, tyranny and injustice, we have to end the insane War on Drugs.

Drugs and terrorists

Do the terrorists sell drugs to finance their operations?

Frankly, I don't know. And I try not to make assertions on matters I haven't studied extensively.

But I can be pretty sure of one thing: Terrorists aren't selling computers, aspirin or food.

The Myths of World War II by Harry Browne

March 25, 2002

A number of people have complained about my stand on the current War on Terrorism by citing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These events are recounted as evidence that sometimes the U.S. is attacked without justification and that sometimes innocent people must be killed for a greater good. Here is my reply to one such letter.

Dear Mr. —:

Thank you for writing with your concerns.

The "Unprovoked Attack"

"The U.S. was minding its own business prior to December 7, 1941 but, we were still attacked by Japan."

Unfortunately, the U.S. (meaning Franklin Roosevelt) was not minding its own business. FDR browbeat the Japanese for a year before Pearl Harbor (1941). He cut off all exports to Japan, froze Japanese assets in the U.S., and demanded that the Japanese get out of Manchuria.

The U.S., Britain, and the Netherlands had already agreed that all three nations would go to war against Japan if the Japanese entered Thailand — which they did a week before Pearl Harbor. So the U.S. was already committed to war (without the knowledge of Congress or the American people) a week before Pearl Harbor.

As Secretary of War Stimson reported in his diaries, FDR then told his cabinet that they had to figure out how to get the Japanese to fire the first shot. Fortunately for them, the Japanese had already decided to bomb Pearl Harbor if the U.S. didn't back down from its bullying.

I don't call Roosevelt's actions to be the U.S. minding its own business.

The Atomic Bomb

"The Japanese did not surrender until two nuclear bombs were detonated on their soil."

That also is not the case. The Japanese had sued for surrender several times during the year before Hiroshima. The Japanese asked for only one condition — that the Emperor be allowed to remain in place.

The U.S. refused because FDR had coined the ridiculous phrase "unconditional surrender" and was determined to stick to it. When the Japanese eventually surrendered without condition, the U.S. allowed the Emperor to remain in place anyway.

Almost every leading U.S. general and admiral was appalled by Truman's dropping of the atomic bomb — especially on two cities with no military significance whatsoever. You can read some of their comments here: <http://www.doug-long.com/quotes.htm>

If terrorism is the act of killing innocent people to pressure a government to change its policies, what was the killing of over 100,000 innocent people — supposedly to end a war, but a war that could have been ended months before?

Foreign Policy Is Simply Politics

How many Japanese and Americans died unnecessarily because of a megalomaniac in the White House — who was conducting an aggressive foreign policy from 1939 onward without the knowledge of Congress or the American people?

Only when all his cabinet officers wrote their memoirs after the war did most of this become known — and by then practically no one was interested in revisiting the causes of the war.

The same thing is happening today. The country is accepting the president's version of events without question. What he's doing makes no sense. But he has his own Pearl Harbor and so, like FDR, he's unstoppable.

Appeasement?

"I don't think talking or appeasing the terrorists will do anything but embolden them."

I have no interest in appeasing anyone. I simply want the U.S. to stop bullying the world and creating enemies.

How Soon We Forget

"I will concede that we (the U.S.) stick our noses where it does not belong sometimes but like the Japanese, the terrorists have brought the fight to U.S. and it is time we showed them and the world what happens when you mess with the best."

I don't understand why so many Libertarians understood before September 11 how dangerous it was for the U.S. to be meddling in other people's affairs — but now suddenly it's as though there's absolutely no connection between a dangerous foreign policy and an aggressive act against the U.S.

And if foreign-policy meddling contributed to the events of September 11, what do you think is going to happen to us as a result of what President Bush is doing now? Shouldn't we be trying to stop an even-greater disaster from occurring?

I want only to speak the truth so that, as events unfold, I hope that more and more people will come to realize what a terrible mistake is being made.

I appreciate your concerns. Few people have the faintest idea what went on in World War II or what went on before September 11. Our government has created a terrible mess that is dividing Americans — even dividing Libertarians. But if it's okay for people to spout jingoistic slogans without any knowledge of the facts, why is it wrong for someone to point out the obvious?

If I seem to be ignoring some historical event, I hope you'll grant me the possibility that I know about it already, and that I actually know what I'm talking about — even if it doesn't conform to the one-liners in high school history books.

A Solution for the Middle East **By Harry Browne**

April 11, 2002

George Bush wants Ariel Sharon to stop doing what George Bush has been doing for the past six months — using force to crush his enemies. Doesn't Bush realize that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery?

His petulance at Sharon for not following Bush's orders indicates that Mr. Bush now believes he's President of the World — and everyone is expected to obey his commands.

He does have good reason to be surprised at Sharon's disobedience, however. After all, your tax money has successfully bribed the leaders of Pakistan, the Philippines and other countries into changing their policies. Why hasn't it bought Israel's obedience as well?

What America should do

Does America have a duty to help Israel?

Of course not. Our Constitution authorizes our government only to defend America – not the rest of the world or any part of it.

But if America is determined to help Israel, the first step should be to stop arming Israel's enemies. Your money has gone to the dictators of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan and other Arab countries. Should we be surprised that some of that money was used to buy military power to attack Israel? Should we be surprised that some of the money is funding Arafat?

After making Israel's enemies so powerful, our leaders have the perfect excuse to run to Israel's aid.

But this is nothing new. The same routine is used by our government at home – causing problems and then running to the rescue in education, health care, charity, farming, business and most other areas of society. Government is good at one thing: It knows how to break your legs, hand you a crutch, and say, "See, if it weren't for the government, you wouldn't be able to walk."

The great mediator

Now Colin Powell is supposed to negotiate a Middle-East peace – in the great tradition of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, who brought peace to the Middle East so many times.

Tell me something: If you and I had a business relationship and disagreed about the meaning of our contract, would you want Colin Powell, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter or even George Bush to mediate the dispute?

I doubt it. We'd look for someone who's a professional mediator – someone with a record of helping people arrive at lasting settlements. Why would anyone want George Bush or Colin Powell to mediate?

The answer is simple: Make an agreement dictated by the U.S. government and you get a big hunk of money from the U.S. taxpayers. You don't have to abide by the agreement; just pose for a photo-op with Colin Powell or George Bush and the money is yours.

In most mediations, the parties involved pay the mediator. Only with American foreign policy does the mediator pay the parties.

The solution

The Middle Eastern crisis was born in turmoil at the end of World War II, as the Great Powers imposed by force a "solution" that told people where they should live. Such a situation is bound to remain a setting for violence and hatred – for resentments that will last hundreds of years. How could we expect it to be otherwise?

And yet, there actually is a solution possible – one that would allow Israelis and Palestinians access to their holy sites, one that would end disputes over territory, one that would permit all sides to live in peace without fear of each other.

The answer is to create a new nation in the area now comprising Israel and west Jordan. Name it anything you want.

But make sure that its government is constitutionally limited to little more than the defense of the nation. Allow people to buy any property that's for sale. Allow people the freedom to worship in whatever way they want. Make sure the holy sites are operated by churches, rather than government agencies, so they're open to everyone.

In other words, make sure that no group can impose its way by force on any other group. No one living in such a country would be deprived of anything he's willing to earn, and no one would have anything to fear from others.

Is such a solution too idealistic? Well, it worked for nearly a century in America. Too bad our ancestors discarded it. If they hadn't, it might be more obvious to people in the Middle East that this is the solution they need.

Unfortunately, there's no chance that anyone with any authority – Israeli, Palestinian or American – would agree to this solution. It takes all the power away from the leaders.

And since our politicians have no regard for constitutional limits, we can't expect them to suggest such a solution to others.

So we can expect the following headline on a newspaper in the year 2032:

"Middle East Violence Continues"

Leave Iraq alone!
By Harry Browne

May 9, 2002

The Bush administration appears to be gearing up for an all-out attack on Iraq – because George Bush has said "I made up my mind that Saddam needs to go."

The politicians justify this invasion of another nation with all sorts of reasons – such as Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, his supposed possession of "weapons of mass destruction," and his support for the Palestine Liberation Organization. And if all else fails to convince,

the coup de grâce is always "He even gassed his own people!" (as though that provides constitutional authority for our politicians to attack another country).

Let's go for the big game

But if these are reasons to invade someone, there's a government that's done all these things on a much larger scale – which would seem to justify having an international military force attack it to make things right.

In just the past two decades, that government has conducted unprovoked military invasions of three other countries and attacked at least four others. It possesses several times as many nuclear weapons as Iraq might have. And it has supported terrorist operations and military dictators in many countries.

And to top it off, the government was caught red-handed gassing its own citizens!

Name that country

What government has done all these things?

Obviously, the U.S. government.

It has:

- Invaded Grenada, Iraq and Panama – not one of which attacked the U.S. in any way.
- Attacked Libya, Serbia, Afghanistan and the Sudan – not one of which attacked the U.S. (No one has suggested that the government of Afghanistan or its people were behind the Sept. 11 attacks.)
- An enormous stockpile of "weapons of mass destruction" – nuclear, chemical and biological. (How safe do you think foreigners feel, knowing our government has such a stockpile and is so eager to attack other countries?)
- Supported such vile characters as Manuel Noriega, the Taliban, Ferdinand Marcos and others (all of which the U.S. government itself labeled as evil people), not to mention dozens of dictators in the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

And the *pièce de résistance* is the U.S. government's use of poisonous CS (banned by international convention) to kill 80 Branch Davidians at Waco in 1993.

Is there a difference between what our government and Saddam Hussein have done? Only in degree, not in kind.

Those who try to explain this away usually fall back on a simple principle: Whatever our government has done was for good reason, whatever our enemies do is bad. But killing innocent people, invading foreign countries, bullying the world are wrong – no matter who does them.

Who's at fault?

Does this make America bad?

Of course not. "America" stands for peace and friendship, and was once the beacon of liberty – providing light and hope and inspiration to the entire world.

But over the past century, its politicians have run amok – ignoring all constitutional limits, dictating to U.S. citizens how they must live their lives, pretending to be the world's policemen, and telling foreigners who must run their governments.

Not surprisingly, the politicians do a horrendous job with everything they attempt – not just foreign policy. Their schools are a mess, they've made a shambles of what was once the best health-care system in the world, they've created criminal gangs with their Drug War, and they've bled us white with their taxes.

And even though they can't bring peace to the streets of Washington, D.C., they arrogantly claim they will "rid the world of evil-doers."

No one is impervious

Yes, America is the most powerful country in the world. So no one can stop George Bush from pushing around any country he sets his sights on.

But that doesn't mean we're safe from the consequences of such bullying. Sept. 11 showed that foreigners can be pushed only so far. It also demonstrated that when you give other people a reason to hate you, it is the most brutal elements of their society who will take the lead in retaliating. Thus we were attacked by people who had no qualms about killing the innocent – even as they were supported by people who had real grievances against our government.

Let's get America back

In his first inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson said, "Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none."

He was right then. He is right today.

Every American citizen should have the right to finance or join any cause he believes in – anywhere in the world. But our government has no business using your tax money and risking your life to support any foreign cause.

Any president who thinks he can decide who should rule a foreign country is a danger to the American people. He's a megalomaniac – putting you and your family at extreme risk to satisfy his own delusions of grandeur.

If we want to prevent further attacks on America, we have to start by stopping the man in the White House.

Defending our 'Freedoms'
by Harry Browne

May 23, 2002

We are told over and over again that the terrorists aren't upset with American foreign policy; it's our freedoms they can't stand. They want to destroy us because we're free.

Unfortunately, those who say this don't spell out the particular freedoms that the terrorists are upset about.

- Is it our freedom to divert 47% of our national income to taxes collected by the federal, state, and local governments?

- Is it the freedom of senior citizens to have life-and-death decisions on medical tests and treatments made by faceless Medicare bureaucrats — who have the power to imprison doctors or patients who defy their wishes?
- Is it the freedom to have our retirement money hijacked by a Social Security system that squanders the money on boondoggles, so that our children and grandchildren have to be taxed in order for us to get our retirement money back?
- Is it the freedom to pay higher and higher school taxes that impoverish us, so that we're forced to send our children to "free" government schools — where they can be indoctrinated as good little citizens of the state?
- Is it the freedom to have the FDA keep life-saving medicines off the market for political reasons — so that critically ill patients have to travel to other countries to get what they need?
- Is it the freedom to have our tax money spent on ridiculous anti-drug ads that drug-users (present and future) think are just plain silly?
- Is it the freedom to have our tax money spent on invasions of Panama, Grenada, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries — to have American troops stationed in a hundred countries around the world — to have American bombers attacking Serbia, Libya, Bosnia, the Sudan, and countless other countries?
- Is it the freedom to be defended by a \$2 trillion government that couldn't even protect us from a bunch of amateurs wielding box-cutters?

I really don't know *what* freedoms the super-patriots are talking about.

What I Want

But before you bruise your dainty fingertips typing an email to tell me I should go live in Iran or some other Hell-hole, let me tell you what I really want.

I don't want to live in Iran, Afghanistan, Cuba, East Timor, or anywhere else.

I want to live in the America that once existed as the beacon of liberty — providing light and hope and inspiration to the entire world — the one that politicians from William McKinley to George W. Bush have replaced with a giant bully that tyrannizes Americans and foreigners alike . . .

- I want to live in the America where health care was inexpensive and easily accessible, where health insurance was easy to obtain and cheap, where there were charity hospitals and free clinics, where hospital stays were inexpensive — the

America that existed before the politicians imposed Medicare, Medicaid, the HMO Act, and their yearly "improvements" on us.

- I want to live in the America where government at all levels took just 8% of the national income, mainly because the federal government was bound down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution — where the federal government was so small that it could perform its constitutional functions on just the revenue collected from tariffs and excise taxes, with no income taxes at all.
- I want to live in the America of Washington and Jefferson that promoted good will and honest commerce toward all countries, and hatred toward none — one in which the politicians don't blame their own failures on faceless foreigners.
- I want to live in the America where people like George Bush, Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, and Teddy Kennedy can't impose their ideas on you and me — where each American is free to work out his own destiny.
- I want to live in the America our Founding Fathers bequeathed to us when they enacted the Bill of Rights — a country in which government has no power to monitor your bank account, your mail, your life — where government can't tax you to subsidize the reelection of incumbent politicians — where government can't leave you defenseless against criminals while treating you like a criminal.

If such a country still existed, the terrorists wouldn't be invading America with box-cutters — in the futile hope of changing American foreign policy.

They'd be flooding the country with visa applications — trying to get in to enjoy the same freedoms we'd have.

National Defense vs. National Offense
by Harry Browne

May 30, 2002

You might think I never advocate an expansion of any government function.

Not so. I'd like to see a greater national defense. In fact, I'd like to see a national defense – period.

Today our government spends virtually nothing on defense. Instead, it spends over \$300 billion per year on offense – the most intimidating national offense in the history of the world.

The U.S. has the ability to destroy any country in the world – or even the entire world. But it can't defend us from any two-bit dictator who gets his hands on a nuclear missile – or from a dozen amateurs with box-cutters.

Isn't there something wrong with this picture?

The Constitution authorizes Congress to "provide for the common defense." But it says nothing about running the world.

Method to the madness

Because the country is virtually defenseless against "terrorist states" and terrorist individuals, the politicians have a ready excuse for depriving us of our civil liberties.

They have to monitor our bank accounts. After all, one of us might be helping to finance terrorism.

They have to tap our telephones. After all, two of us might be plotting the next attack.

They have to monitor our e-mail. After all, three of us might be terrorists conspiring to overthrow the government.

And since the country is virtually defenseless against such attacks, the only recourse is to impose police-state measures – right out of George Orwell's "1984."

How convenient.

But it's even worse than that. Because we can't defend ourselves, we feel justified in launching "preemptive" attacks against Iraq, Panama, Libya, Grenada, Afghanistan, the Sudan, Serbia and just about any other country run by someone our president of the moment doesn't happen to like.

What did the president know?

The big issue currently is the question of how much the government knew in advance of Sept. 11.

But that's almost irrelevant.

If some people in the government did have advance warnings, the government was too bureaucratic to respond. On the other hand, if no one knew anything, you have to wonder what they do with our money.

Either way, we're paying the government \$2 trillion a year and getting nothing in return. With all that money, the government should have been able to defend us from the box-cutter terrorists.

And after all the new invasions of our civil liberties and all the bombs dropped on Afghanistan and all the people killed by our military and all the bullying George Bush

has done to make other governments join the crusade against terrorism, Vice-President Cheney says another terrorist attack is “almost certain.”

So what are we getting for our \$2 trillion, for our lost civil liberties, and for the ill will being created worldwide?

With \$2 trillion, the government ought to be able to come up with a better approach than conducting military invasions that will just provoke more terrorist attacks.

For \$2 trillion someone in government could at least explore the possibility that American foreign policy has made America an unsafe country.

Not a chance. We're expected to pay our taxes, wave the flag and keep our mouths shut.

Defending the country

When will America have a real national defense? It shouldn't cost more than \$50 billion a year.

It requires only two essential elements.

The first is the ability to repel foreign missiles.

Ronald Reagan proposed such a missile defense in 1983. But he gave the job to the Defense Department, a bureaucratic government agency, and 19 years later we're not one step closer to the protection we need.

The government should simply post a reward – say, \$25 billion – to be given to the first private company that produces an actual functioning, fool-proof missile defense. Not a prototype, not a plan, not a cost-plus contract – but a demonstration of the actual system bringing down missiles. If such an offer were made, we'd probably have a missile defense within five years.

Remember all the reasons given in 1997 that the Y2K computer problem couldn't possibly be solved by 2000? Even computer experts said there wasn't enough time, there weren't enough programmers, and there were too many lines of computer code to be examined, altered and tested. But somehow, people in search of profits found ways to overcome all the barriers that stymie bureaucrats, and they reduced the problem to a minor inconvenience.

In the same way, private firms competing to win a huge reward will achieve missile-defense goals that bureaucrats (and even scientists) working for the government might consider impossible.

And then the politicians would no longer have an excuse to intimidate anyone – foreign or American.

The second essential element is to get the U.S. government out of the affairs of other nations. No more troops stationed in other countries. No more foreign aid – military or financial – to other governments. No more demanding that foreign countries change their ways.

If you want to be the world's policeman, telling everyone else how to run their lives, expect to be hated – and even attacked.

But if we restore America to the peaceful beacon of liberty that once provided light and hope and inspiration to the entire world, we can expect to be loved again – as America once was.

All we really want from the government is to be defended against missiles, bombers and terrorists.

For \$2 trillion, is that too much to ask?

Welcome to the War on Terrorism, Comrade **by Harry Browne**

July 18, 2002

You wanted our government to strike back at the terrorists by bombing Afghanistan, right?

You cheered when President Bush stood tall and said, "Let's roll!" And you applauded when he said he will root out the evil-doers everywhere in the world.

And when innocent Afghans were killed, you said there's bound to be "collateral damage" in a war.

When the Feds took over the airports and created enormous inconveniences for passengers, you pointed out that we all must sacrifice for the greater good.

When it was revealed that the military were keeping prisoners in secret, and that people might be tried in secret — and even executed — you pointed out that these things are necessary in wartime. After all, the Bill of Rights shouldn't apply to terrorists, right?

The Inevitable Next Step

Now the federal government has taken the next logical step — the one that proceeds inexorably from all that it has done up to now.

The government's Citizen Corps program has set up Operation TIPS (Terrorism Information & Prevention System). At its website, complete with a smiling picture of Big Brother, you can read:

Operation TIPS will be a national system for reporting suspicious, and potentially terrorist-related activity. The program will involve the millions of American workers who, in the daily course of their work, are in a unique position to see potentially unusual or suspicious activity in public places.

It's about time, right? We've been pussy-footing around with these terrorists for too long, right?

So far the Feds have recruited over a million people to snoop for them — mail carriers, cable TV installers and repairmen, telephone servicemen, trash men, and other people who might be around your home during the course of their work. While doing their normal jobs, they'll look for anything suspicious in your home — and they'll report to the government anything *they* think is strange.

So anyone coming into your home might be a Federal snoop. Even that neighbor who doesn't like you may be a government informant.

But so what? You have nothing to hide, right?

When the cable TV man comes to your house and sees those strange books on your shelf, or the catalog from a gun maker in the trash (a catalog you didn't ask for, but was sent to you because your name was bought from someone you deal with), or the unusual amount of electronic equipment you have, he has the opportunity to be a hero and report you to the secret police. He might even get a Gold Star. Or make that a Red Star.

But so what? Even if secret agents come to question you, you're innocent, right? You have nothing to hide. You can tell the secret police they've got the wrong man.

You can explain later to the neighbors that those policemen and strange-looking agents were at your home by mistake, right?

Incarceration for the Greater Good

Of course, the thought police might not accept your explanations. And they probably won't let you call an attorney. But you don't *need* an attorney if you're innocent, right?

And even if they arrested you when you were by yourself and your family doesn't know where you are, your spouse and children won't worry unnecessarily about you. After all, they know you can take care of yourself, right?

And it's true that the anti-terrorism experts need to make a lot of arrests, in order to show they're doing something and to justify expanding their budgets. After all, they *are* government bureaucrats — just like the ones who are wiping out drugs, poverty, and illiteracy. But they're doing important work — and so you shouldn't complain if you're inconvenienced, right?

They may even torture you to get information you don't have. But, hey, it's better to torture ten innocent people than to let one guilty person conceal the plans for the next terrorist attack, right?

The America That Was

When we had a Bill of Rights in America, it assured you of a right to have an attorney present, a right to confront your accusers, a right to know the charge against you, a right to reasonable bail, a right to a public and speedy trial before a jury of your peers.

But that was before America was attacked in an unprovoked and vicious act. And so now we must all be willing to sacrifice — and accept whatever the government thinks best. You said that yourself, right? And the TIPS program may give *you* the honor to be one of the first Americans to sacrifice.

Since you may be detained in secret, because you might not be allowed to see an attorney, because you might not have a public trial, and because you'll be dealing with human beings who are far from perfect, it's even possible that you could be tried and executed in secret.

But so what? Your death will just be part of the collateral damage that's a necessary element in this important War on Terrorism.

And you will die happy — knowing your government stood tall and showed the terrorists they couldn't get away with the 9-11 attack.

Right?

Who Cares about the Civil War?
by Harry Browne

July 31, 2002

I believe an understanding of the Civil War has great relevance to the future of liberty in America.

It may be the most misunderstood of all American wars. And so much of what we lament today — government intrusions on civil liberties, unlimited taxation, corporate welfare, disregarding of the Constitution, funny money — date back to programs started during the Civil War.

Although slavery was an ever-present political issue in the early 1800s, it wasn't the immediate cause of the war. In fact, Abraham Lincoln in his first inaugural address vowed that he wouldn't interfere with slavery.

He also said the North wouldn't invade the South unless necessary to collect taxes.

Before the war, the main concern about slavery was whether new states and territories would come into the Union as free states or slave states. This affected the balance of power in Congress, and both Northerners and Southerners worried that the other region might dominate Congress.

Taxes

Why then was the Civil War fought?

As with most wars, there's no single answer. But the predominant cause was taxation. Before his election, Lincoln had promoted very high tariffs (federal taxes on foreign imports), using the receipts to build railroads, canals, roads, and other federal pork-barrel projects.

The tariffs protected Northern manufacturers from foreign competition, and were paid mostly by the non-manufacturing South, while most of the proposed boondoggles were to be built in the North. Thus the South was being forced to subsidize Northern corporate welfare.

Certainly the Southerners were concerned about the future of slavery. But there was no threat in 1861 that the federal government would be able to outlaw it.

Secession

When Lincoln was elected, South Carolina saw a grim future ahead and seceded. Other Southern states quickly followed suit.

Lincoln asserted that no state had a right to secede from the Union — even though several geographical regions had considered secession before. Few people thought the Union couldn't survive if some states decided to leave.

Upon seceding, the Confederates took over all federal forts and other facilities in the South, with no opposition from Lincoln. The last remaining federal facilities were Fort Pickens in Florida and Fort Sumter in South Carolina. Lincoln at first promised to let the South have Fort Sumter, but then tried to reinforce it. The South moved to confiscate it — shelling the Fort for many hours. (No one was killed or even seriously injured.)

Why was Fort Sumter important? Because it guarded a major tariff-collecting facility in the harbor at Charleston. So long as the Union controlled it, the South would still have to pay Lincoln's oppressive tariffs.

Although there had been only scattered Northern opposition to the secessions, the shelling of Fort Sumter (like the bombing of Pearl Harbor almost a century later) incited many Northerners to call for war against the South. The South's seizure of Fort Sumter caused many Northerners to notice that the South would no longer be subsidizing Northern manufacturing.

As the war began, the sole issue was restoration of the Union — not ending slavery. Only in 1863 did the Emancipation Proclamation go into effect, and it didn't actually free a single slave — just like so many laws today that don't perform the purpose for which they were promoted.

The Damage

The Lincoln Presidency imposed a police state upon America — North and South. He shut down newspapers that disagreed with him, suspended habeas corpus, imprisoned civilians without trials, and went to war — all without Congressional authority.

Just as future Presidents would do, he used the war as an excuse to increase government dramatically. He rewarded his political friends with pork-barrel projects, flooded the country with paper money, established a national banking system to finance a large federal debt, and imposed the first income tax. He also destroyed the balance between the executive and Congressional branches, and between the federal government and the states.

He set in motion many precedents we suffer from today. That's why it's important to understand the Civil War for what it was, not what the myth makers want it to be.

Alternatives

Was slavery an evil? Of course.

Is it a blessing that it ended? Of course.

Was it necessary for 140,414 people to die in order to end slavery? Definitely not. The U.S. was the only western country that ended slavery through violence — outside of Haiti (where it ended through a slave revolt). During the 19th century dozens of nations ended slavery peaceably.

What Was Lincoln?

Was Lincoln opposed to slavery? Yes, he became an abolitionist in the mid-1850s, although he said he didn't know how slavery could be ended.

Lincoln's fans have portrayed him as the Great Emancipator, Honest Abe, who with great courage and single-minded determination fought a Civil War to free the slaves. Many of his detractors have tried to show that he was actually a racist.

I think it's important to understand that, more than anything else, he was a politician. Throughout his career he shaded the truth for political advantage, he played both sides against the middle, he lied about his opponents, and he used government force to get what he wanted. Like so many politicians, he continually uttered platitudes about liberty while doing everything in his power to curtail it.

His idolaters applaud him for being a dictatorial politician, saying this was precisely what America needed in 1861. No historian believes he acted within the Constitution.

Importance of Studying the Civil War

I believe the study of the origins and conduct of the Civil War is an important part of a libertarian education.

Although the Progressive era, the New Deal, and the Great Society each caused government growth to accelerate, only the Civil War caused a complete break with the past. It transformed a federation of states into a national government. It introduced the elements of big government that later movements would build on. And it set in motion the disregard for the Constitution that's taken for granted today.

You'll also find parallels between the Civil War and today's War on Terrorism.

Lincoln and the Civil War are fascinating subjects. I've read numerous books about them, and I can highly recommend two recent books that provide an excellent introduction.

Jeffrey Hummel's book "Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free" (published in 1996) and Thomas DiLorenzo's "The Real Lincoln" (2002) are both well-documented and very well-written. You'll find reading either of them (or both) to be an adventure, rather than a task.

Hummel's book is longer, more complete, and perhaps more balanced. DiLorenzo's is faster reading. Both are well worth their inexpensive prices.

We're fortunate that Amazon carries an enormous assortment of pro-liberty titles, and makes it easy to order books online.

Hummel's book is only \$24.95, and Di Lorenzo's book is only \$10.17.
Happy reading!

How to destroy America in one easy lesson
by Harry Browne

August 15, 2002

President Bush now seems hell-bent on a plan that could easily lead to a nuclear strike against America – a strike that could cause a disaster many times worse than the World Trade Center attack.

Over and over Mr. Bush has said he'll do whatever is necessary to remove Saddam Hussein from Iraq. ("I've made up my mind that Saddam needs to go.") Until recently, that meant an invasion of Iraq – with the only question being when, not if.

Lately, as more and more people have spoken out against such an invasion, he's said he's considering several possibilities. But don't be surprised when some "incident" provides an excuse to launch a full-scale strike against Iraq. American leaders have always found ways to provoke incidents – from Fort Sumter to the Gulf of Tonkin – that draw America into wars.

No reason for an invasion has made any sense.

- Because Iraq might have nuclear weapons? Does this mean America will next attack China – a nation many times more powerful than Iraq?
- Because of human rights violations? Why not first invade Zimbabwe – where the ruling party is looting and destroying farms, even as the nation starves?
- Because Iraq might be connected to al-Qaida? What about Saudi Arabia – a nation that's been far more helpful to America's enemies?
- Because Saddam Hussein is a madman? How can a madman stay in power for 23 years and earn the respect of his fellow Arab leaders, who refuse to support a war against him?
- Because "Saddam Hussein has gassed his own people" – that argument-clinching, can't-answer-that-can-you, case-closed game-winner? Well, does that mean George Bush will next be attacking Bill Clinton and Janet Reno – who gassed the Branch Davidians at Waco in 1993?

Support evaporating

For the bombing of Afghanistan and other fronts of the "War on Terrorism," Mr. Bush was able to buy the support of foreign leaders – even though polls showed that their subjects opposed America's actions. But for his rumble with Iraq, he's finding it tough to get anyone to hold his coat.

Even so, he's determined to have his war against Iraq – whether or not anyone can invent a plausible reason to justify an unprovoked attack on another nation.

Motive?

Why?

I can't read his mind. But the likely reason is because most of the excitement and patriotic hysteria generated after 9-11 has dried up. And there's still 26 months before the next presidential election. At this rate he'll go the way of his father – a big hit for a short period but yesterday's fish by the time he ran for re-election.

So how can Junior keep the war on the front page for two more years – so we all remain grateful to Big Brother for protecting us from the evil-doers of the world?

Simple. Another war.

And since America picks only on nations that have no chance of beating us, it probably won't take more than a few months before Iraq is conquered. That means still another war against someone else, and maybe even two more, before November 2004. After that, maybe we can relax. Somehow the threat to the American way and everything we hold dear will finally be over.

Playing loose with America's future

If we live that long.

There's a terrible problem in that scenario.

It's really unlikely that Hussein has "weapons of mass destruction." So he's not actually much of a threat to anyone.

But let's just suppose George Bush is right (for once). Let's assume Hussein does have the ability to nuke the United States of America. It would be suicidal for him to use those weapons against us.

He knows he can't defeat America. So using nuclear or biological weapons against us would give George Bush the perfect excuse to drop nuclear bombs on Baghdad – and anywhere else Hussein might try to hide. By using a nuclear weapon against America, Hussein would be signing his own death warrant.

There's only one circumstance in which he'd have reason to do so. If America invaded Iraq, he'd know his days would be numbered. He couldn't possibly drive the Americans out of Iraq. They would capture and kill him.

And if he's going to die anyway, why not use the most terrible weapons he has to cause as much destruction to his enemies as possible before he dies?

So the one situation in which Hussein would use weapons of mass destruction against us would be if George Bush ordered an invasion of Iraq.

If Mr. Bush doesn't realize this, he's a fool. If he does realize it, he's acting with reckless disregard for the safety of the American people and he should be prosecuted.

Either way, his bellicose talk of invading Iraq and deposing Hussein is evidence that George Bush is unfit to be president of the United States.

How to Oppose Terrorism

By Harry Browne

August 22, 2002

I frequently get e-mails from people saying that I only complain – and never offer solutions to the terrorism problem. That isn't true, but here's a laundry list of "Do's and Don't's" regarding the war. (And please note that it doesn't include being nice to the terrorists.)

What to do:

- Repeal the regulations that prohibit guns on planes – and that mandate metal detectors and security searches at airports. Before those measures were introduced in 1973, there were no reported cases of passengers shooting each other by accident or in arguments. There were a few hijackings using guns, but far fewer passengers actually died than have been killed since introducing the security measures.
- Recognize that 9-11 was a trillion-to-one shot that couldn't be duplicated in a million years. So don't turn America upside-down, causing billions of dollars in losses to companies and business travelers to prevent the repetition of something that most likely won't happen again anyway.
- Find Osama bin Laden, capture him, and try him in America. He must have a fair trial – consistent with the rules of evidence and the Bill of Rights. If he's killed without a trial, he'll become a martyr throughout the Muslim world – creating

hundreds of millions more anti-Americans who will support future acts of terrorism. If he isn't really behind the 9-11 attacks, killing him without a fair trial terminates the hunt for the real criminal – leaving us in danger. So prosecute anyone who shoots him on sight.

- Declare an end to the so-called War on Terrorism. Call it a victory, a defeat, or an armistice. But quit acting as though it's an excuse to invade any country or take away our civil liberties.

For the future:

These long-term measures should be taken:

- Bring all American troops home. They're a principal cause of the anti-American feeling that provides financial support, networking, and manpower for thugs who wouldn't be much of a threat otherwise. How would you feel if Chinese troops were stationed in your city?
- Stop telling other countries who their leaders should be or what their foreign policy must be. President Bush can buy off foreign leaders with your tax money, but he can't buy the friendship of the people in those countries – people who suffer because of misguided policies forced on them by arrogant American know-it-alls. How would you feel if the Russians issued ultimatums regarding how our country must be run?
- End all foreign aid – military and economic. It has ruined countries, provided resources to our enemies, and turned hundreds of millions of people against America.
- Stop choosing sides in foreign political battles. They're none of our business, and our meddling usually comes back to haunt us. (Remember, our government supported Iraq in its war against Iran.)
- Recognize that foreigners don't care whether or not you're "free." They do care whether or not our government is interfering in their country.

What not to do:

And here's a list of things we definitely should not do:

- Don't set up military tribunals that operate without the Anglo-Saxon rules of evidence. That's a sure way to convict the wrong people and allow the real criminals to continue hurting us.

- Don't imprison people without trial, without a lawyer to defend them, and without access to their families and the press. What's the point of "defending America" if we throw away American principles?
- Don't invade Iraq. That's probably the only way to motivate Saddam Hussein to attack us with whatever dangerous weapons he might have. So long as we leave him alone, he won't commit the suicidal act of provoking the U.S. to drop nuclear bombs on him.
- Don't disrespect the sovereignty of foreign countries when chasing Osama Bin Laden. How would you like foreign police or military to run around your city chasing people they think are criminals?
- Don't assume that your government tells you the gospel truth – or that it will succeed in anything it does. Don't forget that these same politicians told you they were running budget surpluses while they were hiding deficits by stealing from Social Security. And these are the same Keystone Kops who have promised for decades to stamp out drugs, poverty, crime and sin. How well have they succeeded?
- Don't let politicians use the so-called War on Terrorism as an excuse to take away our remaining freedoms.

Apology

I'm sorry that I can't snap my fingers and undo 50 years of bad American foreign policy. Unfortunately, by continuing to tell the rest of the world what to do, President Bush is making a bad situation even worse.

So here's a final don't:

Don't lose your self-respect. It isn't necessary for you to speak out against the war, but don't embarrass yourself by joining in patriotic displays that are nothing but sound and fury.

If you deceive others or deceive yourself, you too will be a casualty of the so-called War on Terrorism.

Should We Trust George W. Bush?

By Harry Browne

August 29, 2002

Shortly after 9-11, TV talk-show host Sean Hannity said, "Thank God, we have an honest man in the White House!"

And when you think about it, a great deal of what you might believe about the so-called War on Terrorism is based on statements from George W. Bush. You have only his word, or that of someone in his administration:

- that Iraq, which George Bush is dying to invade, still has "weapons of mass destruction" that threaten Americans directly;
- that Osama bin Laden masterminded the 9-11 attacks (the infamous video tape demonstrated his joy at the success of the attacks, not his participation);
- that the people being imprisoned as terrorists really are terrorists – even though they've received no public trial (whether you believe terrorists deserve to be protected by the Bill of Rights is irrelevant. You don't even know that they are terrorists until they receive a fair trial under the Bill of Rights);
- that the Bush administration won't misuse the private information it's acquiring through its massive violations of civil liberties.

Since America is endangered by the "you're either with me or against me" tactics of the Bush administration, it becomes vital to know whether we can trust the man in charge of our government.

The record

So does George Bush's record inspire confidence in his honesty?

Unfortunately, this is the same man who has referred to trillions of dollars in budget surpluses – even though the federal government hasn't had a budget surplus since 1956. (The appearance of any "surpluses" was created by taking excess receipts from Social Security and applying them to the general budget, even as the politicians swore they were protecting Social Security.)

Mr. Bush even has the chutzpah to refer with a straight face (well not exactly a straight face, he loves to smirk) to corporate executives "cooking the books." He neglects to mention that many of the corporate bookkeeping methods the politicians are so incensed about today were motivated by rules imposed by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

And George Bush is the same man who in 2000 said he believed in "limited government." Most people assumed he meant a government limited by the Constitution. In fact, he took an oath in which he swore to uphold the Constitution.

But he's violated virtually every one of the first 10 Amendments – especially the Ninth and 10th Amendments, which are meant to impose precise limits on his power.

- He's willing to give your tax money to foreign dictators who claim they "need" it (meaning they've gone too deeply in debt by spending money on palaces and other forms of self-aggrandizement);
- He wants to escalate the spending of your tax on farm subsidies, health care, welfare, government schools, the War on Drugs, propaganda and other programs – none of which are authorized in the Constitution;
- He believes we should trust him and his minions when they tell us the unnamed people they've locked up are not entitled to the protections of the Fourth and Fifth Amendments.
- He claims he can attack Iraq without a declaration of war – even though the Constitution clearly gives such authority exclusively to.

So his belief in "limited government" apparently means government limited to what he wants to do.

George Bush is the same man who in one breath tries to ingratiate himself with you by saying, "It's your money, not the politicians' money" – but in the next breath, he says he's entitled to one-third of "your money."

George Bush is the same man who said he has learned more about political philosophy from Jesus of Nazareth than from anyone else. But he's proven by his actions that he doesn't really believe such things as "Blessed are the peacemakers." And "the meek" who Jesus said would inherit the earth are in Mr. Bush's eyes really just "collateral damage" in his plans to tell the world how it must live.

Is honesty important?

In these and in so many other ways, George Bush has proven that he's not an honest man – and that we shouldn't trust him with the safety of America.

In fact, Thomas Jefferson understood that we shouldn't put our trust in any politician. He said we should bind them down from mischief "by the chains of the Constitution." And a truly honest man wouldn't even ask you to trust him.

Contrary to what you might have thought, this isn't an article about George Bush. It's an article about you. Are you going to demean yourself by putting your faith in a man who has done so much to demonstrate the folly of such faith?

Are you going to let politicians stampede you into throwing away the Bill of Rights, based on "evidence" you never see, reassured by politicians who have proven that the truth is secondary to their own ambitions?

Don't you have enough respect for your own mind to make your own decisions, refuse to accept conclusions without evidence, and be something better than a cheerleader for a politician or a political party?

America, Meet Your Leaders
by Harry Browne

September 19, 2002

Poor President Bush.

He apparently wants to invade Iraq more than anything else in the world. And just when he thought he had sufficient support to do so, foreign leaders started backing out.

So he went to the U.N. and gave a stirring speech – saying Saddam Hussein must allow weapons inspections or the U.S. will invade – only to have Hussein agree to allow the inspectors in.

What is the point?

In his quest to go to war, the president is supported by writers and commentators who never saw a war they didn't like. That may be because they never have to go to war themselves – they just send others to their deaths.

To these people, the object isn't a democratic Iraq or U.S. security. The object is war.

The goal isn't peace in the Middle East or removing dangerous weapons. The goal is war.

The warmongers demonstrate that war is the purpose of it all by the way they promote it.

If you try to deal with any of their claims, they change the subject.

- If you point out that Pakistan (a military dictatorship), India, Russia, China, France, Britain, Israel and the United States all have "weapons of mass destruction" (including chemical and biological weapons), the war-mongers say, "But Hussein gassed his own people."

- If you point out that Bill Clinton gassed the Branch Davidians at Waco, the warmongers say, "But Hussein invaded Kuwait."
- If you point out that the U.S. invaded Panama and Grenada – and has bombed numerous countries that didn't attack the U.S. – the war-mongers say, "But Hussein operates a brutal dictatorship."
- If you ask if this means we must invade several dozen other countries in the world who are suffering under brutal dictatorships, the war-mongers say, "But Hussein has violated a dozen U.N. resolutions" (this is usually claimed by someone who doesn't think the U.N. should even exist).
- If you point out that the U.S. also violates U.N. resolutions – and didn't even pay its dues for many years – the war-mongers say, "But Hussein has weapons of mass destruction," and we've come full circle and can start all over again.

If any of these claims were a truly serious concern, the war-mongers wouldn't be jumping around from one contention to another.

Lies and damned lies

After every war, the historians dig through the archives and discover that a great deal of what our government claimed as the reason for going to war was untrue.

- After World War II, we found out that the Pearl Harbor attack was neither "unprovoked" nor a "surprise."
- After the Vietnam War, we discovered that the Vietnamese didn't really fire on American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, and so the Senate resolution escalating the war was based on a fraud.
- After the Gulf War, it turned out that the Kuwaiti woman who told Congress that she witnessed Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait – and thereby incited several senators to vote for war – wasn't even in Kuwait at the time she "saw" the atrocities.

And so it goes. The politicians get us all whipped up, and only later do we discover that what we knew about the war and the enemy was a lie.

These are our leaders

But, of course, it isn't just war that politicians lie about. They lie about their loyalty to the Constitution, they lie about their voting records, they lie about the contents of the bills they pass, they lie about the non-existent "budget surpluses."

And as though that weren't enough, they vote for bills they haven't read and don't understand. They browbeat committee witnesses on subjects the politicians know nothing about. They seize on any imaginable event as an excuse to arrogate more power to themselves and to take more liberty away from us.

And they expect us to go to war on their say-so.

You believe what you want. But as for me, until George Bush lays out specific, credible, verifiable, understandable evidence that Saddam Hussein poses an immediate threat to the security of the United States of America (not just to the "interests" of the U.S., as defined by power-hungry politicians), I prefer to keep my self-respect and oppose any thought of going to war.

I love America, not its government.

I am loyal to the Constitution, not to the politicians.

I love the traditional American way of life, not the *1984* version we're living today.

And I don't understand why it is so great to live in a country that's constantly at war with someone somewhere in the world.

Iraq: 'A war waiting for a pretext'

by Harry Browne

October 10, 2002

For about a year, we've been hearing how intensely George W. Bush wants to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Mr. Bush has made all sorts of accusations against Hussein, but offered no public evidence to support his assertions.

Finally, this past Monday evening, we were to hear the full case for going to war against Iraq.

Unfortunately, all we heard Monday were more assertions – with no offer to make public any "evidence" the Bush administration claims to have.

I don't expect George Bush to bore a room full of sycophants with photos and forensic evidence. But this long-awaited speech could have at least pointed to places where the administration's evidence is available for inspection. Instead, it was simply the same old tired litany of horror stories.

And until George Bush presents some hard evidence to back up his lurid tales, no one should take him seriously. After all, the man is a politician, for crying out loud! Are we just supposed to accept his word for anything he tells us?

The president gave us the same old song and dance: "The Iraqi regime has violated all [its] obligations. It possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons. It has given shelter and support to terrorism, and practices terror against its own people."

Evidence? No, just take his word for it. He spoke of "surveillance photos," but didn't offer to show us any. He mentioned "intelligence" discoveries, but provided no details or proof.

Terrorist boogie-man

Naturally, he invoked Sept. 11 – the always-handy justification for anything he wants. Worst of all, he trotted out the already discredited charge of "Hussein's links to international terrorist groups." Even the CIA has refuted that one

Last month, presidential adviser Condoleezza Rice said, "There clearly are contacts between al-Qaida and Iraq that can be documented; there clearly is testimony that some of the contacts have been important contacts and that there's a relationship here." But don't hold your breath waiting to see any of this documentation – it's available only to the true believers inside the administration.

In fact, Hussein is actually a secular nationalist and socialist – and an enemy of the kind of religious fundamentalism represented by al-Qaida. Whatever ogre Saddam Hussein might be, he has nothing to do with the so-called War on Terrorism.

And to call Hussein's support for Palestine an excuse for attacking innocent people in Iraq is to say that the U.S. should bomb every Muslim country – including Pakistan, whose dictator has George Bush's full support.

So Bush is forced to support the "terrorist" excuse by saying, "We know that Iraq and the al-Qaida terrorist network share a common enemy – the United States of America." Yeah, and so do a few billion other people around the world – people who are sick and tired of watching American presidents bully other countries, people who are scared to death of the terrible consequences George Bush's reckless plans could unleash.

Who's the threat?

In truth, every one of the assertions made against Saddam Hussein could easily be made against U.S. foreign policy. And, unlike George Bush, you or I could easily come up with evidence to support such charges against American presidents – who have invaded other countries without provocation, undermined foreign governments, blocked the delivery of food and medicines to people in need, and even gassed innocent civilians at Waco in 1993.

If we're supposed to stop predators before they go too far (advice we hear over and over), why not start with the predators in Washington?

Those who know

During the Gulf War, RAF pilot John Nichol was shot down, captured and tortured in an Iraqi prison. Two weeks ago, Newsweek published an interview with in which he pointed out that the Bush administration is jumping around from one argument to another, trying to find a reason for war that resonates. As he said, "Iraq is a war waiting for a pretext."

He called attention to the U.S. government's complicity in Hussein's infamous "gassing of his own people," about which the war-mongers never tire of reminding us. And there's much more in that interview. I suggest you read it.

Perhaps his most important statement was:

I suppose what the Gulf War showed me – as it was my first war – was the brutal reality of war. That doesn't mean war isn't sometimes necessary, but when you see it at first hand, you view with suspicion politicians who are so ready to wield the military stick.

Consequences

George Bush pointedly ignores the consequences of attacking Iraq – trying instead to stampede you by saying, "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun – that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud." But that "mushroom cloud" might come only if the U.S. attacks Iraq.

Even the CIA director has said that if Hussein really has dangerous weapons, he has no reason to use them unless he's attacked by the U.S.

If George Bush truly believed that Saddam Hussein could harm the American people, he would be negotiating with him – just as U.S. presidents negotiated with the Soviet leaders who were in a position to destroy America with nuclear weapons. In the past 55 years, the American military hasn't attacked a single country that had the capability of inflicting any damage on America.

Fasten your seat belt and stiffen your self-respect

Bush says he'll leave Hussein alone if he complies with all the U.S. demands. But Bush has said over and over "Saddam must go" – and the White House is already drawing up a

list of “war criminals” for prosecution. You can't have war criminals until you've had a war – the war that's currently searching for a pretext.

Some Democrats have spoken up against the madness that will mean the death of hundreds (or even thousands) of Americans – and the death of thousands (or even tens of thousands) of Iraqis. But one by one, those Democrats are caving. After all, they're politicians, too.

You may not be able to stop this out-of-control freight train. But at least you can preserve your self-respect by not supporting the mass destruction that a megalomaniac in the White House is so determined to impose.

An Anniversary Worth Celebrating
by Harry Browne

October 24, 2002

This Monday, October 28th, should be a national holiday.

In addition to being my wife's birthday, it is the anniversary of the dedication of the Statue of Liberty in 1886.

As with most parts of American history, very few Americans are aware of the Statue's background.

It was a gift from the French people to the American people. And when I say, "French people," I mean it. It wasn't paid for with French taxes; the money was raised through voluntary donations, given freely by French people as a token of friendship to the United States.

Why would they do that?

Because at that time the United States was truly unique. It was the one country in the world where individual liberty was prized far above "national greatness." And it was the one major country that didn't embroil itself in the endless wars the European people were so used to.

How Times Change

In the 1880s, people all over the world looked to America for inspiration. Its very existence was proof that it was possible to have a relatively free and peaceful country. No income tax, no foreign wars, no welfare state, no intrusions on civil liberties.

Of course, that's no longer the case. We now have all those things — and more. And, worse yet, most Americans have come to accept them as necessary evils. Government schools make no attempt to show children that it wasn't always this way — that it doesn't have to be this way.

Liberty Alone

When the Statue arrived in the U.S., Americans donated the money — again, voluntarily — to build the pedestal and assemble the Statue on Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor. The great monument isn't called the Statue of the World's Superpower, or the Statue of National Greatness, or the Statue of the World's Policeman. Because individual liberty was America's one possession so prized by others, the monument was named the Statue of Liberty.

It is an impressive sight. Notice that Lady Liberty faces outward — toward the world, not toward America. With her torch held high, she is reaching out to the world as the symbol of liberty — bringing light and inspiration to people everywhere.

The Statue's Message

At the time of her creation, she was saying:

Whoever you are, wherever you are, if you can just get to America, you can be free. No matter what your station where you are now, you'll be equal before the law here.

No one will ask for your papers.

No one will fasten a number on you.

No one will extort a percentage of your income as the price of earning a living.

You'll be free to pursue the life you've always dreamed of.

Emma Lazarus summed it up in those lovely words that are inscribed on the base of the Statue:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these — the homeless, tempest-tossed — to me;
I lift my lamp beside the Golden Door.

That is the America we once had — the beacon of liberty, providing light and hope and inspiration to the entire world — the America we have forsaken for a mess of tasteless pottage.

That is the America we should have.

And I am determined that it is the America we will someday have again.

'If you aren't guilty, what are you afraid of?'
by Harry Browne

November 28, 2002

The Homeland Security bill is now law – following in the footsteps of all the new government intrusions of the past 14 months. And as concerns are raised about the new powers of the government, we continue to hear the familiar refrain, "If you aren't guilty, you have nothing to fear. These restrictions are necessary to catch terrorists, but they won't hurt innocent people."

Sure.

The well-known phrase, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you," could easily be reworded to read, "I'm from Congress and this program will turn out exactly as we promise it will."

Government has failed to educate our children properly, it has made a mess of our health-care system, it can't balance its budget, it can't keep its spending in line, it can't keep drugs out of its own prisons – but we're assured that it will run a squeaky-clean homeland security program.

It's bad enough that government wastes so much of our money, but it's even worse that almost anyone could wind up in prison – even someone who has committed no act of violence against anyone else. Look at the hundreds of thousands of pot-smokers who took seriously the statement that "a woman [or man] has a right to control his own body."

The guilty and the innocent

Why should we think the so-called War on Terrorism will be conducted with more regard for individual rights than anything the government has done up to now?

And yet, no matter how bad the government's record, whenever Congress passes a new piece of draconian legislation, we're assured that only the guilty will be hurt by these laws.

If only that were so. The truth is that innocence is no protection against government agencies that have the power to do what they think best – or against a government agent hoping for promotion and willing to do whatever he has to do in order to get it.

In fact, it is almost always the innocent – not the guilty – who suffer most from government's intrusions.

- Tell the most unprejudiced businessman he has nothing to fear from the piles of forms he must file to prove he doesn't discriminate.
- Tell a homeowner he has nothing to fear when his property is seized by the government in a mistaken – or contrived – drug raid.
- Tell a taxpayer he has nothing to fear when the IRS drags him into a "taxpayer compliance" audit that eats up a week of his life, costs him thousands of dollars in accounting fees, and threatens him with unbearable penalties.

Being innocent doesn't allow you to ignore the government's demands for reports – or to say "No, thanks" when a government agent wants to search your records, your place of business, or your home – or to refuse to observe regulations that were aimed at the guilty, not you.

How laws go wrong

How many times have we seen the following pattern?

The press and politicians demand that something be done about violent crime, terrorist acts, drug dealing, gun deaths, tax evasion, or whatever is the Urgent Concern Of The Month.

A tough new take-no-prisoners law or policy is put into place.

The guilty make it their business to understand whatever new policy might affect them – and they take steps to sidestep the inspections and background checks, and to keep their property out of reach of asset forfeiture laws. The innocent know little about such laws – having been told they have nothing to fear – and are surprised and helpless when some zealous law-enforcement agency, looking to pad its arrest and prosecution records, moves in on them.

After the dust settles, the initial "problem" continues unabated, because the guilty have slipped through the net. But the innocent are left burdened with new chores, expenses, and dangers. If they're lucky, they suffer only from having more reports to file, less privacy, reduced access to products and services, higher costs, heavier taxes, and a new set of penalties for those who shirk their duty to fight in the War On _____ (fill in the blank). But those who aren't so lucky may wind up in prison – as have thousands of non-drug-using individuals who were convicted on drug charges.

Needless to say, the ineffectual law is never repealed.

When government force is used to solve social problems, we all suffer and nothing good is ever achieved. But coercion is wondrously effective at harming the innocent. All our lives are diminished.

Even worse, every year, a few million innocent people suffer special burdens – greater than those the government places on all of us. The dismantling of the Bill of Rights allows the government to disrupt their lives, confiscate their property, or even kill them – even though they've committed no crimes.

I hope you never become one of them. But no one can guarantee that.

What We Can Learn From World War II by Harry Browne

November 14, 2002

World War II is supposedly the one "just" war America has fought. Even critics of the Vietnam War or the so-called War on Terrorism feel obliged to say that World War II was necessary.

And that war provided a justification for all sorts of military adventures afterward. In fact, whenever I write that Americans shouldn't be bombing Iraq or Serbia or Afghanistan or some other hapless Third World country, I get e-mails from critics saying such things as:

- "You would have turned the other cheek after Pearl Harbor."
- "Munich showed you have to stop a dictator before he's too strong to resist."
- "If you'd been in charge in the 1940s, we'd all be speaking Japanese or German today."

World War II has always been of great interest to me. I've known for decades that it was just one more war the politicians suckered us into. But I still learned a great deal from reading Richard Maybury's new book "World War II: The Rest of the Story."

Maybury provides no startling new evidence. But he sifts through the known facts – which nearly all historians agree on – and assembles the evidence to show irrefutably that:

- The U.S. could have stayed out of the war, because Hitler had no chance of conquering England – let alone America. (His doom was sealed the moment his troops invaded Russia in August 1941.)
- The Pearl Harbor attack was neither a surprise nor "unprovoked." (The Japanese code had been broken 16 months before, and Roosevelt had bullied the Japanese in order to provoke a war. On Nov. 26, 1941, Secretary of War Stimson wrote in his diary, "The question was how we should maneuver them into firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves.")
- There was no military reason to drop atomic bombs on Japan. They were used as terrorist weapons – killing innocent people to influence other people. (Japan was already offering to surrender, their homeland was blockaded, and the Japanese couldn't have survived six months even without an invasion.)

There's much more, of course. But the main point is that America should never have intervened in the age-old quarrels of Europe and Asia. If our politicians had minded their own business, 292,131 Americans wouldn't have died – died thinking they were defending American freedoms, but actually sacrificing for the benefit of politicians.

The Roosevelt myth

Why did America get in the war?

Because Franklin Roosevelt thought it was to his personal advantage.

In 1939, most people considered the New Deal to be an abject failure. The unemployment rate was still at 17 percent, with no end in sight to the Depression.

Roosevelt still managed to be re-elected in 1940 because he had great personal charisma, and because he was running against a typical me-too Republican, Wendell Wilkie – a man with no solution for the economic crisis. Roosevelt insisted he would keep America neutral, proclaiming "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."

But in reality, Roosevelt saw getting into the war as a way to redeem his reputation and join the ranks of the "great" presidents – wartime leaders like Washington, Lincoln and Wilson.

Making the world logical again

Maybury writes in a lucid, easy-to-follow style. He explains how Hitler made impressive early victories in the war, but still never had a chance once he decided to invade Russia. His sources of information are the same available to anyone else, but many of his insights and conclusions are original and refreshing.

He ties what happened in World War II to what is happening today in the so-called War on Terrorism. In fact, he shows that today's crises are simply an extension of one century-long war.

Reading this book may help you see the world as a logical place again. It answers a question that might concern any lover of liberty: Why did a nation devoted to freedom and small government – blessed by being isolated from the age-old turmoils of the Old World – cross two oceans, sacrifice a quarter-million Americans, and become embroiled in everyone else's affairs?

The answer: It was done to satisfy the personal ambitions of politicians – not to save America from tyranny.

It's too much to expect tens of millions of Americans to understand that our wars are just a political racket – not when their historical knowledge consists of the one-liners fed to them in government schools. But it is important that you understand – if you hope to be effective in restoring liberty to America.

If you want to know more about World War II, I urge you to read "World War II: The Rest of the Story," which you can obtain at Maybury's website.

I Want My Country Back **by Harry Browne**

December 5, 2002

Thoughts on the American empire ...

Is it an empire?

Whenever I say that America has become an empire, someone is sure to say I'm being ridiculous.

But what do you call a government that has tried (usually successfully) to force "regime changes" in Panama, Grenada, South Vietnam, Cuba, Guatemala, Chile, Rhodesia, South Africa, Iraq (in 1963), the Philippines, Serbia, Afghanistan (twice), Iran and several other countries that don't immediately come to mind?

What do you call a government that has troops stationed in a hundred countries around the world?

What do you call a government whose leader says everyone must play by his rules or risk being attacked?

America the protector?

But then someone is sure to instruct me that "American troops are stationed abroad because those countries asked for them."

Yes, people in foreign countries want American troops there – just about as much as the Poles enjoyed having Soviet troops in Poland.

American troops are in those countries only because the governments of those countries were bribed with your money to allow American troops in.

How would you feel if there were Chinese troops wandering around your city?

Or even German troops?

So how do you think Germans feel about seeing American troops walking their streets – or Korean or Japanese citizens watching American soldiers commit murders and rapes in their countries without facing local prosecution?

World government

America rules the world – by force.

And that's ironic. Because for as long as I can remember, conservatives have been railing against the threat of world government.

But now we actually have a form of world government – a government run by George Bush and enforced by the American military – and most conservatives are all for it.

Our government decides what rules Iraq must live by, and if Iraq breaks those rules it can be bombed or invaded.

Our government decides which governments are legitimate and which must be replaced, which dictatorships are evil and which are "our partners in the War on Terrorism."

North Korea

Some people can't understand why our government is getting ready to attack Iraq, but is ignoring North Korea – which admits to having nuclear weapons and the ability to fire them at Alaska.

The difference between the two countries is simple: North Korea has the means to hurt us, Iraq doesn't.

In the past 50 years, our government has attacked many countries – Panama, Grenada, the Sudan, Afghanistan (twice), Cuba, Vietnam, Iraq and others. But it has never attacked a country that had the capability to hurt America.

Russia, China, Pakistan, India, North Korea, Israel – all have nuclear weapons. So we participate in "constructive engagement" with those countries.

But Iraq? No threat to us, so we can bomb it and invade it with impunity.

Fighting terrorism

After 9-11, some people said we should try to find the people responsible, capture them and prosecute them. They were largely laughed at as being unrealistic. Only by bombing and devastating Afghanistan could we be sure to get Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida. And our president assured us that they would be brought to justice.

Now it's a year later. Osama bin Laden hasn't been captured or killed. Al-Qaida is alive and well. So is anyone concerned?

Of course not. Our attention is directed to Iraq – even though there's no public evidence that Iraq has anything to do with al-Qaida – and a lot of evidence that they're enemies of each other. Suddenly, Osama bin Laden is no longer important.

This doesn't make sense if you think the object is to end terrorism. But it makes perfect sense if the object is to demonstrate the empire's power to intimidate.

Why do they hate us?

For the past year, we've been hearing over and over that the Muslims and others around the world hate us because of our freedoms and our prosperity.

If that's true, the terrorists have won – because we're rapidly giving up our freedoms, and the loss of those freedoms is destroying our ability to prosper.

But, actually, it is only Americans who say that our freedoms and prosperity are the reason foreigners hate us. If you ask the foreigners, they make it clear that it's America's bullying foreign policy they detest.

Liberty and security

We're also told that we must give up some liberty for the sake of security. But that's not true.

For most of our history, Americans enjoyed both liberty and security from foreign threats.

But, as Tim O'Brien has pointed out, while it's possible to have both liberty and security, you can't have an empire as well. Once the American government decided to run the world, Americans were forced to choose between liberty and security – because you can't have all three. Once you become an empire, either liberty or security must go.

Most likely, however, we will lose both liberty and security. We're losing our liberties, but innocent Americans will continue to be hurt by terrorists because of what our government is doing overseas.

Hate America?

Whenever I write on these subjects, I invariably get e-mails accusing me of hating America or "blaming America first."

Quite the contrary. I love America, and I can't stand quietly by while the land of peace and liberty is being destroyed.

I love the America of the Constitution and limited government – not the America of the Patriot Act and the Orwellian Department of Homeland Security.

I love the America that Washington and Jefferson said should be far removed from all the age-old quarrels of Europe and Asia, while trading benevolently with people all over the world – not the America that has troops in a hundred countries while our own government prohibits us from peaceful trading with dozens of countries.

In short, I want my country back.

A Little History Can Be a Dangerous Thing **by Harry Browne**

February 12, 2003

George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Perhaps a corollary of that axiom should be: Those who know only historical slogans should quit using them to support their causes.

For example, amateur historians remind us impatiently that the reason Iraq must disarm (which no one else is doing) is that Hussein promised to disarm at the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

Of course, they neglect to tell us that the "promise" was made at the point of a gun. You don't "freely" give your money to a mugger when he says, "Your money or your life." Promises and actions that are coerced are morally meaningless.

But citing Hussein's promise isn't the only way history is misused.

History is invoked to justify the U.S. starting a war against a foreign country (Iraq in 1991, Serbia in 1999, and now Iraq again) because "history tells us" we have to stop the latest incarnation of Adolf Hitler before he proceeds to conquer the entire world. As though Serbia or Iraq could be compared to the power of Hitler's Germany.

And the history-sloganeers remind us over and over that millions of lives would have been saved if only the Allies had stopped Hitler at Munich.

A historical slogan can be a wonderful thing. It allows you to reduce all the complexities created by billions of people to a simple equation of Good vs. Evil, white & black, us & them.

The Facts

However, the world didn't begin in 1938. And amateur historians apparently have never bothered to go beyond their high-school history lessons to discover what made it possible

for Hitler to threaten Europe in 1938. And the background throws a completely different light on the relevance of 1938 to today.

In 1914 Austria dominated Europe the way the U.S. dominates the world today. The Austrian Empire included what is now Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, as well as parts of Italy and Romania.

Many Serbs thought Bosnia should be part of Serbia instead of Austria. When the Austrian Emperor's heir apparent, Archduke Ferdinand, visited Bosnia, he was murdered by a Bosnian Serb protesting Austrian domination.

This act sucked almost all the countries of Europe into the bloody first World War. Austria declared war on Serbia. And because of mutual defense treaties, Britain, France, Belgium, Romania, Greece, Portugal, Montenegro, Russia, and even Japan went to war on behalf of Serbia. On the other side, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, and Turkey supported Austria.

Eventually, 15 million soldiers and civilians would be killed and at least 20 million wounded, all because one person had been murdered — a fitting testament to the irrationality of war.

Stalemate

The war probably could have ended in 1917. Both sides were devastated and seeking an armistice. But America, under no threat of attack by the Germans or Austrians, entered the war that year — allowing the Allies to step up the war and forcing Germany to surrender in 1918.

The Allies imposed oppressive terms on the Germans — who, by a complicated argument, were blamed for the entire war. Important parts of Germany were confiscated and given to Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France. Germany was stripped of its colonies. And the Allies forced the Germans to assume the cost of the entire war — a price they could never hope to pay.

To the victors go the spoils, indeed!

Enter Hitler

All that most Americans know of 1920s Germany is the decadence they've seen in *Cabaret* and other movies. But here was an intellectual country devastated by losing the resources to support itself, made to pay horrendous reparations, and suffering from a runaway inflation that caused a loaf of bread to cost billions of marks.

If we realize what the Germans were forced to go through, we can begin to understand how one of the most culturally advanced countries of the world — the home of Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, and Wagner — could have fallen for a thug like Hitler.

Hitler would have been laughed out of Germany in 1910. But in 1933 he seemed to be the only person able to end the reparations, recapture the stolen territory, reunite families, and restore Germany's glory. The Germans could see he was a brutal man, but they were told you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.

(Unfortunately, everyone assumes it will be someone else's eggs that will be broken, and no one notices that the omelet never materializes.)

Conclusions

So perhaps those who love to recite historical slogans could give some thought to a few lessons from history that are relevant to today's situation and could help us understand something about our own future . . .

If U.S. politicians had minded their own business in 1917, instead of plunging America into a war that didn't threaten us, an armistice would have occurred, and the existing governments in Russia and Germany most likely would have remained in power — meaning no Soviet Union and no Hitler. But do-gooders always believe they know what's best for the world — and they claim that some simple act of force will settle matters once and for all. It never does.

If the U.S. had stayed out of World War I, most likely there would have been no World War II, although it's entirely possible that other wars — more localized — would have occurred. World War II was the direct result of World War I — and, more specifically, of the U.S. interfering in World War I.

If the Allies hadn't imposed draconian peace terms on Germany in 1918, there probably would have been no Hitler to threaten anyone. Germany would have resumed its role as an intellectual and cultural center in Europe. (American diplomats learned their lesson and eased their demands somewhat at the end of World War II.)

The Allies forced the Germans to promise things that could never be delivered. And using force to exact promises from someone like Saddam Hussein creates about as much security as ordering your cat to guard your home. If the demands are unnatural (as expecting a country in the Middle East to disarm certainly is), you can expect a backlash.

There always will be thugs like Hitler, Osama Bin Laden, or Saddam Hussein in the world. But those thugs aren't dangerous to us until *we* create real grievances that cause millions of people to support the thugs with money, networking, and connections that allow the thugs to threaten us.

There's a Lot More

We haven't even touched on some other salient facts of history that bear on today's situation — such as the attitude of Muslims in the Middle East toward foreigners who have invaded and subjugated Arabs over the centuries. Nor have we looked into the way the British and French in the mid-1900s drew unnatural boundaries in the Middle East that were bound to lead to turmoil.

And when amateur historians remind us that Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 (as though that were an excuse for bullying Iraq forever) probably not one of them could tell you *why* Iraq invaded Kuwait. Are they aware of the oil disputes, the fact that Kuwait has more in common with Iraq proper than the northern Iraqi Kurds do, or that Kuwait not too long ago was prepared to become part of Iraq? Are they aware that the American ambassador to Iraq gave her blessing to an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait just a few days before it occurred?

Nor have we touched on another important part of history — the assertions made by our government before and during the Gulf War, assertions that later proved to be false. There were no Iraqi troops massed on the Saudi border, no Iraqi atrocities in Kuwaiti hospitals. The “smart-bombs” General Schwarzkopf talked about so proudly in his TV briefings were hardly ever used in the war — and when they *were* used, they missed their targets more often than not. And the number of innocent Iraqi civilians was revised upward several times after the war.

Of course, all that is ancient history. So why dredge it up today?

Because the men who told the lies in 1991 — Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Colin Powell — are the same men providing the “evidence” that we must go to war again.

When Colin Powell says he has solid evidence for the claims he made at the UN, we have to remember that this is what he and his associates said before the Gulf War.

History is more than slogans.

- It is facts backed up by evidence you can verify;

- It is human nature being relived over and over;
- It is continual confirmation that we must treat our own government with great skepticism;
- It is an admonition that initiating force never produces the results promised for it.

And if we ignore history and listen to the slogans instead, it will be you and I who will suffer the consequences.

When will we learn?

Bring Back America
by Harry Browne

March 13, 2003

You and I are fortunate that we weren't born and raised in Iraq — or Syria or Korea or Zimbabwe or Indonesia.

Because we're Americans, we don't live in a police state, as so many billions of people in the world do.

Of course, our own government has made it clear that it can — and will — monitor our emails, tap our phones, dig into our bank accounts, and imprison us indefinitely without trial or even access to an attorney. But then, unlike the police states, our government does these things only for good purposes — never to hide its mistakes, to intimidate dissenters, or to force us to trust its good intentions — as happens in police states.

Because we are Americans, we have a free press — not the controlled press that exists in Iraq and other despotic countries.

Of course, our President holds scripted news conferences — during which the questions and questioners have been chosen in advance. But that's merely because he has a penchant for organization, not to control what the press reports — the way it's done in despotic countries.

It's true that over the past year we've been subjected to an unrelenting drumbeat of accusations against Saddam Hussein — all emanating from our government. This has been picked up by the press. Radio and TV newscasts (and even commercials for the newscasts) replay over and over statements from George Bush and Colin Powell about the evils of Saddam Hussein — as though we were living in the land of 1984 where citizens are bombarded with Big Brother's pronouncements from all sides.

And it's true that the obsession with Saddam Hussein has become so pervasive that polls by ABC, CNN, CBS, the Los Angeles Times, and Knight all show that a majority of

Americans assume the World Trade Center attackers were Iraqis. (I wonder how they got that idea.) I guess it's no surprise that a majority supports the President's desire to attack a country that hasn't attacked us — or even threatened to do so.

But, unlike in Iraq, this propaganda has been disseminated as a replacement for the presentation of evidence that the President feels is too sensitive for us to see. So, unlike in Iraq, government brain-washing is done for our own security.

What I Want

If you'll forgive my feeble attempts at irony, I hope you'll at least see my point: in the guise of supposedly protecting our freedom, our government has already confiscated far too much of it.

"But what would you do about Iraq? Would you trust a known liar like Saddam Hussein? How would you get Hussein to disarm?"

I wouldn't even try — anymore than I'd try to disarm Israel or China or Pakistan or India or Korea. Not one of those countries, including Iraq, has tried to attack us.

America's entry into World War I "to make the world safe for democracy" caused the war to last an extra year, allowed the communists to come to power in Russia, allowed Adolf Hitler to come to power in Germany, and laid the groundwork for World War II.

Our government's attempts to fight communism or spread democracy around the world have caused millions of innocent people to die in Iran, Indonesia, Iraq, Panama, Guatemala, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Grenada, Cambodia, and many other countries. All the good intentions in the world are little comfort to the people buried prematurely all over the globe.

What I want is for our government:

- To quit pretending it knows what's best for other countries.
- To quit inciting terrorists by backing coups and dictatorial regimes.
- To quit generating hostility by bribing foreign governments to allow American troops to be stationed in a hundred countries.
- To quit giving our money to foreign countries — no matter whose side they're on.

Restoring the Real America

More than anything else, I want my America back:

- The America in which politicians were limited to just what's authorized in the Constitution.
- The America in which the government had no power to monitor your private life.
- The America in which the government was so small, there was no need for an income tax and every dollar you earned was yours — to put your child in a private school, maintain a much higher standard of living, or support your favorite church or charity in a much better way than you can today.
- The America where people like George W. Bush, Hillary Clinton, Trent Lott, and Teddy Kennedy couldn't impose their ideas on us — where each American was free to work out his own destiny.
- The America that was once such a symbol of peace and freedom — providing light and hope and inspiration to the entire world — that the French people (not their government) voluntarily donated money to build the Statue of Liberty in gratitude.
- The America in which each of us could live in peace and security because America was no threat to any other country.

That was the real America. What we have today is merely a carbon-copy of every smug government that presumed to rule the world — and eventually caused people like you and me to pay for its arrogance.

"What Can I Do to Stop the War?"
by Harry Browne

February 13, 2003

There's no question that George Bush has been determined to go to war with Iraq for at least two years. Insider David Frum, wrote in his book "The Right Man" that at the time of his inauguration in January 2001, Bush's only firm policy objective was "to dig Saddam Hussein out of power in Iraq."

Since he's the President, he will most likely find a way to fulfill his desires — no matter how many people oppose him, here or overseas.

And once the war is underway, a good deal of the anti-war movement will collapse — as it always does when America goes to war.

So what point is there in trying to stop the war?

Can you stop it by yourself? Of course not.

Can you and I together stop the war? Of course not.

Can you and I and thousands of other people stop the war? Perhaps, but we don't control thousands of other people. Each of us controls only himself.

So why should we continue struggling?

Why Delay Is Helpful

I believe there's good reason to do so.

The opposition to the war has helped keep Bush on the defensive. Enough troops have been in place and enough missiles armed that the war could have started a month or more ago. And every day's delay seems to bring greater opposition, as well as new revelations

of the flaws and misrepresentations in the administration's arguments. More and more people are coming to believe that it makes no sense to risk the lives of our young people and risk the safety of our cities by going to war against a country that can't hurt us. George Bush's approval rating and public enthusiasm for his foreign policy have been slipping steadily. He's probably too arrogant to let that stop him, but the erosion of support confirms that the longer we can delay the start of the war, the more people will oppose it.

Why We Fight

Perhaps neither you nor I can single-handedly create the tidal wave of opposition necessary to stop George Bush from continuing on his obsessive course.

But every person we persuade that war should always be the last resort, rather than the first, is one more person no longer reciting the trite slogans of war, one more person who understands that our Keystone Kops can't make the Middle East safe for democracy, one more person who understands that giving up our liberty for a government-promised security will mean we have neither liberty nor security.

And the next time a President wants to drag us into a dangerous war, that one more person will be on our side from the beginning. And he'll be pointing out the dangers to his friends and associates.

And among all the people we talk to, there may be someone who does have the power, the ability, and the influence to create that tidal wave of opposition that will force the politicians to quit putting us at risk.

Having lived with the Cold War from the time I was 12 years old, I came to assume it would last for the rest of my life. I was happily amazed when the communist Hungarian government opened its border to allow vacationing East Germans to flee into Austria. A few weeks later the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, and a year later the Soviet Union disintegrated.

Miracles do happen.

I don't know that a miracle will happen in the present situation, but I know that it can happen. And so it's important to take every opportunity to allow it to happen.

What You Can Do

Your first responsibility is to yourself and your family. So I don't suggest that you put your job at risk or create problems for your family by speaking out in situations that could cause trouble for you.

But, whether or not you feel free to speak out, there's a great deal you can do. Here are just a few examples.

You can preserve your self-respect by never agreeing with jingoistic statements. And if you feel free to do so, try saying what you believe, rather than what you think people expect you to say. You might discover that other people have similar beliefs but have been afraid to reveal them. They might thank you for encouraging them to say what they really believe.

You can email your friends, giving them links to your favorite websites that are opposing the war. Let the websites speak for you.

You can go to TruthAboutWar.com, a new website and ad campaign that's currently running anti-war radio spots in major cities. The website provides evidence backing up the claims in its ads — rebutting the common reasons given for attacking Iraq. At the website, you can listen to the ads or read the scripts. While you're there, consider making a tax-deductible donation to expand the reach of those ads.

I can't promise you we'll stop this war. But we can help keep the administration on the defensive — perhaps causing the hawks to cut short their aggression before the worst happens.

And you may help create enough new skeptics to stop the next war — whether that was meant to be against Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Colombia, or Lower Slobovia.

More than anything else, you just may somehow reach those people who can do something to stop this war.

Support Our Boys in Uniform

by Harry Browne

March 18, 2003

Now that George Bush has quit pretending to weigh the pros and cons of war, and has issued an unacceptable ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, we can expect the war to begin before the week is out.

Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman voiced the slogans of many when he, "It's time to come together to support our great American men and women in uniform and their commander-in-chief." And Senator Bob Graham (who must have the same speech-writer) pronounced, "At a time like this, all Americans must come together to support our commander-in-chief and our men and women in uniform."

I, too, support our boys in uniform — but in a different way. I don't want to see a single one of them die in a useless war that will leave the world no better than before, and that will probably make America much less safe — rather than more secure.

As well, the Iraqi people have been starved and hurt and deprived enough. George Bush likes to talk about how Saddam Hussein has stalled for twelve years. But during those twelve years, three American Presidents have stalled on ending the cruel and brutal sanctions that have left Iraqis without the food, medicine, and income they need to live even at third-world levels. Everytime Hussein has complied with a demand from an American President, the Americans have upped the ante or called the compliance a "cynical ploy."

Now our "boys" are going to go over there to kill thousands of those poor Iraqis. They will kill with bombs or missiles or mortars or rifles. However they do it, they will leave a lot of dead bodies on the ground when they come home.

Long-Term Effects

And when they come home, they will have learned that life is cheap, that collateral damage is inevitable, that killing people that had nothing against you is sometimes necessary. Our boys will never be the same again. Is this how we want our children to turn out?

Some of them won't even come home, since collateral damage works both ways.

Of those who do come home, some will suffer for years — perhaps for the rest of their lives — from guilt, or with unexplained symptoms arising from the firing of weapons armed with depleted uranium. Is this what you want for your children.

If your child is one of the casualties, what will you think ten years from now — when Iraq is no more a democratic, friendly nation than it is now? What will you think when it becomes obvious that this wasn't a war against Saddam Hussein, it was a war against reason — the first in a series of empire-building adventures against the likes of Iran, Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and who-knows-who-else?

Is this why you had children — to send them off to kill and to risk their lives in a meaningless war for the benefit of a handful of politicians?

I'm sorry Senator Lieberman and Senator Graham, but I not only think you're mealy-mouthed, I think you're disgraceful. If the country really should "come together" now, it should be united against the idea of attacking a virtually defenseless nation on the unverified say-so of a known liar.

To "come together" to support insanity is not patriotic, it is not reason, it is not moral. It simply makes you as guilty as the people perpetrating this war.

If you really want to support our boys over there, do the honorable thing:

Demand that they be brought home now.

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Notice

Due to conflicts of interest, we've had to cancel:

Operation American Freedom

Our Apologies

We apologize that some of our previous epics ended tragically.

Operation Vietnamese Freedom didn't live up to its advance billing.

Operation Panamanian Freedom was scripted to end Panama as a drug conduit, but instead destroyed the Panamanian military — leaving no way to stop the flow of drugs.

Operation Iraqi Freedom: the Prequel was intended to produce an Iraqi uprising and an end to the evil demon, but we changed the script at the last moment.

Operation Kosovo Freedom ended the ethnic cleansing of Albanians, but mistakenly replaced it with the ethnic cleansing of Serbs.

Operation Afghan Freedom enabled the Taliban to come to power.

Operation Afghan Freedom II produced a lot of Rock & Roll and recycled, but it also left the country in the hands of feuding warlords and a U.S.-imposed viceroy who fears for his life.

But we promise that you'll love *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Unlike the last few productions, we guarantee to kill *all* the evil-doers — and even more!

**. . . Harry Browne
March 31, 2003**

[Note: All countries mentioned in the Coming Attractions have been accused by the U.S. government of terrorist connections or are currently designated by Freedom House as "Not free." Most of these governments engage in torture or other human-rights abuses. And you aren't pro-torture, are you?]

Libertarians & War by Harry Browne

May 3, 2003

I've been surprised by the number of libertarians who have supported the war against Iraq.

The two principal arguments I've heard from libertarian war-supporters are:

Saddam Hussein is a threat to the U.S. We must remove him from power before he attacks us or gives weapons of mass destruction to terrorists.

We libertarians should be the first to support the liberation of the Iraqi people from a cruel dictator.

The Threat

With regard to the first argument, supporting a politician's pre-emptive attack violates virtually every principle underlying libertarian thought — the simple truths that are taught in Libertarianism 101.

For example . . .

1. Non-aggression: Most libertarians believe you shouldn't initiate force against someone who has never used force against you. Force is to be used only in self-defense — not used just because you don't happen to like someone, or because someone doesn't like you, or because he *might* become dangerous in the future, or because some third party has attacked you and you want to prove you're not a wimp. The same principles must apply to our nation — that it shouldn't use force against a nation that hasn't attacked us.

2. Credibility of Politicians: The idea that Hussein posed a substantial threat to America is based entirely on claims made by the Bush administration. When did libertarians start believing anything politicians say? Politicians routinely lie about fictitious budget surpluses, "budget cuts," drug matters, crime statistics, and almost anything else. Remember the old joke?:

"How can you tell when a politician is lying?"

"His lips move."

The Bush administration has already been caught in numerous falsehoods concerning Iraq:

- claiming Iraq was consorting with Al-Qaeda (refuted by the),

- saying Iraq was acquiring aluminum tubes to make nuclear bombs (refuted by scientists and UN inspectors),
- producing satellite photos of alleged chemical-weapons sites (that on-the-spot investigations proved to have no chemical),
- citing mobile chemical-weapons labs (that turned out to have no chemical weapons),
- giving worthless leads to UN weapons inspectors,
- claiming that Iraq was seeking enriched uranium (citing documents that turned out to be crude forgeries),
- referring to a British dossier as evidence (a dossier that turned out to have been plagiarized from a 12-year-old thesis written by a college student),

. . . and much more.

Even if none of these falsehoods had come to light, libertarians should always be skeptical of any claims made by politicians.

3. Government doesn't work: The federal government has devastated what was once the best health-care system in history, it is trashing our children's schools, its Drug War has pulverized the inner cities, it has left chaos in its wake in Afghanistan. In fact, you'd be hard put to think of a single government program that fulfilled the rosy promises made for it.

So why would you think the promises of Iraqi freedom and democracy will be fulfilled? This is the same government that's messed up everything else. Just because "national defense" is Constitutionally authorized doesn't mean the government will handle it effectively.

The Defense Department is nothing more than the Post Office in fatigues.

And beating up a third-world country after disarming it isn't something any self-respecting country should put on its résumé.

4. Power will be abused: The President has been given tens of billions of dollars to spend on Iraq as he chooses. Do you assume he'll use it wisely, without a hint of corruption?

The FBI and other law-enforcement agencies have been given enormous new powers to jail people without warrant and hold them without trial or legal counsel. Do you assume they will employ these powers only against America's enemies?

Do you really want to give government one more excuse to expand its size, its power, and its intrusions into your life?

5. Government programs never stand still: Every other government program has turned out to be far more expensive, far more intrusive, and extend into far more areas than proposed originally. Why should this war prove to be an exception?

Do you really think the regime-changers — after tasting the blood of innocents and the praise of the media and the citizenry — will go back to bickering about farm subsidies and school-lunch programs?

Or will they look for more "monsters to destroy" (as John Quincy Adams put it)?

6. Government is politics: Whenever you turn anything over to the government, it ceases to be a financial, medical, commercial, educational, or human-rights matter, and becomes a *political* issue — to be decided by whoever has the most political influence. And that will never be you or I.

Why should military matters be any different? Should we be surprised that companies like Bechtel and Halliburton have already received hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts to rebuild Iraq without competitive bidding?

Did you really think this war would be fought with no regard for political gain or abuse?

7. You don't control the government: You can look at the previous six items and say you would have handled some things differently. But who asked you?

No one.

And no one ever will. You don't make the decisions.

The politicians use your support as endorsements for them to fulfill *their* objectives, not yours — in *their* way, not yours.

That's true for health care, education, regulation — and it's true for military matters.

In Sum . . .

Government is force, and libertarians distrust force.

They know it will be abused, they know force won't produce the results promised for it, they know politicians will lie about the exercise of force, they know force will eventually be uncontrollable, they know that power is inevitably abused, and they know that no government program achieves its purpose and then goes quietly into the night.

On every count of libertarian principles, we should demand that the use of force against foreign countries be reserved for response to direct attacks — not to be used for "regime change," not for "democracy-building," not for pre-emptive attacks, not for demonstrations of strength.

Freeing People

The second argument offered by libertarians is that we should do anything we can to free other people from a brutal dictator.

I won't even deal with the fact that most of our knowledge of Hussein's brutality emanates from the U.S. government — hardly the place a libertarian would look for unbiased, authoritative information about *anything*.

I'll also ignore the point that, while condemning Hussein's brutal dictatorship, the U.S. government is aiding dictatorships in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Pakistan, and many other countries. We shouldn't be surprised if we're told someday that we must go to war against *those* dictatorships, to free the people our tax dollars are helping to enslave today.

Let's deal instead only with the idea that we have a responsibility to free people in other countries.

Is it *your* responsibility to enter someone's home and beat up the man you believe is abusing his wife?

Is it *your* responsibility to go into a dangerous section of your city and protect people from drug gangs that engage in drive-by shootings?

You might say the Drug War breeds those gangs and shootings, and thus you're working instead to end the Drug War itself — rather than trying to alleviate the symptoms of it.

Why then wouldn't you be working to end the causes of the profound anti-American sentiment that has swept the globe and provoked terrorist acts — rather than trying to alleviate the symptoms by supporting the attacking of Iraq?

Responsibility

The answer to the question "Is it your responsibility?" is simple: *that's for you to decide*.

Each of us must choose for himself what he feels responsible for. If you believe you have a duty to help those fighting for Iraqi freedom — perhaps even to go fight yourself — you should be free to make that choice, and no one should get in your way.

But what gives you the right to make that choice for others?

Why should you have the power or moral authority to decide which countries *I* must free, which countries warrant extracting money from me by force, which dictatorships warrant provoking terrorist attacks that put *my* life at risk?

And what libertarian would believe that George Bush should have that moral authority — plus the power to compel all of us to obey that authority?

You will face the consequences of your acts and I will face the consequences of mine. But George Bush won't face the consequences of *his* acts; you and I will. Is that the way it should be according to libertarian principles?

I think not.

And thus there is nothing George Bush can say that will make me believe I should put my faith in him to decide how many innocent Iraqis it's okay to kill, how many countries it's okay to attack and invade, how many Americans it's okay to put at risk, or how many libertarian principles it's okay to violate.

Is the World a Better Place with Hussein Gone?
by Harry Browne

August 8, 2003

Republican sycophants have been engaging in revisionist history to rewrite the assertions made by the Bush administration before the war.

Absolute proof that Hussein had dangerous weapons has morphed into "we know Hussein had a weapons program" (for which any idle wish to have a bomb qualifies). Irrefutable knowledge that Hussein and Al-Qaeda were Saturday night drinking buddies has been replaced with — well, just about anything will do.

But the *coup de grace* the Republicans fall back on, the #1 intimidation technique to be used on anyone who questions the good intentions of George W. Bush, the absolute-sure-fire-can't-miss-you're-toast-Buddy argument to put everything back in "perspective" is this:

You mean you don't think the world is a better place now that Hussein is no longer in power???

With that thrust, the most dedicated peacenik is guaranteed to melt and stammer, "Well, er, of course no one wants Hussein back but, er . . ."

But rather than duck the question, perhaps we should meet it head on:

Is the world a better place now that Hussein is gone?

Actually, I don't know. Yes, *George Bush* claims it is. But he's the guy who said in 2000 that he was compassionate, believed in limited government, and opposed nation-building. So, frankly, his word doesn't hold much weight with me these days.

Is Iraq a better place now that it no longer has much electricity, clean water, or food?

Is Iraq a better place now that tens of thousands of citizens are dead or from U.S. attacks?

Is Iraq a better place after 12 years of U.S.-enforced sanctions that generated starvation and disease?

Is America a better place now that over 100,000 of the nation's finest are in 110-degree heat — being picked off by attackers, one by one?

UnRevisionist History

Perhaps we should look at the past results of American attempts to create "better places."

Was Indonesia a better place after the U.S. helped bring Suharto to power — so that he could kill over 250,000 Indonesians and then another 200,000 in East?

Did the Middle East become a better place by the U.S. providing Saddam Hussein with weapons and intelligence during his war with Iran?

Is Afghanistan a better place nearly two years after the Afghan war — with electricity still not reestablished in many parts of the country, the war lords each other, and civil war providing an invitation for the Taliban to come back?

Is Kosovo a better place after the U.S. drove the Serbs out and left the province to the Albanians to "ethnically cleanse" the province?

Is the world a better place with one man in Washington having the power to decide who will live and who will die anywhere in the world?

What do *you* think?

Obviously, it will be several years before anyone can know with certainty whether the world is a better place for what the U.S. has done in Iraq. And anyone who claims to know now is just whistling in the dark.

Rulers

In the history of the world, there have been a few thousand rulers who had the kind of power George Bush has today — the ability to jail people without trial or accountability, the license to spy on every citizen, the power to conquer other countries.

Quick quiz: Name a ruler who had this much power but didn't become an absolute tyrant?

(*Hint:* There were very, very few.)

Perhaps the real question should be:

Is the world a better place with George Bush having so much power?

And that question I can answer with certainty: *no*. He has caused Americans to become afraid of the rest of the world, and the rest of the world to become afraid of America.

Next Year

And that leads us to the liberty-lover's dilemma.

Will the world be a better place if George Bush is voted out of office next year?

That's not so easy to answer.

It will be tempting for us to want anyone but Bush to be in the White House. And that encourages voting for whoever the Democratic candidate is — Al Gore, Howard Dean, Dick Gephardt, John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, whoever.

The Democratic candidate may even pledge never to do what George Bush just did — take the country into an undeclared and unprovoked war. The candidate may promise faithfully that he'll never meddle in the affairs of foreign countries.

But don't forget that George Bush as much as promised the same things when *he* was running for President.

The problem isn't the abuse of power. As Michael Cloud has pointed out, *the problem is the power to abuse*. Whoever gets the power is almost certain to abuse it.

A lot of people voted for George Bush because they couldn't stand Al Gore, and now regret that they did.

Most likely, the same thing will happen again next year — when many people will vote reluctantly for the Democrat and later regret it when he, too, becomes enamored with his role as ruler of the world — while simultaneously pushing for universal health care, increased federal control of schools, and the like.

The Choices

To me, there are only two valid choices next year — and neither of them spells Republican or Democrat.

Choice #1: Vote Libertarian. It's the only vote you can cast that will never be misinterpreted as an endorsement of things you wouldn't want in a million years.

Choice #2: Don't vote at all. This is a perfectly legitimate option. It's a way of saying you don't like what either major party is doing. Abstaining won't of itself make the world a better place, but neither would voting for a Democrat or a Republican.

And either voting Libertarian or not voting at all provides the fringe benefit of being able to live with yourself ever after.

The most important choice you can make is to take care of yourself and your family. That's an area where you actually do have some control — a place where you can make a real difference.

Better Place?

Is the world a better place with Hussein gone?

I don't know. But I do know that I'm making *my* world a better place by earning a living trying to improve the lives of the people with whom I associate.

I wish George Bush and the Republican intimidators could say the same.

What Liberals Can Learn from the War by Harry Browne

October 11, 2003

War involves the use of force to impose one's way upon others. It brings with it collateral damages that hurt the innocent as much or more than the guilty. . . .

- Innocent people die, are maimed, lose their property, or lose their loved ones.
- Innocent Americans are deprived of freedoms supposedly guaranteed in the Bill of Rights — in the name of some goal, such as "world peace" or "national security," that is never reached.
- Innocent people are taxed to pay for an enterprise that they may oppose intensely, but that satisfies the desires of politicians.
- Innocent Americans lose the right to make their own choices.

Liberals naturally oppose these oppressions — and speak out against them.

We can easily see similar harmful effects of using force in some other government programs — such as the insane War on Drugs:

- Innocent people die, are maimed, or lose their loved ones in drug raids — or because of the street violence that comes from taking the drug business away from pharmaceutical companies and putting it in the hands of criminal gangs.
- Innocent Americans are deprived of freedoms supposedly guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. People who don't deal in drugs still have their bank accounts and other property searched, and their assets are vulnerable to forfeiture with no constitutional safeguards — in the name of some goal, such as "a drug-free America," that is never reached.
- Innocent people are taxed to pay for a program they may oppose intensely, but that satisfies the desires of politicians.
- Americans lose the right to make their own choices about their own lives.

Force Is the Defining Factor

But liberals need to understand that such collateral damages exist in *all* government programs, because force is the defining factor in *every* government program.

People are forced to do what they don't want to do, or are forcibly prevented from doing what they *do* want to do, or are forced to pay for things they don't want to pay for.

If you think some government program, law, regulation, or tax *doesn't* involve force, try disobeying it — don't pay the Social Security tax, ignore an environmental regulation, or fail to register your gun — and see what happens.

Every government program employs force to overrule life and liberty . . .

- Innocent people die, are maimed, lose their property, or lose their loved ones because some bureaucratic decision satisfies a political purpose but is contrary to the wishes of the individual.
- Americans are deprived of the rights supposedly guaranteed in the Bill of Rights — to read what they want to read, to use their earnings and property as they want to use it, to have their wealth safe from search and seizure — in the name of some goal, such as "no child left behind" or "health insurance you can never lose," that is never reached.
- Innocent people are taxed to pay for a program they may oppose intensely, but that satisfies the desires of politicians.
- Innocent Americans lose the right to make their own choices about their own lives, to make their own arrangements for retirement — as politicians mandate the way products must be built, ban popular products from the market, and force people into fraudulent schemes like Social Security.

The Same Force, Foreign or Domestic

When our government mandates what kind of government every country of the world should have, it's no different from the federal government mandating what kind of education system every American state should have — or what every health insurance policy must cover — or what products a company may offer — or how much corn a farmer can plant.

If it's wrong to impose George Bush's choice of government on every citizen of a foreign country, it's just as wrong to impose *anyone's* choice of a health-care system on every American citizen.

It simply can't be any of the government's business in a country that calls itself "free."

War is no different from government health care, government education, government charity, government subsidies, government regulation, government compassion. In every case, persuasion and diplomacy are tossed out the window — to be replaced by the naked power of mandates, regulations, and people with guns.

And the force is imposed indiscriminately on everyone . . .

- Because some people might abuse drugs, *all of us* are afflicted with the sins of the insane War on Drugs — Treasury agents rummaging through our bank accounts looking for suspicious transactions, asset forfeiture seizing the property of people who have committed no crimes, cancer and AIDS patients deprived of marijuana to ease their pain, cities terrorized by drug gangs

because peaceful, reputable companies are forcibly prohibited from providing recreational drugs.

- Because some people might do bad things after looking at dirty pictures, the politicians assume the right to tell *all of us* what we can view on the Internet.
- Because some people won't save for their old age, *all of us* are forced to pay 15% of our earnings into Social Security.

Means & Ends

You may believe the force is being employed for a good purpose (just as the war-makers believe), but it is force nonetheless. And the force is imposed upon the innocent as much or more than the guilty.

The force is employed . . .

- To prevent consumers from buying what they want to buy, and to prevent companies from selling what they want to sell — under threat of fines and imprisonment.
- To give bureaucrats the power to overrule the strictly personal decisions of individuals — under threat of fines and imprisonment.
- To take hard-earned money away from innocent people and use it in ways pleasing to politicians and bureaucrats — under threat of fines and imprisonment.
- To impose monopoly suppliers on consumers or forcibly outlaw competition in such critical areas as education, postal service, electricity, and water — under threat of fines and imprisonment.
- To impose bureaucratic decisions on doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies — enforced with fines and imprisonment for differences of opinion about diagnoses, fees, policies, or treatment.
- To give politicians and regulators the power to withhold life-saving medicines from sick people — under threat of fines and imprisonment.

The elements of war are employed in *every* government program, not just those involving disputes with foreign countries.

In war, a few visible beneficiaries or promises ("liberating" Afghans and Iraqis or "making the world safe for democracy") serve to obscure the brutality, the horror, and the deaths of innocent people.

With domestic government programs, a few visible beneficiaries or promises (a grateful subsidy recipient, "health care for everyone," or a "drug-free America") serve to obscure the iron fist of the state — inflicting taxes on families and forcing them to forgo getting braces for their daughters' teeth, or regulating out of business companies that were providing valuable services that people willingly paid for.

And the few visible beneficiaries obscure as well the corruption and oppression that naturally follows from giving fallible human beings the power to coerce others.

War is the quintessential big-government program. It displays in stark relief the elements of all other government programs. War may seem more violent, more aggressive, more unjust, and more futile — but the differences between war and other government programs are differences only of degree and visibility, not differences of kind.

Power Is a Powder Keg

It may seem that force is necessary to bring about worthy social objectives. But using force always sets in motion a series of events that you're bound to regret. Again, it is easier to recognize when war is the issue.

For example, how has George Bush managed to get away with attacking a country that hasn't threatened us? Because Bill Clinton paved the way for him. Very few liberals complained when Clinton invaded or bombed Haiti, Serbia, Afghanistan, the Sudan, and Iraq. If liberals had protested then, it might have been easier today to stop the war in Iraq.

And when conservatives protested Clinton's foreign adventures, they conveniently forgot that Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Sr. had already established the necessary precedents with attacks on Libya, Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, and Iraq.

Every government program gives politicians power and money that will be misused sooner or later. When you give power to a good President or a good Congress to do what you think are good works, you're automatically giving power to a future *bad* President or Congress to do *bad* works. The power doesn't disappear when a different party takes office.

In addition, power always expands. You may enact a program to perform a specific function, but it automatically takes on a life of its own. The program grows — not just bigger, but in many directions — until it bears very little similarity to the "good" program you supported at the outset.

Big government concentrates enormous power in one place. And that power is like a magnet, attracting the worst elements of society — people who seek to dominate others

and use the power for their own purposes. Not surprisingly, such people always seem to find a plausible reason to impose wars, tyranny, and the destruction of civil liberties.

As Michael Cloud has pointed out, the problem isn't the abuse of power, it's the power to abuse. The only way to stop the abuse is to take away the power.

Doing Good

Government is force.

And you can't achieve good objectives by force, any more than you can bomb a country into democracy or peace.

When you *persuade* someone to do something, he's a willing participant. When you *force* him to do something, he immediately begins looking for ways to get around what you're demanding or to get back at you for what you've done to his life.

And when you forcibly confiscate money from one person to satisfy the needs of another, the first person is inspired to reduce his earnings or hide his income and wealth — while the second is encouraged to continually expand his needs.

So there's never enough money available from the earners to satisfy the needs of the takers.

That's why government's use of force never produces the results promised for it:

- Medicare was supposed to reduce health costs for the elderly and for society as well. So why does Medicare cost many, many times what was originally promised, and why do the elderly pay more out of their own pockets for health care (even after allowing for inflation) than they did before Medicare?¹
- We're told that extracting money by force and showering it on government schools will improve education. So why — after spending hundreds of billions of dollars — do the politicians still complain about the terrible conditions in schools and the need for more money?

Welfare and Medicaid are perpetual scandals. Wasteful, harmful corporate welfare and farm subsidies don't go away — no matter how many promises are made, no matter how many reforms are enacted.

Allowing politicians to confiscate our money by force empowers them to use it for what *they* want, not what *you* want. So a good part of it goes to keep foreign dictators in power until those dictators can be cited as excuses to go to war.

Why?

Why isn't there a single government program that has actually achieved what was originally promised for it? Not the elimination of poverty ("The days of the dole in this country are numbered" said Lyndon Johnson in 1964), not improved reading skills for children, not a "drug-free America," not an end to gun violence, not anything.

The reason for such universal failure is that coercion transforms everything it touches into something completely different from what was intended. With the use of force . . .

- People in government get to spend other people's money, instead of money they had to work hard to earn — and they will never treat that money with the same care and respect they would give to their own earnings.
- People in government never have to face the consequences of wrong decisions that you or I have to face, and so there's nothing to restrain them from pursuing utopian schemes endlessly or using their power to reward their friends and punish their enemies.

This power is like a cornucopia — providing free money, unearned markets, freedom from prohibited competition. No wonder there are special-interest groups, voting blocs, and constant selling pressure on the politicians to provide more and more unearned goodies.

As a result, whenever you turn something over to government, it ceases to be a financial, humanitarian, medical, military, or commercial matter. It becomes a *political issue* — to be decided by whoever has the most political power. And that will never be you or I.

Problem-Solving

Big government hasn't solved a single problem. On the contrary, it has always led to enormous problems. Just look at the way big government has affected foreign affairs.

Our government's overseas aggression was an outgrowth of the Progressive Era of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The expansion of government into regulatory agencies and new functions fostered the concept that the U.S. government could achieve good things for people — and should have the power to do so. The increased power gave the politicians the opportunity and the arrogance to occupy the Philippines to "Christianize" the heathen — causing the slaughter of thousands of innocent people.

The imposition of the income tax in 1913 gave the politicians what they never had before — a virtually unlimited source of revenue. This furnished the resources to interfere in a European war — something the U.S. government could never have done before. American intervention transformed a stalemated World War I into an overwhelming

Allied victory — enabling the Allies to wreak havoc on Germany and give Germans the incentive to turn to Adolf Hitler.

How could there have been U.S. wars in Afghanistan or Iraq the past two years if there were no income tax today — if the federal government were still operating with the mere half-billion-or-so dollars in yearly revenue available in the early 20th century? The U.S. government is now spending *per week* in Iraq twice as much as its entire *yearly* budget in 1903.

America could never afford to have troops in over a hundred countries if the government were still small enough to fit within the Constitution. The \$2 trillion budget has not only made the war on Iraq possible, it will facilitate the war on Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, or whoever else is to be the next lucky country to be liberated by an all-powerful American President with an endless supply of money with which to play God.

George W. Bush can do whatever he wants because he has the money and power to do it. Big government gives him the power to reward friends like Halliburton, Bechtel, oil companies, and construction companies — and the power to destroy enemies, foreign or domestic.

Making war requires big government to provide the necessary money and control over individuals. A nation with a small government can't set about to remake the world.

Better Ways

If liberals want to stop tyrannical adventures like the invasion of Iraq, they must do everything possible to whittle big government down to a small, limited, constitutional government. Not the "limited government" the Republicans pay homage to in campaign speeches and ignore in practice, but the constitutional straight-jacket envisioned by the likes of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

The Founding Fathers knew first-hand how dangerous government can be. They intended the federal government to be limited to a few carefully defined powers that are itemized in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. And they added the 9th and 10th Amendments to make it clear that these are the only powers the federal government is supposed to have.

They provided a method by which the Constitution could be amended, but only by long and careful deliberation — not by Presidents playing God or by Congressmen catering to the whims of politically powerful voting blocs.

Voluntary Methods

Almost everything good we enjoy today has come from the efforts of individuals and companies acting voluntarily, not under the duress of laws and regulations.

It didn't require coercion to produce low-cost computers available to people in almost all income brackets and getting cheaper by the month. It didn't require coercion to discover penicillin or a polio vaccine. It didn't require the coercion of the federal government to invent safety glass, disk brakes, seat belts, radial tires, or any of the other auto-safety features we enjoy. No one had to be coerced to create the Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, charity hospitals, or free clinics.

Today there are over 300,000 churches in America. Not one single person had to be coerced or have his earnings confiscated in order to build and support these churches. Imagine what else could be done — the money available to help the poor, find low-cost cures for diseases, and educate our children more properly — if American families didn't have to pay an average of \$10,000 a year in Social Security and income taxes.

If we want to take care of the poor, improve health care, have better schools, and make America a peaceful, beloved nation again, we must turn away from government and expand voluntary society.

When people are free to make their own decisions, social needs represent opportunities for someone to do well by doing good — either by competing to sell lower-cost services directly to those who need them or by creating private agencies to facilitate the liberal desire to provide for the needy.

Such arrangements involve no force, no loss of anyone's civil liberties, no confiscation of anyone's property, no threats of fines or imprisonment, no single policy coercively imposed on everyone.

Those arrangements don't build resentments. They don't create struggles for winner-take-all pots of money and power that turn us into enemies of each other. In the grocery store, you can buy Heinz ketchup while I buy Hunt's, and neither of us considers the other a threat to one's own well-being. With government, one size fits all and so we necessarily become opponents in a fierce fight to make sure it's one's own size that's chosen. No wonder there's so much class warfare, racial warfare, and generation warfare in America.

A society of free individuals acting voluntarily to help each other for mutual benefit should be exactly what liberals want. After all, the word *liberal* stems from the same root as *liberty*, not *compulsion*.

Liberals must take the trouble to discover the *many* alternatives available for solving social problems — instead of just differentiating between big-government Republican programs and big-government Democratic programs.

There are better ways to preserve the environment, better ways to see that children get good schooling, better ways to take care of the health needs of the elderly, better ways to take care of the poor. And none of them involve more government. Just the opposite.

You can't have a big government that redistributes the wealth without a big government that restricts peoples' civil liberties and tries to remake the entire world. But you *can* have a society that constantly improves opportunities for everyone without resorting to force.

When liberals join with libertarians to provide non-coercive methods for social progress, we will get the better world that liberals want.

¹In 1961 the average elderly family spent \$1,589 per year on health care (in 1991 dollars). In 1991 this had risen to \$3,305 per year. This was reported in "The Health Care Squeeze on Older Americans," a study by the Families USA Foundation, using data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

A Forgotten Day & a Forgotten Country **by Harry Browne**

October 28, 2003

On this date in 1886, the Statue of Liberty was first unveiled in New York Harbor. You're probably aware that the Statue wasn't built in America. It was built with money voluntarily raised from the people of France — and then erected in New York Harbor with money voluntarily raised from the people of the United States.

Foreigners were grateful for America's liberty, because the very existence of such a country as ours meant that someday they might be able to have the same peace and liberty in their own countries.

Then & Now

Today, 117 years later, that America doesn't exist anymore — even though politicians love to talk about "our freedoms."

In 1886 America had an open hand to the rest of the world. America didn't fear anyone and no one feared America. Today Americans live in a state of siege.

The idea of invading the Philippines or bombing the Sudan or intervening in Nicaragua or overturning a government in the Dominican Republic or starting a war with Iraq would have seemed ludicrous to the American people in 1886. As John Quincy Adams put it, America didn't go abroad in search of monsters to destroy. Today America has troops in over a hundred foreign countries.

In 2003 the maximum personal income tax rate is 35%, plus 15% for Social Security tax. In 1886 the maximum income tax rate of any kind was 0%.

In 1886 taxes at all levels of government consumed less than 7% of the national income. In 2003 taxes take roughly half the national income.

In 1886 the federal government spent \$242 million. In 2003 the federal government will spend over \$2 trillion — 10,000 times as much.

In 1886 the federal debt was \$1.40 per person (adjusted for inflation to dollars of 2002 value). In 2002 the federal debt was \$21,564 per person.

In 1886 there was no Securities & Exchange Commission, no Food and Drug Administration, no Interstate Commerce Commission, no Federal Trade Commission, no federal regulatory agencies of any kind. In 2003 every conceivable thing in America is regulated in some way by some level of government.

In 1886 there was no Federal Reserve System. The U.S. government simply minted coins from gold or silver brought to the Treasury. All paper money was issued by private banks, who redeemed the paper money on demand with gold or silver. While there occasionally were bank failures, small panics, or crashes, there was nothing to compare with the gigantic failure of the banking system and the Great Depression that occurred after the founding of the Federal Reserve System in 1913.

In 1886 there were no crimes against the state — no drug laws, no prohibitions of any kind. People lived their own lives, and if you didn't like the way someone lived, you simply didn't associate with him. You didn't run to the legislature to try to get a law passed to change his conduct; you just stayed away from him. In 2003 there is no law regulating conduct that is so ridiculous that someone won't introduce it in the U.S. Congress or some state legislature.

In 1886 America, the individual stood above the state. In 2003 the state's "compelling interest" comes first.

If America in 1886 was a land of liberty, what is America in 2003?

A Free Country

In 1886 anyone living in America could be assured that:

- No one would ask for his papers;
- No one would fasten a number on him;
- No one would extort a percentage of his income as the price of getting a job.
- No police would invade his home without warning and a warrant; a person's home truly was his castle.

No Longer Unique

Today politicians talk about our liberty, our freedoms, our unique heritage — as though they still existed in any meaningful way.

In fact, there's nothing unique about America anymore. Yes, it's a better country than others in some ways. But by and large, America is little different from the countries of Europe and Asia — where every public issue must be settled in the legislature and imposed upon everyone by force.

Today any group of people can get together and vote to take money away from the people who've earned it, vote to regulate the lives of other people, vote to tell other people how to live. We have long since torn up the Constitution and every single article in the Bill of Rights.

I love the Statue of Liberty, standing tall with her lamp held high — "liberty enlightening the world." The mere sight of it is a moving experience.

But it's been desecrated by politicians who take its name in vain.

And what we have in America today is so far from what existed in 1886 that they really should replace the Statue of Liberty with something much more appropriate — perhaps soldiers holding assault rifles. Call it the Statue of the World's Policeman, the Statue of the Superpower, the Statue of the National Interest, or the Statue of the All-Powerful State.

But don't try to call it Liberty. That isn't what we have today.

Restoring America

Today's date won't be celebrated, because what it stands for no longer exists. It's a forgotten day, just as the real America seems to be a forgotten country.

But it isn't really forgotten. Many of us know what once was and what could be again. And that's why we refuse to give up.

We want to bring back 19th-century freedom and marry it with 21st-century technology. Then we can again celebrate this day and this country as it should be.

And once again that great statue of Lady Liberty can provide light and hope and inspiration to the entire world.

Lying for a Living by Harry Browne

January 7, 2004

The Bush administration lied to the American people about many things in order to drag America into a war against a country that posed no threat whatsoever to it.

The biggest lie, of course, was the idea that Iraq had so-called "weapons of mass destruction" (nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons) that could kill millions of Americans.

Now that it's evident that there were no such weapons, the war hawks claim that George Bush never really said the Iraqi threat was imminent. In fact, he supposedly said precisely the opposite — that we must stop Saddam Hussein *before* he can pose a threat to the United States.

In fact, on October 7, 2002, George Bush said to a cheering crowd in Cincinnati:

Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof — the smoking gun — that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.

See! He didn't say Hussein was an imminent threat — only that we must stop him before he *becomes* a threat.

Unfortunately, for the war hawks, that isn't what Bush meant — as is evident when that statement is placed in its original context:

Knowing these realities, America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof — the smoking gun — that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud. As President Kennedy said in October of 1962, "Neither the United States of America, nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world," he said, *"where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril."* [italics added]

Bush implied that we can't wait for the "actual firing of weapons" before responding. He didn't say we have to respond before the weapons are even developed — which is what he's now trying to convince us he said.

If that doesn't convince you that George Bush said Hussein already had weapons that posed a threat, try looking at just some of the statements made by various members of the Bush administration, to wit:

Statements by George Bush

"If we know Saddam Hussein has dangerous weapons today — and we do — does it make any sense for the world to wait to confront him as he grows even stronger and develops even more dangerous weapons?"

Speech in Cincinnati, October 7, 2002

"And we have sources that tell us that Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons — the very weapons the dictator tells us he does not have."

Radio Address, February 8, 2003

"[W]e have arrived at an important moment in confronting the threat posed to our nation and to peace by Saddam Hussein and his weapons of terror. . . . Saddam Hussein has a long history of reckless aggression and terrible crimes. He possesses weapons of terror. He provides funding and training and safe haven to terrorists — terrorists who would willingly use weapons of mass destruction against America and other peace-loving countries. Saddam Hussein and his weapons are a direct threat to this country, to our people, and to all free people."

Press Conference, March 6, 2003

"Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

TV Address, March 17, 2003

"Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction."

Press Conference at Texas ranch, May 3, 2003

"We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories . . . and we'll find more weapons as time goes on. But for those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, we found them."

Polish TV Interview, May 30, 2003

"For more than a decade, Saddam Hussein went to great lengths to hide his weapons from the world. And in the regime's final days, documents and suspected weapons sites were looted and burned. Yet all who know the dictator's history agree that he possessed chemical and biological weapons and that he used chemical weapons in the past."

Radio Address, June 21, 2003

"I am confident that Saddam Hussein had a weapons of mass destruction program."

Press Conference, South Africa, July 9, 2003

Statements by Richard Cheney

"Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us."

Speech at VFW convention, August 26, 2002

Repeated in Speech to Veterans of Korean War, August 29, 2002

"We believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons."

Meet the Press, March 16, 2003

"So I say I'm not willing at all at this point to buy the proposition that somehow Saddam Hussein was innocent and he had no WMD and some guy out at the CIA, because I called him, cooked up a report saying he did."

Meet the Press, September 14, 2003

Statements by Donald Rumsfeld

"We have seen intelligence over many months that they have chemical and biological weapons, and that they have dispersed them and that they're weaponized and that, in one case at least, the command and control arrangements have been established."

Face The Nation, March 23, 2003

". . . the area in the south and the west and the north that coalition forces control is substantial. It happens not to be the area where weapons of mass destruction were dispersed. We know where they are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat."

Interview with Stephanopoulos, March 30, 2003

Statement by Colin Powell

"We know that Saddam Hussein is determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction; he's determined to make more."

Presentation at the United Nations, February 5, 2003

Lies, Lies, Lies

Of course, this is just one part of the Iraqi "threat" about which the politicians lied to us. They also lied about mobile laboratories, aluminum, unmanned that could carry WMDs to America's east coast, ballistic missiles that could threaten the whole Middle East, uranium purchases in Africa, Al-Qaeda training camps in Iraq, the adventures of Jessica Lynch, the toppling of Hussein's statue, Hussein kicking the UN inspectors out of Iraq, and much more.

Thousands of people — Americans and Iraqis — are dead because millions of Americans believed those lies.

We should never let the politicians' statements lure us into war again.

They Lie about Everything

But lying isn't confined to matters of war and peace. Those matters are simply the most dangerous areas in which politicians lie.

They lie to us about virtually everything.

- They lied when they said they were phasing out farm subsidies with the "Freedom to Farm" act in 1996. But now farm subsidies are 50% larger than they were in 1996.

- They lied when they said they reformed welfare in the mid-1990s. Since then, the annual federal cost of "income security" has increased by 40.
- They lied when they said the federal budget was in surplus during 1998-2001, while the federal debt increased every during that period. (They stole the money from Social Security to paper over the deficits.)
- They lied in 1965 when the Medicare Act said that "Nothing in this title shall be construed to authorize any Federal officer or employee to exercise any supervision or control over the practice of medicine or the manner in which medical services are provided," as doctors are routinely terrorized by Medicare bureaucrats.
- They lie whenever they take an oath to obey the Constitution of the United States.
- They lie when they claim to be protecting our freedom.

They lie because that's what a politician does for a living — lie to convince us to give him more power over our lives.

And Americans fall for the lies over and over again.

What to Do

How do you deal with this?

Simple: Whenever a politician starts talking, just close your innocent little ears and pay no attention to him. He's most likely lying — simply telling you what he hopes will persuade you to give him another chunk of your life.

Politicians lie far more often than used-car salesmen do — more often than aluminum-siding salesmen — more often than people in suede shoes.

Why do politicians lie so much more often than other people? Because they risk no personal consequences when they lie. When a politician is found to have lied, he isn't reprimanded, he doesn't lose his job, he doesn't have to pay a fine or go to jail. He doesn't even risk losing his next election, because most people won't even be aware of his lie. But he will have lied nonetheless, and he'll lie again — and again — and again.

There is probably no more important lesson that you can learn and take to heart than the simple lesson that *politicians don't tell the truth* — and when the politicians promise that some government program will cure some problem, you can almost be positive that it will in fact make matters worse.

More government means trouble. There's only one thing a politician can do to help us: repeal laws.

Repeal thousands and thousands of laws.

And I don't mean *promise* to repeal laws, but actually do it.

Only their actions are meaningful.

Pay no attention to what they say. They make their living by lying.

Is War Necessary? **by Harry Browne**

January 16, 2004

I have managed to live on this planet for 70 years without ever striking another human being.

There have been a dozen or so times when someone wanted to fight me. I managed to talk my way out of a fight in most of those cases. In the few times I didn't succeed in avoiding a fight altogether, I managed to end the scuffle without hitting the other person and without suffering any noticeable damage to myself.

Granted, I've been fortunate. I grew up in a peaceful suburban area. Had I had the bad fortune to have been born in the inner city in a gang neighborhood, I might not have avoided violence so easily.

But that's an important point. Being fortunate in the circumstances of my birth and my growing-up, I didn't squander that good fortune by looking for trouble.

The U.S. by Birth

America was also fortunate in the circumstances of its birth.

After one apparently necessary fight to extricate itself from British rule, it found itself in the best neighborhood possible. It is bounded by two friendly countries and two enormous oceans. No need here to look for trouble.

And yet, ruled by American instead of British politicians, the United States has found itself embroiled in one street fight after another.

In fact, in the 20th century there were less than 20 years in which America was at peace with the world. What with World Wars, the Cold War, police actions, gunboat diplomacy

in Latin America, overthrowing governments in Iran and other places, suppressing the Philippine rebellion, interfering with the Mexican revolution, firing missiles at Afghanistan and the Sudan, invading Panama and Grenada, bombing Libya, and on and on and on, Americans have lived with the tension of conflict and violence almost their entire lives.

And we live in a good neighborhood!

The Swiss by Birth

Contrast our circumstances with those of Switzerland.

The poor Swiss have the misfortune of living in the middle of one of the worst neighborhoods in the world. Centuries of imperial rivalries, ethnic hatreds, governments armed to the teeth and ready to go to war at the drop of the hat, and populations nursing grudges against each other — all these elements have kept Europe in turmoil for centuries.

Switzerland is like the inner-city family that hears gunfire outside its windows every night.

And yet Switzerland hasn't been involved in a single war for two centuries. The Swiss managed to avoid being sucked into the World Wars, the Cold War, or any of the other conflicts that have beset Europe.

The Swiss haven't been fortunate in their geographical circumstances. But they've dealt with those circumstances intelligently. It wasn't by the grace of dictators that they've avoided war; it has been a national policy to do so.

The Swiss have always made sure it was in the self-interest of warring nations to leave Switzerland out of their quarrels. They've devised ingenious defenses to demonstrate that, while Switzerland is not unconquerable, the cost of conquest would be intolerable to the conqueror. And they've made themselves an indispensable trading partner to any country that otherwise might see some profit in invading Switzerland.

It may *seem* that war is inevitable for many countries — such as the warring factions in the Balkans or some countries in Asia or Africa. But Switzerland has proven that it isn't inevitable for anyone — not even for a country as poorly situated as Switzerland is.

Why then is America continually at war over one thing or another?

The "Last Resort"

Whenever the U.S. goes to war somewhere, the politicians tell us that diplomacy was tried and failed — and that war was the very, very, very last resort.

But the truth is that the politicians didn't try much at all to avoid war. And the diplomacy was bound to fail, because it involved our politicians making insensitive demands on a foreign country — demands we had no authority to make, demands that were known in advance to be unacceptable to the foreigners.

In the few cases that America has been attacked, it's been because our politicians were trying to dictate to other countries — countries that represented no threat to us at all. The foreigners attacked either to try to gain an advantage against the stronger U.S. when our government had made war seem inevitable (as at Pearl Harbor), or because attacking seemed the only way to strike back at a country that was throwing its weight around in other people's business (as in 9/11).

Our Neighborhood

How easy it would have been for Americans to have lived the past two centuries in peace. We have never been attacked by a country that hadn't first been bullied by our politicians.

Maybe others aren't so fortunately situated, *but we are*.

No one can seriously believe that terrorists have struck America because they hate our freedom, our democracy, or our prosperity. If that were true, they would have warmed up first by attacking Switzerland — an easier target.

And if someone asks how you would handle the terrorists without war, now that Pandora's Box has been opened, here's a simple answer:

I'm not certain what I'd do, but I know one thing for sure: With \$2 trillion a year at my disposal, I could hire the best minds in the world to find a solution that didn't involve using the cave-man tactics of trying to beat people to death.

But no one in power is interested in finding alternatives to war. They arm to the teeth and then tell us we will obtain "peace through strength."

Well, America has been overwhelmingly strong for a century, and we're still waiting to see the peace. As Charles Beard put it, we've had "perpetual war for perpetual peace." Perhaps part of the problem is that we have an overwhelming national offense, but practically no national defense.

Is It Necessary?

I have never hit anyone, and not doing so has caused me no humiliation; nor has it made me a target for bullies. If America made peace the object, it need be neither humiliated nor picked upon.

Is war necessary?

For Americans, no.

Is war inevitable?

For Americans, yes — so long as we give politicians the power to meddle in our lives and in the lives of foreigners.

Is War Necessary? – Part II **by Harry Browne**

January 28, 2004

My article "Is War Necessary?" provoked a number of email comments and criticisms. Here are some of them, together with my responses.

"Either you live in a cocoon or are a physical and/or moral coward!!"

Would you like me better if I said I had beat up two dozen men and a handful of women?

"Sometimes you have to accept the burden. Some responsibilities can not be wished away. That is what the liberals do, they run from responsibility, hoping that by being 'nice' people, the big bad wolf will not bang on their door. . . .

"You liberals either don't understand history or don't want to. Either way, you end up being physical and moral cowards."

You have me mixed up with someone else.

Unlike liberals, and unlike you, I have no faith in government. It can't run the health-care system, doesn't educate our children well, and it certainly doesn't keep us safe from your "big bad wolf."

As for "being physical and moral cowards": If it's cowardly not to want to see innocent people killed, I guess I'm a coward. I'm not brave enough to taunt the villain and dare him to kill a bunch of other people.

If you want to go over to the Middle East and fight for "Iraqi Freedom," that's your business. But by staying at home, eating well, watching TV, and earning a decent living — while men, women, and children are getting killed in Iraq — it is you who won't "accept the burden." It is you who are "wishing away responsibilities." It is you who is "running from responsibility." It is you who are the physical and moral coward, while playing the part of the courageous hero.

I hope you *don't* go off to fight in the Middle East. But I also want every American there to come home. I want to see America live in peace and liberty. And big government doesn't provide either.

Switzerland

"You misunderstand and misuse history. Switzerland has not had a war in lots of years because every Swiss is armed, is in the armed services until age 40, and shoots to kill anyone that violates their sovereignty.

"They are at all times prepared to defend themselves. And, being such a small country, even Hitler and Stalin and his successors felt that the cost of invasion was not worth the gain.

"Wake up, smell the coffee and live in the real world, not some idealistic place in your warped mind and some place that has never existed."

Since I said in my article "They've devised ingenious defenses to demonstrate that, while Switzerland is not unconquerable, the cost of conquest would be intolerable to the conqueror," I'm not sure what you're complaining about. As a matter of fact, I lived in Switzerland for six years and am quite familiar with its defense system. But notice that it is focused on defense, not offense — as the U.S. system is.

"One important fact not reported by Mr. Browne. Switzerland became a repository for Nazi gold during World War II as well as valuable artifacts and paintings. When Germany lost the war, Switzerland simply kept the gold and other valuable items and founded a banking system that would not have been possible otherwise.

"In addition, Switzerland did cooperate with Nazi Germany during the war and manufactured critical war materiel for the German war machine for which they were paid handsomely.

"Switzerland has kept out of conflict by being underhanded in its dealings and not because of any moral commitment.

"Sorry to burst your bubble."

Since I said in my article "And they've made themselves an indispensable trading partner to any country that otherwise might see some advantage in invading Switzerland," I'm not sure what new information you think you're providing.

The Swiss banking system was founded hundreds of years ago. Laws were passed in the mid-1930s to protect Jewish accounts from being investigated or confiscated by the Nazis; otherwise, the system remained as it always had been. The only gold the Swiss bankers retained after the war was gold for which claimants had no way to prove their ownership; you can't expect a banker to give someone's gold to anyone who showed up at the door asking for it, but who had no evidence of ownership.

And I don't see anything underhanded in dealing openly with Germany and Britain during the war. Not joining your side doesn't make someone underhanded, just discriminating.

The last time I looked, the bubble was still intact and unburst.

Swiss Profiteering

"One point about Switzerland. The reason they never go to war is because that is the enclave that the world's bankers use to house all the world's (their) money. And they are the ones that fund all the wars, and both sides of the wars. War is very profitable for them and keeps countries unstable, while they remain in full charge through finances which is power."

I understand what you're saying, but Switzerland doesn't fund wars. The Swiss government foreign aid program is infinitesimal — much too small to have any effect on anything. And the banks are privately owned. No private bank is going to lend money to both sides of a war (as our government sometimes has). A bank can't afford to lend money to the loser who may not repay his loans.

Swiss & American Defenses

"I'm curious about two points.

"1. Mr. Browne stated 'They've [the Swiss] devised ingenious defenses to demonstrate that, while Switzerland is not unconquerable, the cost of conquest would be intolerable to the conqueror.' What are these devices and/or where could I learn more about Switzerland's defense policies?

"2. He also wrote: 'In the few cases that America has been attacked, it's because our politicians were trying to dictate to other countries.' What were we doing to Japan to provoke the attack on Pearl Harbor?"

Unfortunately, not a lot has been written in the English language about Switzerland's ingenious World War II defense policies. And I don't have time to try to remedy the lack of material. But I can give two examples.

During World War II, the Swiss government allowed the Nazis to pass through the Swiss Alps to resupply troops in Italy — a very valuable route for the Nazis. The Swiss mined critical spots and told the Nazis that the Swiss would close the supply lines by blowing them up the moment the Nazis started any funny business.

Second, the Swiss made a deal with the Nazis that allowed the Germans to buy machine tools from Swiss companies — but only on condition that Swiss boats be allowed to carry equipment for delivery to the British down the Rhine River to the North Sea, unimpeded by the Nazis.

As for the other question, the Roosevelt administration browbeat the Japanese for two years before the Pearl Harbor attack — demanding that the Japanese give up their colonies and conquests in China and East Asia. The Japanese were absolutely no threat to the United States (just like Iraq in 2003), but Roosevelt made it clear to his subordinates (who later reported his views in their memoirs) that he wanted to lure the Japanese into "firing the first shot" so that America could get into the war against Hitler. (The Japanese and Germans had a mutual defense treaty.)

I don't know of a single historian today who believes the Pearl Harbor attack was either unprovoked or a surprise. The only argument is over whether Roosevelt was right to bully the Japanese into attacking, in order to rally the American people to support U.S. entry into the war.

Here are some links to more detailed information:

The Myths of World War II by Harry Browne

American Knowledge of the Coming Japanese attack; interview with Robert B. Stinnett

Details of Roosevelt's Maneuvering by John Flynn

Why Did Japan Attack Us by Patrick Buchanan

Predictions

"The war has largely been a success, especially when compared with pre-war predictions made by Harry."

I'm not aware of any pre-war predictions I made. If I've forgotten some, you're free to remind me. But don't confuse me with anyone else.

Pandering to the Crowd?

"Going against the war is bad for the Libertarian Party. . . . what matters is the tremendous number of Bush supporters who are upset with his domestic agenda. The Patriot Act, his propensity to spend, and the prescription drug entitlement are the first that come to mind.

"I don't think your going to get a lot of Dean supporters; they will support the Green (communist) Party, or any of the other leftist running for the Democratic nomination, if he does not make it. Anti-war rhetoric may catch their ear, but once they learn of the Libertarian position on government, taxes and guns, they will switch us off."

If we go along with the war hawks, how can we ever expect the war mentality to recede? *Someone* has to stand up and point out the obvious — that the Bush doctrine has caused tens of millions more people worldwide to believe America is a bully, encouraging more people to support the terrorists.

Maybe we couldn't stop the Iraqi War. But pointing out that politicians lie and that war isn't necessary may cause a few more people to be skeptical the next time — when the President (either Bush or Kerry) is trying to build support for attacking Syria, Iran, or someone else.

We can't determine the truth of a proposition by the number of people it might appeal to. I'm not saying what I think might appeal to Dean supporters. If you really think I am, you don't understand libertarian principles.

Comparing Countries

"You said, 'After one apparently necessary fight to extricate itself from British rule, it found itself in the best neighborhood possible.'"

"I don't think my life would be any worse off today if Britain still ruled the United States. The British people are not any less free than the American people are today. So I think that war didn't matter either. In fact I would rather live in Britain today than the United States."

When your own government is out of control, almost any other country can seem to be more attractive. However, I don't think you'd find Britain to be any freer than America (or even *as* free).

George Bush, Lying, & the Dogs of War
by Harry Browne

March 26, 2004

"Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war."

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Before the Iraqi war, the Bush administration cried "Havoc!" and used a number of lies to justify setting the dogs of war loose.

The non-existent weapons of mass destruction and the phony uranium purchases from Niger weren't the only falsehoods. There also were lies about Al-Qaeda training camps in Iraq, aluminum tubes, Hussein kicking the UN inspectors out of Iraq, unmanned airplanes that could attack the East Coast of America, mobile bioweapons laboratories, and on and on and on.

Once the war was underway, the folks who brought us death and destruction peddled further lies: the triumphant toppling of the Hussein statue the Jessica Lynch (she actually got a medal for bravery despite not doing anything), the bogus stories to explain the killing of civilians, and more.

It Never Stops

Now that the war is over, the discredited prewar lies have been discarded, and the administration is resorting to new claims, such as:

- The world is a safer place with Saddam Hussein gone.
- The Iraqi people are finally free.
- Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator.

- "The defense of freedom is always worth it," as George Bush said last week.

Character Assassination

And we need to add to these prevarications the character assassination the administration fires at anyone who exposes its lies by relating personal experiences within the administration. Paul O'Neill and Richard Clarke have felt the full force of the government-press partnership.

The moment Clarke went public with statements that Bush was determined to blame 9-11 on Iraq, and that Bush was much more eager to attack Iraq than attack Al-Qaeda, the administration redirected the dogs of war from Hussein to Clarke.

Top administration officials have already appeared on numerous national news shows. Condoleezza Rice showed up on all five national morning shows (on NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox, and CNN). The attack dogs said very little about the actual charges, preferring to attack Clarke personally as a hypocrite who previously praised President Bush's response to terrorism.

Providing their usual support for big government, TV and press reporters repeated and discussed statements Clarke made in 2001 and 2002 — statements that seemed to back up the charge that Clarke was an opportunistic hypocrite.

But did you notice that every reporter showed us exactly the same statements from Clarke? Some of the apparent "statements" weren't even complete sentences. Why did everyone who commented on Clarke's apparent flip-flop focus on exactly the same fragments?

They did so because those were the only fragments they had to work with. The quotes were all provided by the Bush administration — and they're the only quotes available. If the reporters had possessed the original documents, some of them would have picked out other statements or fragments from those documents.

It is very, very, very important to realize that . . .

Virtually everything we think we know about a foreign-policy issue is only what the government tells us.

We have no way of knowing whether the fragments are actually true statements Clarke once made. Nor do we know in what context the fragments appeared originally. All we know is that this is what the administration wants us to believe.

Even if every fragment is true and indicative of Clarke's previous opinions, it doesn't mean he's a hypocrite. What he said in 2001 or 2002 may have seemed true to him at the time, but has since been refuted by reality.

For example, Clarke supposedly said in 2002 that the Bush administration "changed the strategy from one of rollback with Al Qaeda over the course of five years, which it had been, to a new strategy that called for the rapid elimination of Al Qaeda." But that doesn't mean the strategy *did* change. Politicians continually make statements promising revolutionary improvements that never come to pass. One year after making that statement, Clarke quit working for the government — partly, we presume, because Bush's actions didn't match his promises.

Fox TV News has provided a complete transcript of a press briefing Clarke gave in 2002 — from which the above quote was taken. You can search the entire transcript and not find unequivocal praise for George Bush.

We have no way of knowing what Clarke really thought about Bush in 2001 and 2002, because we have mostly only out-of-context fragments of statements Clarke made — fragments that have been carefully selected and released by the Bush administration in order to discredit Clarke. And the press dutifully publicizes those statements without pointing out that they are necessarily only small, out-of-context pieces of the puzzle.

So let me repeat what you should never forget . . .

Virtually everything we think we know about a foreign-policy issue is only what the government wants us to know.

Other Postwar Lies

What about the Bush administration's postwar lies? . . .

- The world is a safer place with Saddam Hussein gone.

Is it really?

Tell that to the 200 people who died in Spain two weeks ago — or to their families. Tell it to the Israelis who continue to be killed in Palestine suicide attacks. Tell it to the Palestinians who continue to be killed in Israeli military attacks. Tell it to the people in America who have been jailed without formal charges, without benefit of an attorney, without a speedy trial or the opportunity to confront their accusers.

Free At Last!, Thank God Almighty, We Are Free at Last!

- The Iraqi people are finally free.

Oh really?

The country is occupied by a foreign power.

Its officials are appointed by that foreign power.

Its citizens must carry ID cards, and submit to searches of their persons and cars at checkpoints and roadblocks.

They must be in their homes by curfew time.

Many towns are ringed with barbed wire.

The occupiers have imposed strict gun-control laws, preventing ordinary citizens from defending themselves — making robberies, rapes, and assaults quite common.

The occupiers have decreed that certain electoral outcomes won't be permitted.

Families are held hostage until they reveal the whereabouts of wanted resisters — much like the Nazis held innocent French people hostage during World War II.

Public protests are outlawed.

Private homes are raided or demolished — with no due process of law.

Newspapers, radio stations, and TV are all supervised by the occupiers.

Brutality

- Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator.

So what?

Is it the duty of the American people to give their resources — and maybe their lives — to topple every dictator in the world and make sure the Bill of Rights is enforced in every country (except, perhaps, the United States)?

And if toppling dictators is so important, why is George Bush cozying up to brutal dictators in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan?

If George Bush wants to donate his own money to revolutionary movements in oppressed countries, he has a right to do so. If he wants to quit his job and go fight in one of those revolutionary movements, he has a right to do so.

But he has no constitutional authority to commit American money and American lives to the fight for freedom in other countries.

Even the claims of Hussein's brutality are suspect, because they come mostly from the same administration that has already discredited itself. The "human shredder" atrocity story has already been refuted, and who knows how many more of George Bush's favorite horrors will be exposed as lies eventually?

Say What?

When confronted with the charge that he misled the American people about the need to go to war with Iraq, President Bush replied, "The defense of freedom is always worth it."

Is that right?

Worth what?

The loss of more of our freedoms in America?

A cost of hundreds of billions of dollars paid by Americans for the freedom of people in foreign countries?

And worth it to whom?

Obviously, the Iraqi war was worth it to George Bush. (At least it seemed so until now.)

But was it worth it to the hundreds of Americans who died?

Was it worth it to the thousands of Iraqis who died?

Was it worth it to the families of those who died?

And what freedom are we talking about?

The U.S. was never threatened by Saddam Hussein. He had no capability to attack America, and he never indicated any desire to attack America.

In short, American "freedom" was never threatened by Saddam Hussein. So why is an unprovoked attack on another country considered to be a "defense of freedom"?

The Dogs of War

So the lies continue.

And the dogs of war are unleashed on anyone who threatens to expose those lies and seems to have the public forum in which to do so.

As Usual, the Wrong Question Is Being Asked
by Harry Browne

April 9, 2004

Richard Clarke says the Bush administration was too focused on Iraq to see the 9-11 attack coming.

The Bush administration says Clarke is an opportunistic S.O.B. who once praised President Bush, but now criticizes Bush in order to boost sales of Clarke's book.

Which one is correct?

That's the burning question the press focuses on day after day after day. Everyone in radio, TV, or print publications seems to have a very firm answer to the question, one way or the other.

But if you have an answer, you've been snookered — maneuvered into pondering the wrong question.

The Real Issue

The 9-11 Commission is supposedly focusing on all aspects of the attack — all aspects except the one that is by far the most important question: *why did the hijackers knowingly give up their lives to destroy the World Trade Center?*

President Bush has a ready answer. He tells us it's because they hate American freedoms, American democracy, and American prosperity.

Of course, there are people around the world who are cranks, malcontents, or Stars-and-Stripes-phobes who simply don't like America — for all kinds of reasons.

But how could any intelligent person believe that there are hundreds — more likely, thousands — of people around the world who would knowingly sacrifice their lives just to protest American freedom, democracy, or prosperity?

As Charley Reese has put it:

It is absurd to suppose that a human being sitting around suddenly stands up and says: "You know, I hate freedom. I think I'll go blow myself up."

The Motive

There was only one possible motive for the 9-11 attackers: they were protesting the way the American government has been using force for half a century to overrule the wishes of people in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Our government has overthrown democratically elected governments, it has supported with money and weapons dictatorial governments that have tortured and killed dissenters (just as George Bush keeps saying Saddam Hussein was doing), it has bribed foreign governments to join in enterprises of the U.S. government (as it did with Spain and tried to do with Turkey before Operation Kill Iraqis).

Because of very little press coverage, most Americans have no idea that our government has been doing these things. How many people know, for example, that Iran had a democratically elected government until the U.S. and British governments engineered a coup to install the tyrannical Shah of Iran in 1953?

Then there was all the U.S. government help to Diem in South Vietnam, Suharto in Indonesia, Somoza in Nicaragua, Batista in Cuba, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Stalin during World War II, Lumumba* in the Congo, Saddam Hussein in Iraq (yes, *that* Saddam Hussein), and dozens more tyrants — all of whom used American taxpayer money to oppress their own citizens.

Americans may not know about the support provided to these tyrants by the U.S. government, but I can assure you that plenty of people in those countries *do* know what our government has done to them.

Because Americans know so little about the history of our government's adventures of the last 50 years (and the last place anyone's likely to learn about them is in a government school), it's easy for Americans to buy George Bush's logic when he says, "See, these people hate freedom." Consequently, most people believe that the history of violence began on 9-11, when it's actually been building for 50 years.

It isn't even just history. Today George Bush is sending money and other resources to governments in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan — governments that are oppressing their subjects in much the same way Hussein was supposed to have oppressed Iraq.

So if the 9-11 Commission has any interest in preventing future 9-11s, why isn't it discussing the role U.S. foreign policy played in creating 9-11 — and is continuing to play today?

Public Debate

Perhaps you don't agree with me. You may think our government was justified in everything it has done. Or maybe you think I'm overstating the importance of American support of oppressive foreign governments.

Fair enough. But you must admit that this is a legitimate issue to be debated. So why isn't the 9-11 Commission studying it? Why aren't journalists and TV hosts interviewing people on both sides of the question to help form opinions?

Why is there only one question to be debated on any issue? Why, for example, didn't any of the coverage of the Martha Stewart case focus on the question of whether insider trading actually hurts anyone? Why was there a debate about whether a juror's run-in with the police was grounds for a mistrial — when his after-trial statements demonstrated that he found Stewart guilty for something she wasn't even on trial for — a much more significant reason for a mistrial?

The press — including (especially) the TV experts — will usually focus on the wrong aspect of any case or issue. This is probably because reporters, journalists, and TV experts are mostly all big-government people. So the debate is about whether some politician handled something in the best possible way — rather than debating whether the government should have been involved at all.

And we play their game when we allow ourselves to debate the questions they're asking. As Thomas Pynchon said (in *Gravity's Rainbow*), "If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about the answers."

In almost all matters, the real question should be: *why are we letting government handle this?*

*Patrice Lumumba was a Communist who studied in Moscow, and there's a university there that used to be named after him. When the Congo received its independence from Belgium in 1960, Lumumba became the Congo's leader. Katanga province, under the leadership of Moise Tshombe, tried to secede from the Congo. A war broke out. The United Nations, with the help of the U.S., sent troops to Katanga to put down the secession. The U.S. help was remarkable (although not that unusual) because Lumumba

was pro-USSR and setting up a socialist government — while Tshombe was pro-US and wanting to establish a free market in Katanga. Why the U.S. supported the UN in putting down a pro-US movement, I'll probably never know — but it happened nonetheless.

Of course, as with so many other dictators the U.S. helped (such as Saddam Hussein or Manuel Noriega), the U.S. government eventually turned against Lumumba and may have been responsible for his death. When Mobutu Sésé Séko came to power in 1965, he set up a brutal regime. Of course, the United States government supported him as well.

Who's Responsible for the Iraqi Prisoner Abuse? **by Harry Browne**

May 7, 2004

The revelations that Iraqi prisoners have been abused and tortured have prompted the typical deep thinking by America's pundits.

But, as usual, they are ignoring the central point: Atrocities and war go together like ham and eggs.

When soldiers — American, Iraqi, or of any nation — go to war, they are transformed into different people. This is because of the nature of war. Battles aren't fought in the clean, antiseptic style of a John Wayne movie.

In a real war, men's limbs are blown off, they see their insides pour out onto the ground, and they die in excruciating pain. Many "combat" deaths aren't caused by enemy fire; they result from dysentery, pneumonia, shock, a comrade's mistake, or even just fright.

Transformation

The sight of these horrors is enough to transform almost anyone into a person quite different from the one who went to war to "defend freedom."

Eugene B. Sledge wrote about his reaction when, as a U.S. Marine fighting in the Pacific during World War II, he saw his comrades hosed down by machine-gun fire:

I felt sickened to the depths of my soul. I asked God, "Why, why, why?" I turned my face away and wished that I were imagining it all. I had tasted the bitterest essence of war, the sight of helpless comrades being slaughtered, and it filled me with disgust. . . .

We were expendable. It was difficult to accept. We come from a nation and a culture that values life and the individual. To find oneself in a situation where your life seems of little value is the ultimate in loneliness. It was a humbling experience.¹

In World War I, a French soldier wrote in his diary:

Heaps of corpses, French and German, are lying every which way, rifles in hand. Rain is falling, shells are screaming and bursting — shells all the time. Artillery fire is the worst. I lay all night listening to the wounded groaning — some were German. The cannonading

goes on. Whenever it stops we hear the wounded crying from all over the woods. Two or three men go mad every day.²

In this kind of environment, human beings become something quite different — and less human. When the boy next door comes home from Iraq, he won't be the same one who left. He will have lived in a world completely different from that of you and me — and completely different from the pictures shown on TV.

The Atrocities Follow

Quoting Sledge again:

Our code of conduct toward the enemy differed drastically from that prevailing back at Division CP. . . . We lived in an environment totally incomprehensible to men behind the lines.³

Thus we shouldn't be surprised to find soldiers taking delight in activities that disgust us. As Paul Fussell has pointed out, this is what happens "when you arm a lot of frightened boys with deadly weapons."⁴

It has happened in every army in every war — including the Iraqi War, and undoubtedly in areas of the Iraqi occupation that are yet to be revealed.

Fussell, in his book *Wartime*, wrote about atrocities committed by both Japanese and American soldiers during World War II — atrocities so repulsive they can't be described here in a family website.

In a kill-or-be-killed environment, emotions run high. Men don't just oppose the enemy, they hate him. And when they think information might save a buddy, they will commit heinous acts to extract the information from a prisoner.

There's only one way to stop such things from happening: *don't go to war in the first place.*

Responsibility

So if anyone is responsible for the atrocities that were recently revealed, it is the person that decided to send 150,000 Americans to a desolate area to kill or be killed.

I believe that person's name is George W. Bush.

But how can George Bush be held responsible for the crimes of subordinates way down the chain of command?

Well, Herman Goering was sentenced to death at the Nuremberg trials for crimes committed by his underlings.

Chutzpah

According to Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush was informed of the back in January. Apparently, nothing significant was said or done about the problem until CBS broke the story last week. Now everyone in the administration is feigning shock and awe over what happened.

But that's not the most remarkable aspect of this whole brouhaha. Long after George Bush knew about the prisoner abuse, he was still justifying the war on Iraq on the basis that Hussein had torture chambers. William Saletan of *Slate* has compiled an amazing chronicle of administration statements, made after Bush knew about the U.S. military's use of torture, implying that only Saddam Hussein did such terrible things. As recently as May 1, *even after the scandal had been made public*, George Bush was still talking about Hussein's torture chambers.

This indicates that, in addition to being dishonest, Bush also is a bit dense. An intelligent knave would have quit talking about Hussein's "torture chambers" the moment he discovered that his own army was using torture.

¹*With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene B. Sledge, pages 60,100; cited by Paul Fussell in *Wartime*, page 293.

²*With the French Eastern Army* by W.E. Grey, page 49; cited in *The Guns of August* by Barbara W. Tuchman, page 241.

³*With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene B. Sledge, page 120; cited by Paul Fussell in *Wartime*, page 294.

⁴"The Culture of War" by Paul Fussell, in *The Costs of War*, edited by John V. Denson, page 356.

How Much Is Hussein's Departure Worth?

by Harry Browne

May 27, 2004

Despite all that's gone wrong with "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (such as the lack of freedom for Iraqis), we still hear over and over that "the world is a better place with Saddam Hussein gone."

Is it really?

Everything in life has a price — even getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Any goal or result must be compared with the price to be paid — in order to determine whether the goal is, or was, worth it. No goal can be said to be worth *any* price.

In the case of Hussein, the price involves the tens of billions of dollars of our tax money that have been lavished on the task of driving one man from power — and on cleaning up the mess that operation caused.

Name your Price

But, even more important, the price comes in the number of human lives that are snuffed out.

So we must ask ourselves:

How many human lives are a proper price to pay for the removal of Saddam Hussein?

Would you say removing Hussein would be worth it if a million people — Americans and Iraqis — had to die to achieve it?

If the answer is no, let's try a lower price. How about 100,000?

If that's too many, how about 10,000 lives being snuffed out to remove one man from power?

The Relevant Question

Let's make it simpler. Rather than throwing numbers around, let's ask just one question:

Would removing Hussein be worth it if the cost were just one human life — but that life was yours?

Would you be willing to die to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?

If the answer is no, then anything you have to say about the world being a better place now — about collateral damage — about the glory of soldiers sacrificing their lives for their country — is meaningless. You're not willing to pay the price. You're like so many people who believe various government programs are wonderful — provided someone else pays for them.

Everyone who has died so far in Iraq had a life that meant as much to him as your life means to you. But now that life is gone, done, finished, nevermore.

By supporting the war in Iraq, you have supported the idea that it's okay to kill people — *other* people.

But until you're willing to volunteer to be one of those killed, your words don't carry any weight.

Can George Bush Be Americanized?

by Harry Browne

June 26, 2004

A few weeks ago, America was absorbed with the death in Afghanistan of Pat Tillman, the athlete who gave up a lucrative career as an NFL football star in order to fight for his country.

Every night for almost a week, ESPN's *Sports Center* show had a segment on Tillman — as did so many other news shows.

I found the celebration of death to be upsetting, but I couldn't find the right words to express my feelings.

But this past week I had the pleasure of watching — as I do every few years — the movie *The Americanization of Emily*.

In it, the hero articulates what I was unable to say:

"My brother died at Anzio . . . an everyday soldier's death, no special heroism involved. They buried what pieces they found of him. But my mother insists he died a brave death and pretends to be very proud. . . .

"Now my other brother can't wait to reach enlistment age. . . . What has my mother got for pretending bravery was admirable? She's under constant sedation and terrified she may wake up one morning and find her last son has run off to be brave."

If we glorify death, we shouldn't be surprised when we get more of it — just as by voting for big-government politicians we reward them and encourage them to give us bigger and bigger government.

Let's Go to the Movies

The Americanization of Emily is one of my favorite movies, and it's certainly one of the best anti-war movies ever made.

However, it has a strange origin. It's based on a novel by William Bradford, a writer of many best-selling novels of a few decades ago.

The hero, Charlie Madison, is stationed in London during World War II, working as an admiral's "dog robber" — a naval officer who makes sure the admiral and his guests have all the good food and entertainment they want, despite wartime shortages.

Emily is a British motor-pool driver whom Charlie meets and falls in love with. She doesn't like "Yanks" because they think they own the world, but Charlie eventually Americanizes her.

The admiral wants to make a movie showing that the first Americans to reach France on D-Day are naval demolition engineers, clearing the mines so the soldiers and marines can hit the beach. He commands Charlie to be there with a camera filming the operation.

But Charlie is a coward, and he thinks it's absurd to risk his life in order to help the Navy get bigger appropriations from Congress. However, as he grudgingly takes on the project, he becomes progressively more gung-ho — and eventually he's a true believer. Sort of like Dick Cheney without the desk job.

Transformation

The novel was made into a movie in 1964, and the screenplay was written by Paddy Chayefsky (whose work includes *Network* and *Marty*).

In Chayefsky's version, however, Charlie Madison doesn't get religion and become gung-ho. But his best friend *does*, and the friend forces Charlie at gunpoint to charge onto Omaha Beach on D-Day.

I won't say any more about the plot, because I don't want to spoil it for you. It's too good a movie not to let the story unfold on its own.

The movie isn't preachy, although Charlie Madison (played by James Garner) has some sensational monologues. It is first and foremost entertaining. But it ends with the most fascinating moral dilemma you'll find in any movie. At least half the people I know who've seen the movie think it ended wrongly, while the other half think the ending is perfect.

Amazon has VHS copies for sale and, most likely, your local Blockbuster store has copies for rent. but There's no DVD version.

James Garner is a fine actor, and he has been fortunate in having three of the juiciest roles in movies and television — Charlie Madison in *The Americanization of Emily*, Jim Rockford in the *Rockford Files*, and the title role in *Cash McCall* (another movie with libertarian undertones).

I don't think you'll regret seeing any of these.

Americanizing

What should be noticed in *The Americanization of Emily* is the fact that Charlie Madison is symbolic of what America was meant to be — a nation in which each individual gets to live his own life without having to suppress his desires and go along with some group crusade. Although repelled at first, Emily comes to see the common sense in this approach to life.

Now, if we could just Americanize George Bush . . .

Death by Harry Browne

August 21, 2004

Moore's question was designed to bring home the reality of death. In wars people die. And those who die are people who wanted to live as much as you want to live. And they meant as much to their parents as your children mean to you.

Every one of the tens of thousands of people who died in Iraq, including the roughly one thousand Americans, was someone's husband, daughter, father, son, brother, sister, mother, or wife.

But the administration flaks (both in and out of government) don't care. They're too busy telling us of the wonderful job the American military is doing rebuilding the schools, hospitals, and power plants that were destroyed by American bombs.

***The Daily Show*:** A couple of weeks ago the Television Critics Association announced its annual awards for the best shows on TV. Along with the awards for best comedy, best drama, and such, was the award for the best news show on television.

And the winner? *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart on Comedy Central. That's right, on the Comedy Central channel. And if you've ever seen the show, you can understand how it won the award.

Stewart calls it a "fake news show." And there *are* fake news reports here and there. But what makes the show so successful, I think, is the *true* news reporting that it does. Virtually every show includes actual clips of politicians being hypocritical, contradictory, or just plain stupid. For example, showing George Bush saying "This country is in great danger" and then showing him three days earlier saying "America is much safer now."

Just after the critics' award was announced, on one of those weekend shows in which a panel discusses the media's handling of current news, the host mentioned the award and asked whether this was some kind of joke. One of the panelists immediately leaped to the defense of the award — pointing out that *The Daily Show* was the only program expressing any real skepticism prior to the Iraqi war, and that the show was holding the politicians' feet to the fire in a way the broadcast and cable news shows refuse to do.

If you've never seen *The Daily Show*, you're in for a real treat. The show skewers politicians of both major parties equally. It's on five days a week, 30 minutes a show.

Each episode airs three times during the day. Most cable systems carry Comedy Central. Check your cable guide.

Death Again
by Harry Browne

August 21, 2004

On *The Daily Show* Jon Stewart generally does a pretty fair job of interviewing guests. But he had one disappointing interview with Wolf Blitzer of CNN. Stewart kept pressing Blitzer for an answer as to how such a horrible miscalculation could have been made that brought about the invasion of Iraq. Blitzer kept answering, in effect, that it was a case of "Oops, I made a mistake." In other words, everyone makes mistakes; so why can't the CIA and the President occasionally be wrong?

Not once did either Stewart or Blitzer acknowledge that this particular "Oops" caused the deaths of thousands of innocent people. Not once was the death of even one person referred to. The "Oops" was treated in the same way as a federal budget miscalculation.

Life is the most important possession any human being has. And to snuff it out is the worst possible crime. But to do it so casually as politicians do, to act as though it is something wonderful that some poor soul has "died for his country" — that's adding insult to murder.

In his speech asking Congress to enter World War I, Woodrow Wilson said:

America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured.¹

"Spend *her* blood"? No, spend the blood of individual young men who were conscripted — shanghaied, kidnapped, put into slavery — to do the dying for Woodrow Wilson.

How did those young men end up?

Shirley Millard, an American nurse in an army hospital in France, later wrote about her experience. She was shocked by the terrible reality of what happens to soldiers in war. She could see that they weren't privileged to spend their blood. She described one batch of wounded brought into the hospital:

They cannot breathe lying down or sitting up. They just struggle for breath. But nothing can be done. Their lungs are gone. Some with their eyes and faces entirely eaten away by the gas and bodies covered with burns. . . . One boy, today, screaming to die. The entire top layer of his skin burned from his face and body.

She didn't exactly see the situation in the same way as Woodrow Wilson or Bill O'Reilly. She asked:

What's the sense of it? Why did they have to be killed before they had even begun to live?²

I am not generally a vengeful person. But I hope the darkest, hottest, most painful region of Hell is reserved for those who so casually send other people to their deaths in order to preserve some meaningless political position.

Eternal Siege
by Harry Browne

August 31, 2004

Now we know.

President Bush says that we can't win the War on Terror. We can only hope to make it difficult for the terrorists.

Thus we can expect that America will remain in a state of siege for the rest of our lives. We will never be able to get on an airliner without being screened, searched, and intimidated. Our email and phone calls will be subject to monitoring. The people arrested as potential terrorists can expect to remain in prison forever — with no trials, no access to attorneys, no communication with their families, no right to confront their accusers, none of the supposed safeguards in the Bill of Rights.

In other words, we will never have America again.

During the Cold War, we lived in a constant state of fear — fearing nuclear attack. Now, in the War on Terrorism, we not only live in a state of constantly fearing an attack, but also fearing our own government's grabbing us and taking our lives away from us.

It appears that we had less to fear from Leonid Brezhnev than we do from George Bush.

Winning the War on Terrorism

by Harry Browne

September 2, 2004

After George Bush said last Saturday that he didn't think we could actually win the war on terror, the Democrats jumped on the remark. Bush's handlers evidently prodded him to retract the statement.

So on Tuesday he said:

In this different kind of war, we may never sit down at a peace table. But make no mistake about it, we are winning, and we will win. (Applause.) We will win by staying on the offensive. We will win by spreading liberty.

However, NBC News did a study of terrorist attacks and found that "we" aren't winning the war on terrorism after all. Between September 11, 2001, and the end of 2003 — a period of 26½ months, there were 1,220 terrorist attacks worldwide — an average of 42 per month. But in the first 8 months of this year, there have already been 1,709 such attacks — an average of 213 per month. So the attacks are increasing, not diminishing.

It would be interesting to know by what standard Mr. Bush thinks "we are winning" the War on Terrorism.

Oh, I just figured it out. George Bush is President. George Bush is a Republican. Thus we must be winning the War on Terrorism.

The Cost Of War
by Harry Browne

September 12, 2004

On Friday, speaking at the National Press Club, Donald Rumsfeld once again that, while he regretted the lives lost in Iraq, he believes the cost was worth it.

What cost?

How much has the war cost Donald Rumsfeld?

Did he lose his life in Iraq?

Does he have children or grandchildren who died in Iraq?

Just exactly what has it cost him?

If the answer is nothing, as I'm sure it is, he is in no position to weigh the cost because he hasn't paid any cost. Only those who have lost loved ones can answer the question as to whether the cost is worth whatever dubious benefits Rumsfeld thinks the war has brought to us.

In a similar way, Madeline Albright (Clinton's Secretary of State) decided that the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children was a price worth paying in order to maintain the sanctions that prevented food and medicines from reaching Iraq during the 1990s. On May 12, 1996, on *60 Minutes*, Lesley Stahl asked her, "We have heard that a half a million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?" Albright responded by saying, "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it."

Since human life is so expendable, I guess this means that the people in the Bush administration believe that the 3,000 lives lost on 9/11 were a price worth paying in order to continue the American foreign policy of ruling the world. Otherwise, they would change their foreign policy to the more humble one that George Bush in his 2000 presidential campaign.

An Iraq Strategy to Reelect George Bush

by Harry Browne

September 17, 2004

News flash: President Bush wants to be reelected.

If he fails in that endeavor, it most likely will be because American voters will have rejected him on the very issue he thought was his best asset: his strong leadership in the War on Terrorism.

In case you haven't noticed, things aren't working out as planned in Iraq.

Even U.S. military leaders are starting to talk, and they're saying that the entire Iraqi campaign is a terrible disaster.

Kill 'em!

But why should it be?

After all, the Bush administration has done exactly what so many people have recommended — impose overwhelming force to achieve victory. Since 9/11 I've received dozens (perhaps hundreds) of emails from people calling for exactly that. Here's a paraphrased summary of what these emails say:

The only thing the terrorists understand is force. The U.S. should blitzkrieg them with so much force that they realize that their cause is futile. For every one of ours that dies in a terrorist attack, we should kill a hundred of them, without worrying whether the dead were terrorists or innocent bystanders. You can't reason with these people; they don't understand anything but force.

None of the emails revealed that the writers had arrived at their conclusions through actual discussions with terrorists, but no matter. The email writers were joined by a lot of people in the press, radio, and television in their belief that the only answer was overwhelming force.

Force in Action

When four U.S. civilians were killed in Fallujah, Joseph Farah of World Net Daily said:

It's time to take off the velvet gloves. It's time to stop being Mr. Nice Guy [sic].
It's time to cease worrying about collateral damage.

It's time to show all Iraqis and their brothers and sisters throughout the Middle East that it doesn't pay to mess with Americans. They need to see there is no profit

in it. They need to understand we mean business. They need to accept things will never be the same in Iraq. They need to feel the heat. They need to be provided with visible disincentives to further attacks on Americans, free Iraqis and other coalition partners. . . .

We should not try to gain an international consensus for this action. We should not apologize for it. We should not restrain our Air Force and our artillery batteries from wreaking devastation. We should not expose our ground troops to unnecessary risks.

In other words, we may need to flatten Fallujah. We may need to destroy it. We may need to grind it, pulverize it and salt the soil, as the Romans did with troublesome enemies.

Quite frankly, we need to make an example out of Fallujah.

Here's a chance for justice. Here's an opportunity to show the people of the Middle East it doesn't pay to resort to barbarism and terrorism.

In effect, the U.S. military took Mr. Farah's advice. The city *was* pulverized. At least 600 Iraqis — mostly civilians — died in the American attack, which was a reprisal for the deaths of just 4 Americans.

As John Pilger has pointed out, this is no different from when members of the World War II French Resistance (the same "spineless" French that conservatives like to make jokes about) killed or kidnapped a Nazi in occupied towns, causing the Nazis to shoot dozens of innocent Frenchmen in reprisal.

In Iraq the reprisal failed. The Americans eventually had to withdraw entirely from the city, and content themselves with an occasional bombardment. Now the city is run by Islamic emirs and mujahideen who enforce Islamic law strictly. (There probably are quite a few Fallujah residents who would prefer Saddam Hussein to either the Americans or the Islamic emirs.)

But notice the important outcome: *once the Americans abandoned Fallujah, so did the news media*. We no longer get daily news reports about that city. Few people in the U.S. are aware of what's going on in Fallujah.

How Bush Might Win

The entire Iraqi campaign has been a failure for George Bush.

As is now well known, none of the original accusations against Hussein — WMDs, mobile laboratories, uranium from Niger, unmanned planes that could shower biological weapons on America, the aluminum tubes for nuclear weapons — turned out to be valid.

And, contrary to expectations, Iraqis seem to mistake American "liberators" for foreign occupiers.

So what should Bush do — assuming that he's more concerned about reelection than about the future of Iraq?

As I see it, he has two choices available to him:

Door #1

The first choice is to elevate the force being used against the Iraqi resistance. He can send more troops to Iraq — even reactivating the draft, if necessary to acquire enough bodies. In other words, he can keep moving in the direction he's been going.

As we've seen, this hasn't worked out very well, it has produced skepticism even among some of his supporters, and it should now be evident that no amount of force is going to "pacify" Iraq.

Door #2

The second choice is to do what he did in Afghanistan — declare victory and withdraw attention from the battleground, taking the country out of the news and allowing people to believe George Bush when he says that all is well.

Afghanistan is a mess.. There has been no victory there. But *because the President turned our attention to Iraq*, no one notices the violent Civil War that rages in Afghanistan.

So Bush could go before the American people in October and say something like this:

My fellow Americans, I have very good news for you. We continue to win the War on Terror. Our latest victory is the liberation of Iraq. The country now has tens of thousands of Iraqi security police, trained by the good men and women of the U.S. military, and the new democratic government of Iraq is able to govern the country peacefully.

In short, we have prevailed — just as we thought we would.

Accordingly, we can now begin withdrawing our troops from the country. Today I have ordered the immediate return home of 20,000 American soldiers and marines. The withdrawals will continue in an orderly way, and nearly all the troops will be home by February.

At the request of the Iraqi government, we will maintain six military bases in Iraq — in order to protect the country from foreign attack. This will require a token force of 15,000 American troops to remain there indefinitely, but all other American forces will be home by February.

We also have signed an agreement with the Iraqi government to buy all of Iraq's oil production — guaranteeing that Iraq will be able to grow, be self-sufficient, and prosper economically.

God bless America, God bless Iraq, and don't forget to vote next week.

Opposition?

Needless to say, there will be voices raised that say this pronouncement is a sham. There is no peace, no liberation in Iraq.

But a majority of Americans will never hear the rebuttals, only the President's claims. After all, there were people in late 2002 pointing out that "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was a stupid idea, but their arguments received only a fraction of the news coverage that was given to Bush's claims.

Expecting John Kerry to take apart anything George Bush says is about as realistic as expecting George Bush to keep a campaign promise. And CNN, Fox News, and the broadcast networks will interview plenty of administration sycophants who will congratulate the President on a job well done.

Once the election is over and Bush is safely in the White House for another four years, anything can happen. But Bush will be concerned then about his "legacy," and he may have come to realize that attacking another country could lead to another Iraqi-type disaster. And he may be restrained as well from going back on his word to withdraw American troops from Iraq.

Once the U.S. troops are gone, any killing in Iraq will no longer be big news in America. Iraq will be off the front pages, out of the Evening News, and out of the minds of American citizens. Like Afghanistan, Iraq will be thought of as just one more "victory" in the War on Terrorism.

I can't predict the future. But if I can think of such a ruse, why can't Dick Cheney or Karl Rove?

Let's just say I won't be surprised if George Bush announces in October that victory has been achieved and the troops will be coming home from Iraq.

Can America Bring Peace to the World?
by Harry Browne

October 5, 2004

I received this email yesterday:

I just finished a book *The Pentagon's New Map* by Thomas P. M. Barnett, a strategist for the Navy and Defense Department, in which he talks about America's role in the world, with concepts such as exporting rule-sets to the world, and dividing the world into "core" and "gap" countries.

Overall, what he presented challenged some of my assumptions about America's role in the world. I was wondering if the same ends he describes, e.g. peace in our lifetime, could be achieved in more freedom-oriented ways that you have figured out.

I commend this book to your reading, and if you have time, I would be interested in your thoughts.

Unfortunately, because of the book I'm currently writing, I can't spare any time for reading books that aren't related to my current project.

However, from what the email-writer said, I would guess that Thomas Barnett has never bothered to examine the history of government programs — and the sad record of failure after failure after failure. It isn't just the War on Drugs or the War on Poverty or the War on Illiteracy that has failed to fulfill its promises. There hasn't been a single American war in this century or the last in which the U.S. government actually achieved the results that were promised when it went to war.

Here's a brief overview . . .

World War I

Objective: Bring democracy to all the countries of the world, self-determination for everyone, and a new world order that would end wars forever.

Result: American entry into the war prevented the two sides from negotiating a just end to the war. Instead, the Allies saw American entry as decisive, and so they rejected all

peace overtures, fought the war to a bitter end, won the war, and imposed devastating, humiliating peace terms on Germany.

The result was an expansion of the British and French empires, subjecting millions more people worldwide to foreign rule. In addition, millions of Europeans were herded into foreign countries.

The U.S. entry into the European war prompted the Germans to finance and facilitate Lenin's takeover of Russia — creating the Soviet Union. And the oppressive peace terms imposed on the German people caused them to accept a thug named Adolf Hitler as their avenging angel. Thus U.S. entry into the war was responsible for what many call the two worst regimes in world history — and the cause of 52 years of wars from 1939 to 1991.

World War II

Objective: Liberate Europe and China, and impose peace upon the world.

Result: Half of Europe was controlled by the Soviet Union, and China was quickly taken over by the Communists.

The Cold War

Objective: Free subjugated countries.

Result: In the process of "fighting" the Cold War, Iran's democracy was overthrown with the help of the CIA — leaving the Iranians subjugated by the oppressive Shah. That's just one example, however. The U.S. government imposed or assisted dictators in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, China, South Korea, South Vietnam, the Philippines, and numerous countries in Africa.

The Korean War

Objective: Save South Korea from being taken over by an oppressive dictatorship.

Result: South Korea was left in the hands of an oppressive dictator, Syngman Rhee, who was just as oppressive as the communist North Korean dictator, Kim Il Sung.

The Vietnam War

Objective: Save Indochina from Communism, and prevent dominos from falling all over the world.

Result: Indochina was overrun by communists. (Surprisingly, the world didn't come to an end.)

The Panamanian War

Objective: Stop Panama from being a conduit for drug-running.

Result: The Panamanian army was destroyed, leaving the country *more* vulnerable to drug-running.

The First Iraq War

Objective: Free Kuwait and stop Saddam Hussein from taking over the world. (Seriously, George H.W. Bush called him a modern-day Hitler, who had to be stopped the way Hitler should have been stopped at Munich.) At the end of the war, George H.W. Bush called on the Iraqis to overthrow Hussein.

Result: Kuwait is still run by a family dynasty that has no interest in democracy or in providing rights for the people. Apparently, Saddam Hussein wasn't stopped from his diabolical plans of world domination — at least according to George H.W. Bush's son 11 years later. And Bush Sr. helped put down the postwar that would have overthrown Hussein.

The Bombing of Serbia

Objective: End the ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo, perpetrated by the Serbs.

Result: Once the Serbs had been defeated, the Albanians ethnic-cleansed all the Serbs and gypsies out of Kosovo, and began terrorizing the Macedonians in Macedonia.

The War in Afghanistan

Objective: Stop the country from harboring terrorists, get rid of the Taliban, create human rights for women, and establish a free Afghanistan.

Result: Al-Qaeda operatives continue to function there, and Osama Bin Laden himself may be safely hiding in Afghanistan. Women are still treated as tools, rather than people. And as for freedom, the Afghan people are subjugated by brutal, and the Taliban have been invited back in to help restore order.

The War in Iraq

Objective: "Disarm" Saddam Hussein and liberate the Iraqi people.

Result: Turns out that there was nothing to "disarm." (Surprisingly, George Bush is still justifying the war by saying that "Saddam Hussein had no intention of disarming." *Disarming what???*) And over 10,000 Iraqi deaths later, Iraq is not only *not* liberated, it's being occupied by a foreign power that's being fought by a determined resistance movement.

Success?

So while Mr. Barnett's objectives may be attractive, they are irrelevant — since the odds against the U.S. government actually achieving them are at least 100 to 1.

The Pentagon will try to export rule-sets to other countries, with no success (rule-sets that, incidentally, don't apply in the U.S.). If I understand the terms correctly, the "core" countries will be those whose rulers agree to do whatever the U.S. President tells them to do, and the "gap" countries will be those run by rulers who insist on making their own rules.

There is no way that America can make the entire world peaceful — or, in fact, any part of the world except America itself.

Peace in our Time

We could lift the state of siege in America tomorrow morning if the U.S. would simply stop meddling in other countries' affairs.

The supposed "hate America" feeling is really the fear that America is going to come into one's country and throw its weight around — as it has in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Iraq,

Iran, Lebanon, Somalia, Libya, Colombia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Grenada, Guatemala, Indonesia, East Timor, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Pakistan, the Congo, and dozens of other countries.

The question really is simple: Which do we want . . .

- To have our government make a futile effort to bring peace and democracy to the world — in the process generating such hatred that we live the rest of our lives in a state of siege, with America becoming progressively more like the chaos that exists in Israel and the Palestinian territories?

Or

- Bring all the troops home, end all foreign aid to friends and foes alike, keep out of the affairs of other countries — and restore the peace and liberty that America experienced throughout most of the 19th century?

You decide. But when you decide, remember that you're choosing the inevitable consequences at the same time you choose the objective.

Fighting communism
by Harry Browne

October 19, 2004

I received the following email:

A friend of mine read your article "Can America Bring Peace to the World?" [in which you said that the U.S. government has always failed to deliver on the promises made when entering a war, including entering the Cold War]. He said you failed to mention that American intervention stopped the Communists from taking over Greece and Turkey in 1946. He also said that North Korea and South Korea today are not in similar situations. South Korea is the next Japan and North Korea is in the pits. What say you, Harry Browne?

Your friend didn't go far enough. He should have mentioned other Cold War triumphs of the U.S. government — such as overthrowing the democratic government of Iran and imposing the tyrannical Shah in 1953; helping the Indonesian dictator Suharto as he slaughtered at least 250,000 Indonesians and then at least 150,000 East Timorese, and continuing to train Indonesian thugs on into the 1990s; installing and protecting dictators throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa — all in the name of protecting innocent people from tyranny.

As for South and North Korea, the U.S. government fought for the dictatorial regime of Syngman Rhee in the Korean War. As it turns out, South Korea eventually discarded the shackles of oppressive government while North Korea has yet to do so. But that hardly justifies the price Americans paid for going to war to support a dictator — 33,651 American soldiers dead, an escalation of the federal budget, civil liberties ignored, rationing, and much else. Not only did the Korean War not free subjugated people, it added 150 million Americans to the ranks of the subjugated.

Fighting Communism, Part II
by Harry Browne

October 22, 2004

Yesterday I received the following email:

Your October 19th journal entry failed to address the claim that "American intervention stopped the Communists from taking over Greece and Turkey in 1946." Can you comment on this?

I don't know much about the intervention in Turkey. I will be researching it for my forthcoming book on American wars.

However, I'm quite familiar with the situation in Greece. It was considerably different from the way it's normally described. American intervention there established the "Truman Doctrine," which today neo-conservatives delight in citing as a precedent for their proposals to have America police the world. Thus there is a great incentive to perpetuate the myth that Harry Truman's bold intervention prevented a Communist takeover of Greece at the end of World War II.

In fact, however, there was absolutely no danger of such a Communist takeover. Near the end of the war Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agreed that each of their three countries would have postwar control over whichever countries it liberated from the Nazis. This gave the Soviets a free hand in Eastern Europe, and it gave the British a free hand in Greece, among other places. The Soviets kept their word and stayed completely out of the Greek Civil War — intervening only at the end to order the Greek Communist Party to give up the battle.

The Greek Communist Party was actually only a small part of the Popular Front that opposed the ruling Greek government. That government was extremely oppressive — squashing civil liberties, assassinating opponents, and rigging what few elections were allowed to take place. The British tried to help the Greek government ward off the rebellion, but their resources were exhausted from the World War. So the Americans stepped in and provided arms and ammunition (but not troops) to the Greek government, and that was sufficient to end the rebellion eventually.

The Greek Civil War (as it was called) was never a struggle between the forces of freedom and Communism. It was simply a rebellion against an oppressive government (which is not to say that a rebel victory would have made Greece any more of a free country). The U.S. government intervened, as it did in so many purely local disputes, for reasons other than that of fighting communism.

What, then, was the real reason the U.S. intervened?

Mainly, the alleged need to combat Communism in Greece gave President Truman the clout to hike the military budget significantly, to impose restrictions on the American people, and to clamp down on alleged communists inside the U.S. government. In the same way, from 1945 through 1950 all military intelligence indicated that the Soviets were too weak to consider invading Western Europe, but administration officials continually went before Congress and claimed that increased American military might was necessary to stop the Soviets from overrunning the continent. They dropped that claim only when the Korean War began and provided a more visible excuse to expand the U.S. government.

From 1945 through 1991, virtually every dispute between a pro-American dictator and his local opposition was depicted as a titanic struggle to preserve freedom by preventing Communists from taking over another country. It worked well, and so today our politicians depict every terrorist or guerrilla attack anywhere in the world as an attempt by Al-Qaeda to advance its plans to destroy American civilization. The Transportation Security Agency has cited the Chechen attack in the Russian city of Beslan (one more battle in a decades-old conflict) as a reason to make life even more uncomfortable and humiliating for U.S. airline passengers.

And during the Cold War, we were told that we had to fight the Communists in Greece (or Korea or Guatemala) so that we wouldn't have to fight them in New York or Los Angeles — just as today we're told that Americans are fighting in Iraq so that we won't have to fight in Seattle or Aspen.

This is not to say that the Communists were peace-loving agrarian reformers. They weren't. But they also were not the constant, imminent danger that our politicians made them out to be. However, we'll leave that issue for another time.

The story of how our government manipulated the situation in Greece in order to gain bigger budgets and greater control over Americans is important because it is being duplicated today — as our government uses any eruption anywhere in the world as an excuse to expand its dominance over our lives.

And the irony is that today's war-mongers are citing the Greek conflict as evidence that America can triumph over its enemies if it will only act boldly and ruthlessly. In fact, the more "boldly" America acts, the more enemies it creates — in the 1940s and today.

The more things change . . .

Libertarians for Bush
by Harry Browne

October 26, 2004

Here is an amalgamation of two emails I've received. . . .

At least four celebrity libertarians that I know of, at least some of whom are Libertarian Party members, have issued statements of support for the reelection of George Bush.

They urge libertarians to vote for Bush, instead of voting Libertarian. I know you don't agree with them, but I do.

While too many libertarians keep their heads in the sand, George Bush has stood up to terrorists and is taking steps to fight them.

There has been throughout history, and continues uninterrupted today, hordes of people who need no more excuse than their own bloodthirsty and genocidal impulses to aggress on others. Think about the sort of being that enjoys slowly sawing off the head of someone else. Think of Hitler's concentration camps and gas chambers. Think of Stalin's gulags. Think of Mao's mass starvation. Think of Pol Pot's killing fields. Did they do these things because they had legitimate grievances?

I don't know. Do the people inside America — who kidnap, torture, and kill other people — have legitimate grievances? Should we start bombing New York? Chicago? Washington, D.C.? — to get rid of the thugs inside America?

What I do know is that there always has been and always will be thugs in the world. Mostly those thugs are feared and condemned by respectable people. But when millions of people — well-meaning, relatively decent people — give their support to those thugs — as they did with Hitler and as they are today with the terrorists — you know that there *are* legitimate grievances that allow the thugs to command the respect of others. To whatever extent you dismiss those grievances, you multiply the support given to the thugs. What the thugs are doing is wrong — just as it was wrong to commit the acts that created the legitimate grievances.

There are two possible courses of action available to America — and I sincerely hope you will think long and hard about these two possibilities:

Choice #1: You can try to stamp out the thugs, which is impossible, if the history of the world is any guide whatsoever. That means that the so-called War on Terror will continue for the rest of our lives. And for the rest of our lives we will be subjected to humiliating searches at airports, to our email being monitored, to warrantless searches and seizures, to wire-tapping. And what we must put up with today is just the beginning, because every time there's another terrorist act (anywhere in the world, such as the Chechen attack in Russia), the invasions into our lives will be expanded and expanded and expanded.

Choice #2: You can change American foreign policy.

Stop the U.S. government from invading other countries.

Stop the U.S. government from supporting dozens of dictators around the world.

Stop the U.S. government from having the world's largest national offense, but absolutely no national defense.

Stop the U.S. government from telling other countries "you're either with us or against us."

Stop the U.S. government from meddling in the affairs of other countries.

Stop the U.S. government from stationing troops in 702 bases in foreign.

Stop the U.S. government from bribing foreign governments with your tax money.

This won't bring peace to the whole world (and neither will choice #1). But it will bring relative peace to America, and allow it to once again be a nation of liberty — proud of the Bill of Rights and the freedoms Americans enjoy, rather than obsessed with security.

Do you really want to live in an expanding police state for the rest of your life?

Why We Must Stay in Iraq (or Not) by Harry Browne

December 24, 2004

On Thursday the daily column of Al Neuharth, founder of *USA Today*, advocated getting out of Iraq sooner, rather than later.

This provoked hundreds of emails. Here are some that were reported in Editor & Publisher, together with my comments.

A.P. Oliver, commander USN (ret.): "To withdraw troops from Iraq would qualify as the greatest surrender in history and invite direct attacks here in this country and ultimately drastically change the way we live."

Let me see if I have this right. Hundreds — if not thousands — more Americans will have to die, thousands more Iraqis will have to die, and we at home will have to cough up hundreds of billions of dollars more out of our pockets because a thoughtless, insensitive President decided to invade a foreign country without having the good sense to *personally* check the evidence justifying the invasion.

Withdrawing from Iraq would not be "the greatest surrender in history." The greatest surrender already has occurred — when we surrendered to the federal government the power to sacrifice our lives and eat away our sustenance — when we allowed one man to put this nation in such jeopardy.

Michael Bustamente, Sterling Height, MI: "Tell you what. We leave and the sanctimonious jerks like you and your Free Press, you go there and stay after we leave."

Sanctimonious = Not wanting to see people die for no purpose other than to prevent a delusional President from having to admit he made a mistake.

Cliff Hair: "Never heard of Al Neuharth! What makes him so special and who gives a damn what he thinks?"

Apparently you do.

Alec Jones, Hoover, AL: "Nothing more than a unilateral withdrawal would encourage those who are our enemies and wish to do us harm."

Do you really believe that keeping American troops in Iraq would discourage "our enemies" and cause them to stop wishing to "do us harm." Perhaps George Bush *isn't* the most delusional man in America.

Bob Armstrong, Clayton, CA: "When the Iraqi elections are held and they demonstrate a willingness to fight for freedom this will all be worth it."

You mean it will justify the deaths of upwards of 100,000 Iraqis and Americans — probably none of whom considers an election in Iraq to be a worthwhile reward for losing his life? And since you consider it will all be worth it, are you now on your way to Iraq to offer your life? Or is it worth only *other people's* lives?

Pat Giuffra: "I have asked the hotels to not deliver *USA Today* anymore to my room because of this type of distorted news reporting that it is putting out these days."

Neuharth's column was presented not as "reporting," but as opinion. As to "distorted news reporting," are you referring to the acres of newsprint in 2002 and 2003 that were devoted to repeating verbatim the administration's "evidence" that Iraq had WMDs, mobile labs producing bio-chemical weapons, aluminum tubes that could be used only to produce nuclear bombs, unmanned planes that could drop WMDs on the eastern United States, enriched uranium being bought in Africa, and Al-Qaeda training camps? Or are you referring to the few commentators who refused to believe that the administration knew what it was talking about?

Rand Oertle: "We didn't get out of World War II until the job was finished. The defeat of Germany and Japan took years. Now they are our allies."

And 292,131 Americans died so that the Soviet Union could dominate half of Europe.

Travis Snyder: "He dishonors those who died by inviting American surrender."

You're right. Let's honor the dead by letting thousands more Americans die.

Travis Snyder again: "This is no Vietnam. We can never have another Vietnam."

No, we can't. We've renamed it Iraq.

Why I Am Obsessed with War **By Harry Browne**

January 28, 2005

George Bush was reinaugurated in Washington last week. Fittingly, the inauguration parade route was lined the entire way with armed guards — so many armed guards that they had to stand shoulder-to-shoulder. As with the rest of America, Washington, D.C. was in a state of siege.

The militant air of the entire affair was very much like a parade in the old Soviet Union or even in Nazi Germany.

And in his speech, George Bush proclaimed his desire for world domination — to have the power and the right to decide who is good and who is bad, who shall live and who shall die, what form of government will exist in each nation.

He made it clear that if he has a use for your government, you will keep it — no matter how oppressive.

But if your government doesn't suit him, if it declares its independence from the United States, we will "liberate" your country and impose what we call "democracy" on it — no matter how advanced your civilization, no matter how much or how little your people may approve of your current form of government.

Of course, by "we" he meant George Bush.

George Bush is, in effect, the ruler of the world — more powerful than the United Nations, more powerful than the countries of Europe, more powerful than the Congress of the United States, more powerful than the people of the United States — a majority of whom now believe that George Bush was wrong to invade Iraq. But that majority opinion has no effect on George Bush, who continues to try to impose His way upon Iraq, and who most likely now has His sights on Iran.

My Obsession

If you've been reading my articles or listening to my radio, you may be aware of how much attention I've given to this drive for world domination — dressed up as the "War on Terror" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom." I've written over and over about these wars.

You might say I'm obsessed with war.

And you'd be right.

I'm obsessed with war because of what war really is. And because of what war is doing to America.

Why am I so obsessed?

Sacrifice

A January 21st editorial in the Wall Street Journal summed up George Bush's inauguration speech very neatly:

The entire speech was about Iraq, as a way of explaining to Americans why the sacrifice our troops are making there is justified.

Aye, and there's the rub.

Troops don't sacrifice. Only individuals can sacrifice. For some of them, the sacrifice is a year out of their lives. For others, the sacrifice is in living for a year or more in constant fear and danger.

But for too many, the sacrifice is one's life. The loss of one's *whole* life.

That's not the same as giving a tenth of your income to the church, or working 15 hours a week in a soup kitchen, or spending a day a week helping out at a nursing home. When you sacrifice your life, you give up *everything*. The world has ended. What you were no longer exists. No more life, no more love, no more music, no more sports, no more breathing, no more interest in anything.

And when you've sacrificed your life, it no longer matters whether Iraq is "liberated" or oppressed, because you don't exist any more. It no longer matters whether George Bush is a great leader or a megalomaniac, because you no longer have a life with which to be affected by it. You are no more.

George Bush can speak cavalierly about such sacrifices. He can say "freedom is always worth it " He can speak with gratitude about such sacrifices — because he is making no sacrifice whatsoever.

He can tell young people that when you die "you will add not just to the wealth of our country, but to its character."

But he is not the Messiah. He can't bring those dead people back to life. He can not restore their ability to taste love, to enjoy fellowship, to pursue a career, to bask in the sheer joy of being alive.

He can't return to a mother her dead son. He can't return to a wife her dead husband. He can't bring a dead soldier back to raise his children. He can't do anything to restore what he has stolen from people with his glib assurances about WMDs, mobile bioweapons labs, unmanned planes dropping chemical weapons on the East Coast of the United States, about freedom always being worth the price — a price that to *him* is effectively zero.

The dead are dead, and they can't come back. They won't dance at any inaugural balls — or even attend their alumni reunions. They won't attend presidential banquets — or even eat at the local coffee shop. Not ever again.

They are dead. And George Bush killed them. He killed them as certainly as though he personally had fired a rocket launcher at their homes.

Who or What Is He?

If he didn't know that his plan to "liberate" people who hadn't asked to be liberated, to bring democracy to people who hadn't asked for democracy, would lead to the deaths of thousands of people, he is not only incompetent and unfit to hold office, he is surely psychopathic and needs to be incarcerated.

Only a psychopath would stand in the midst of thousands of security guards and speak of "the force of human freedom."

Only a man so insulated from the real world by palace sycophants, by little Napoleons filled with utopian fantasies, and by callous, ambitious schemers to whom the lives of others mean nothing — only a man so insulated could possibly speak of "the expansion of freedom in all the world."

Only a man with no link to reality could start a war that destroys lives and families and then say, "Every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth."

Only a snake oil salesman can rain missiles and bombs on other countries and then say that no "human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies."

Only a man divorced from human reason can imprison people — possibly for life — without due process of law and then say that "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves."

Only a liar can proclaim that he will decide which countries must be remade and then say, "No one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave."

Only a devious schemer can announce a goal of "ending tyranny in our" while he is imposing a new tyranny in his own country — *our* country.

So you tell me: what kind of a President do we have?

And what has he given us other than wars, fear, and a state of siege?

Why the Obsession?

Yes, I have become obsessed with these wars.

Josef Stalin is reputed to have said that a single death is a tragedy, a million deaths only a statistic.

But no matter how many people die in Iraq, every single one of them is a tragedy — a tragedy I will neither ignore nor forget. And that's why I'm obsessed with this war.

I'm obsessed with each and every death — because in fact each and every death is more than a statistic or a tragedy. It's murder.

I will never forget the people, American or Iraqi, whose lives have been irrevocably destroyed — the people who have been murdered, the people who lost those they love, the people whose homes have been smashed to bits, the people who are maimed for the rest of the only lives they will ever live.

And neither will I ever forget who it is that killed them.

They were killed by a relatively small group in Washington who believe they were put there by God to remake the world — not remake it in God's image, but in Their own.

I believe it is a crime to take the life of another person. And no murder of an innocent person can be justified by saying it was necessary to achieve some larger goal — whether or not that goal is claimed to be a worthy one.

When reformers create murder and mayhem, they justify it by saying, "You can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs." But it's always *someone else's* eggs that get broken. And the omelet never materializes — even after millions of eggs are broken, as they were during the two World Wars.

Life

Yes, I'm obsessed with war.

I'm obsessed with war because I'm obsessed with life.

I love life. I love my wife Pamela. I love being in love with her. I love the 19 years we've been playing house together — pretending we're grown-ups, just like our parents.

I love music. I love food. I love reading. I love sports. I even love sleeping. I taste and love so many parts of life.

I don't ever want to die.

And I don't want anyone else to die — except maybe those who treat life so trivially that they can speak of the sacrifice of *other people's* lives as being a worthwhile price to pay for some idealistic goal they believe they will achieve — a goal that will give them an exalted position in the history books.

Reformers such as George Bush are like children playing games based on fantasies. They see no reason to discover whether others before them have harbored the same ambitions — and failed miserably to achieve their goals. It's of no concern to them that without an understanding of the history and cultures of other peoples, they have no hope either to persuade or to dominate other people.

And they pay no attention to the fact that in the process of "ending tyranny in our world" they are imposing a new tyranny in their own country — *our* country.

Yes, I'm obsessed with war.

I'm obsessed with war because I love life.

And so I will continue to fight against America's wars with every bit of strength, with every bit of talent, with every resource I can spare.

Should the U.S. Military Be Allowed to Use Torture?
by Harry Browne

January 11, 2005

As you know, the Bush administration has been under fire for its use of torture — and it has become apparent that torture has pervaded the U.S. military's activities not just at Abu Ghraib, but also in other parts of Iraq, in Afghanistan, at Guantanamo, and elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the argument over the use of torture has focused on whether the nature of terrorism justifies its use: Terrorists do terrible things, so why should they have any

rights? And why not use torture against terrorists who might be able to provide information that could prevent another terrorist attack?

Opponents of torture answer "no" — but they do it on the grounds that this is contrary to international law (which could open the door to wider use of torture by our enemies), and that it is inhumane to use torture — even if the person being tortured is a terrorist.

In all the arguing over the presumed rights of a terrorist, one thing is being overlooked: *no one knows for sure whether the person being tortured really is a terrorist.*

There are three very good reasons we have a 6th in the Bill of Rights:

First, until the accused has had his day in court, until he has had the benefit of an attorney who can call attention to weaknesses in the case against him, until he has had the opportunity to confront and cross-examine those who have accused him, until his case can be judged by people who don't have a vested interest in convicting him, *no one can be sure the accused is guilty.*

We already have narratives from people who make a pretty good case that they are entirely innocent, but were captured and arrested by the U.S., put in jail, denied all contact with counsel or family, and tortured.

Second, if the Bill of Rights isn't adhered to, if the accused isn't given the privileges accorded therein, it's too easy to convict the wrong person — thus *allowing the guilty party to go free* and continue to commit crimes. So the Bill of Rights doesn't just protect the rights of the innocent, it also enhances the security of the community.

Third, using torture on prisoners is a poor way to gain information. The moment anyone started to torture me, I'd tell him anything he wanted to know — even if I didn't know anything. I would confess my crimes immediately — even if I had committed no crimes. I would say anything the torturer wanted to hear. But of what value is that to him?

Absolutely no value at all. In fact, if my statements were believed and people acted on what they "learned" from torturing me, they would waste valuable resources by pursuing false leads.

The problem, as so often is the case, comes back to government schools. Because there is virtually no education covering the *reasons* for the Bill of Rights, very few people in America have an understanding of why we have a Bill of Rights and why *it must be enforced without exception* — in both civilian courts and in military justice.

P.S. To those who say that the Bill of Rights doesn't apply to non-Americans, I say: read the Bill of Rights. Nowhere does it refer to the citizenship of the people affected. The 1st amendment refers to "Congress," the 2nd to "people," the third to "soldiers," the 4th to

"people," the 5th to "person," the 6th to "accused," the 9th to "people," the 10th to the "States" and to the "people," while the 7th and 8th don't refer to any specific entities. The word "American" or "citizen" appears nowhere in the Bill of Rights.

If the government is allowed to suspend the Bill of Rights for *anyone*, the security of all of us is diminished.

P.P.S. What is truly amazing is that after the Abu Ghraib scandal erupted, George W. Bush was still tsk, tsking about Hussein's alleged use of torture.

**The War Against Strawmen
a.k.a. "The War on Terrorism"
by Harry Browne**

December 13, 2005

The Bush Administration continues to maintain that its war in Iraq, and its adventures anywhere else, are aimed at ending worldwide terrorism.

But such a feat is not only impossible, it is absurd.

Terrorism is a crime, not a war. Terrorism is committed by gangs of criminals — not soldiers representing a sovereign government. And no one in his right mind can believe that our government can eliminate every criminal gang in the world.

If our government could do that, why wouldn't it start with the drug gangs that terrorize areas of Washington, D.C.? What a perfect opportunity for the politicians to demonstrate their crime-fighting abilities.

On October 4, 2001, I wrote:

Because the September attacks were a crime, the government's job is to locate and bring to trial any perpetrators who didn't die in the attacks. If some of them are located in foreign countries, our government should request extradition — not threaten to bomb the foreign country if we don't get our way.

I was criticized by some people, who asked, "But what if all the 'criminals' aren't caught"

And yet, here we are four years later, tens of thousands of people have died, and still not all the criminals have been caught regardless. Osama Bin Laden not only hasn't been apprehended, he isn't even talked about anymore. As I said in:

If not all the criminals are found and brought to trial, it doesn't mean that bombing innocent people would have brought the criminals to justice.

So why do the politicians talk about a War on Terrorism that makes no sense?

Because it opens the door to all sorts of aggressions against foreigners and Americans.

And it allows the politicians — most notably the leading members of the Bush administration — to pose as noble warriors against enemies that are really only Strawmen.

Charley Reese, in a recent LewRockwell.com article, quoted Dick Cheney as claiming a U.S. pullout from Iraq would leave it in the hands of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Osama Bin Laden, and/or Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Charley points out that "Zarqawi is a Jordanian, not an Iraqi; he has been denounced by his tribe and his family; and he has killed more Iraqis than Americans. It is just a matter of time before some Iraqi drops a dime on him and he's packed off to Islamic hell."

But he's a worthy Strawman, a bogey man, whose name is worth a hundred million dollars or more in Congressional appropriations.

Charley goes on, "As for bin Laden and his Egyptian adviser, they are — assuming they're still alive — hiding out in some cave or rat-infested village in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan. They could not control a small town, much less a country of 25 million people of which neither of them is a native."

As we all know, the U.S. government has since World War II been financing and arming various foreign dictators — such as Saddam Hussein, Manuel Noriega, the Shah of Iran, and others — only to denounce and attack them once they become wealthy and aggressive enough to be worthy Strawmen.

It's also true that the U.S. government has financed and armed various opposition groups that supposedly represent the opportunity to topple the mean old dictators. Often these groups oppose each other, and engage in violence against one another. But no matter, the object of our government is to be doing something to fight a Strawman.

Robert Dreyfuss, in another excellent LewRockwell.com, catalogs a number of the groups that opposed Saddam Hussein and are now battling for control of Iraq. There is far more than the Iraqi National Congress. The strongest groups are SCIRI (the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution), Al Dawa (The Islamic Call), SCIRI's paramilitary arm, the Badr Brigade, the Muslim Brotherhood, represented by IIP (the Iraqi Islamic Party) — not to mention Al-Qaeda. The first three originated and are based in — guess where — Iran. In fact, SCIRI was founded in 1982 by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Today these groups are fighting each other as much as they're fighting Iraqi insurgents, Americans, or Iraqi civilians. They regularly practice torture, assassinations, and other dastardly deeds upon one another. They are fighting to become the rulers of the new Iraq — the "democracy" that George Bush claims to be creating.

Is this what 2,000 Americans and tens of thousands of Iraqis have died for? Is this what \$200 billion dollars has financed? Is this why we have given up so much of our freedom?

And whoever wins the battle to rule Iraq will eventually become Strawmen against whom the Bush administration can get on its horses and ride off to protect us.

There is no War on Terrorism. There is only a War on Strawmen, a War on Shadows, a War on Fantasies — allowing George Bush to do whatever he, or his advisors, choose to do.

It is time to quit pretending that the War in Iraq serves any purpose relating to world peace, democracy in the Middle East, the first line against terrorism, or any other salutary goal.

It is simply part of the War on Strawmen.

A Foreign Policy for America
by Harry Browne

(Adapted from "Freedom from War," in The Great Libertarian Offer)

In 1914 Austria was Europe's "superpower." The Austrian Empire included the territories of present-day Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, as well as parts of Italy and Romania.

Serbia, an independent country, wasn't part of the Empire. Many Serbs (both in Serbia and Bosnia) wanted Serbia to annex Bosnia, but the Austrian Emperor refused to let Bosnia go.

When the Emperor's heir apparent, Archduke Ferdinand, visited Bosnia, he was shot and killed by a Bosnian Serb.

The assassination was a crime, of course, but it was committed by just a handful of men. Since Bosnia was part of Austria, it would have been a simple matter for Austria to prosecute the assassin and his collaborators. But instead the Austrian Emperor accused Serbia's government of arranging the murder, and Austria mobilized for war against Serbia.

At the time, governments inside and outside of Europe were joined together in a web of mutual defense treaties, and so a local quarrel became a world war. Britain, France, Belgium, Romania, Greece, Portugal, Montenegro, Russia, and even Japan supported Serbia. On the other side, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, and Turkey supported Austria. The awful war quickly consumed most of Europe.

Eventually, 15 million soldiers and civilians would be killed and at least 20 million wounded — all because one person had been assassinated. What a testament to the irrationality of war.

Stalemate

After three years of fighting, the two sides were bogged down in a bloody stalemate — with neither able to gain a decisive advantage.

The armies on both sides were exhausted, and Europeans were ready for an armistice that would stop the terrible bloodshed. Germany put out feelers to end the conflict.

If that armistice had materialized in 1917, the history of the past 80 years would have been quite different and much happier. There might still be monarchs in Germany, Austria, Belgium, and even Russia. That may be distasteful to some, but it might have saved the lives of tens of millions of people.

With Russia and Germany again at peace, the Germans would have had no reason to help Lenin take over Russia, and the Soviet Union never would have been born. And with the German Emperor still on the throne, Adolf Hitler would never have had the opportunity to seize power.

Although no one can say for sure, it seems very unlikely that there would have been a second World War. And without that war and without a Soviet Union, there would have been no Cold War, no Korean War, no Vietnam War. The 20th century wouldn't have been an era of perfect peace, but it would have avoided being history's bloodiest 100 years.

American Intervention Changes History

But such was not to be.

Instead, in 1917, after winning reelection for keeping America out of the war, Woodrow Wilson pulled America into it — and that intervention changed history irrevocably for the worse.

Millions of fresh American soldiers streamed into Europe — tipping the balance of power and overwhelming an enemy exhausted from three years of war. Germany and Austria surrendered, the German emperor fled to the Netherlands, and the Allies imposed devastating conditions upon a defeated Germany.

So, instead of a functioning Germany with Kaiser Wilhelm on the throne, America produced a prostrate Germany eager for revenge.

The humanitarian spirit that propelled America into a war to "end all wars" laid the groundwork for two of history's worst murderers — Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler.

Could Woodrow Wilson — or anyone else — have foreseen all this in advance?

No, and that's the point. Once you embark on the use of force — for any purpose — you have no idea what will fly up out of Pandora's box.

Lessons to Be Learned

At least, one could learn a lesson from the deaths of 15 million people. In fact, World War I offered two unmistakable lessons:

- George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were right to say America would achieve nothing but ruin by meddling in the ancient quarrels of Europe.
- When mutual defense treaties fail to deter wars, as they usually do, they enlarge war and make it bloodier. A mutual defense treaty easily becomes a mutual suicide pact.

Unfortunately, memories are short, and history seems to be such a dull subject.

So when the politicians tell us we have a chance to bring about world peace if we just send more of our children to die, or just bomb more innocent civilians overseas, or just bully a few more smaller countries, many people don't realize they are listening to a story that has been told many times before — and seldom produced a happy ending.

THE PERMANENT WAR FOOTING

America returned to peace and independent policies after World War I. But after World War II our government enmeshed itself in mutual defense treaties all over the world, put us on a permanent war footing, undertook numerous military adventures, and took sides in almost everyone's conflicts — much of which activity had little to do with the Soviet threat.

Here are a few examples:

- In the 1980s our government sent military equipment to Iraq's Saddam Hussein to help him fight the Ayatollah in Iran. Much of the American equipment was used in 1990 to help Iraq invade Kuwait. So our children were sent to Iraq to depose our one-time ally Saddam Hussein — now described by our politicians as a modern Hitler. However, even after the U.S. killed thousands of civilians and soldiers, Hussein remained in power.
- Our government enlisted Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega in the fight against communism. But in 1989 the U.S. military invaded Panama, killed a number of people, kidnapped Noriega, took him to Florida, and imprisoned him — supposedly to stop the use of Panama as a relay station for the drug trade. Noriega still sits in a U.S. prison, but there's no indication that the drug flow through Panama has abated. In fact, the drug cartels of South America move freely into Panama because America destroyed Panama's army in 1989.
- American politicians went to the Philippines to monitor elections, pressure the Philippine people to get rid of Ferdinand Marcos, and end corruption. Marcos lost the election, but corruption is as rampant in the Philippines today as it was then — and the subject no longer seems to interest American politicians.
- Our government bombed Libya in 1986, killing a number of civilians, to force Muammar Khadaffi to end his support for terrorists. But two years after our government supposedly taught Khadaffi a lesson, a bomb destroyed a Pan American Airlines flight over Scotland, killing 259 people — and our government says Khadaffi was responsible.
- During the 1980s our government helped the "freedom fighters" take power in Afghanistan. In 1998 our government bombed those same Afghans, claiming they were now harboring terrorists.

- In Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia — wherever our government has meddled — the only consistent outcomes have been American deaths, American tax dollars wasted, the sacrifice of thousands of innocent foreigners, and no lasting solution.

In country after country, American intervention either failed to achieve its objective or succeeded in making matters worse.

A DANGEROUS WORLD

Because America has taken sides in so many conflicts, because America has armed so many countries' enemies, because America has imposed so many "solutions" on so many people, because American troops occupy so many countries, the world has become dangerous for America.

Foreigners generally love McDonald's but hate our government. Foreign politicians exploit that hatred. And now and then foreign terrorists try — or pretend to try — to change our government's policies by bombing American targets here or abroad.

But our policies don't change, because politicians never respond to problems by letting go of their power. So, instead of doing something to eliminate the motive for actual or threatened terrorism, our politicians "fight" it with even more foreign adventures.

And they issue a steady stream of alarms about frightening problems around the world — all of which supposedly require our immediate attention and intervention.

But why should we have anything to fear? Our country is bounded by two friendly nations and two oceans that protect us from invasion. We are open only to the sky. Our first military concern should be to defend ourselves against missiles launched from overseas.

Weak Defense

And therein lies the rub.

Today we have a very strong national offense, but a very weak national defense.

American taxpayers have coughed up trillions of dollars for the military since World War II — giving the politicians the power to destroy any country in the world. But we are still almost completely helpless before any dictator who decides to lob a low-budget missile at your city.

The basic technology to defend against incoming missiles has been available for close to 30 years, and perfecting and implementing it becomes easier every year. But by leaving us vulnerable, the politicians can justify more power for themselves.

They tell us we must arm ourselves to the teeth with weapons that can threaten any would-be attacker with annihilation. We must station American troops in nearly a hundred countries around the world, as though your children were a Roman army of occupation. We must intervene in every foreign dispute to prevent it from escalating into a wider war. We must react with fright when India or Pakistan tests a nuclear weapon. We must intimidate other countries and impose our "solutions" upon them. And although the Cold War is over, we must continue to support a huge, bureaucratic Defense Department and military.

In reality, we need only two things to make you, me, and every American safe from the world's turmoil: (1) a missile defense that will repel a nuclear attack, and (2) a border patrol that will protect us from those rampaging Canadians when they charge across the border from Ontario.

With a proper defense against incoming missiles, we'd have no need to intimidate the world with offensive missiles — threatening to kill millions of civilians in an aggressor country. We'd have no reason to bomb Serbia, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Sudan, or any other country — and then give it billions of dollars to repair the damage. Instead, we could let others nurse their age-old grievances they seem to love so much — knowing that their problems can't hurt us.

Mutual Suicide

And even without a missile defense, we have no need to participate in NATO, the United Nations, or any other foreign agency that wants to bind you and me to its decisions. And there is no reason to risk disaster with mutual defense treaties. (Or do you really believe Turkey and Italy will rush to help us if we're attacked?)

Our federal government was formed to protect Americans, not foreigners.

If we're responsible for the defense of Europe, what are the Europeans responsible for — the defense of Asia?

POLITICIANS & DEATH

War is justified by blurring the distinction between foreign rulers and their subjects. Our politicians cite the sins of foreign rulers, and then ask us to join in killing their downtrodden subjects.

The politicians want us to forget that wars and "police actions" kill innocent people. They talk about teaching a foreign dictator a lesson, but the dictator never gets hurt. Instead, American bombs kill thousands of innocent civilians who may hate the dictator even more than our politicians claim to.

For example, since the Gulf War in 1991, our government has brow-beaten other governments to ban trade with Iraq — in order to force Saddam Hussein from power. In the eight years of trade sanctions through 1999, it is estimated that at least 1,700,000 Iraqi civilians have died for lack of imported foreign food and medicine.

And, although it doesn't seem to make the newspapers very often, from time to time American planes continue to drop bombs on innocent Iraqi civilians.

Politicians call the deaths of the innocent "collateral damage." And President Clinton and the Republican Congress have steadfastly supported the policy of starving and bombing, even though it has achieved nothing but death and disease.

And after ten years of delivering death by air freight, the U.S. has left Saddam Hussein still firmly entrenched in power. But American politicians never admit the failure or cruelty of their policies — or even discuss the matter.

The war against Serbia in 1999 was little different. When it ended, the hated Slobodan Milosevic was still ruling the country. And it became apparent that American bombing had done little to cripple Serbia's military. But hundreds, and maybe thousands, of civilians died — including many of the Albanian civilians who supposedly were the objects of our government's "humanitarian" mission.

Isn't there a better way?

SOLUTIONS

Yes, there is.

Like the Founding Fathers, Libertarians know that war is the first resort of political scoundrels, but the last resort of a free people. Libertarians know that government's role isn't to police the world — or even to win wars. Government's role is to keep us out of wars — and to protect us from foreign enemies, not create them.

How would a Libertarian government assure our safety?

Our foreign policy would be simple:

We are always ready to defend ourselves, but we threaten no one.

America's foreign policy should rest on four principles.

1. Non-Interference

Our government should express good will and a desire for peace toward all — threatening no foreign country, interfering in no other countries' disputes, arming or aiding no foreign governments, and giving terrorists no motivation to influence our government.

Any American who wants to volunteer to a foreign government to fight in its war, to negotiate its peace, or to send money to help defend it should be free to do so with no interference from the U.S. government.

But no American should be forced to participate in or pay for such activities. And our politicians should quit committing Americans to these futile attempts to settle other people's problems.

When the politicians drag us off to someone else's war, they always offer plenty of reasons — too many, in fact, to be taken seriously. The typical menu of justifications for a single intervention might be: We must interfere to keep the conflict from spreading, to head off the emergence of a new Hitler, to protect our allies, to do the moral thing, and to end violations of human rights.

But how can our politicians protect human rights in other countries? They don't even respect our rights. They try to disarm you, they allow the police to invade your life and property, they use the insane War on Drugs to impose police-state surveillance on all of us, and they try to censor the Internet. So how can they claim to care about human rights in other nations?

2. No Foreign Aid or Military Assistance

The Constitution grants our government no authority to take your money to support foreign governments.

Not only is it unconstitutional, it is unfair by almost any standard. Little of the money reaches the average citizen in the target country. Most of it enriches the rulers — and it helps them stay in power and continue the policies that keep their countries poor.

As Fred L. Smith pointed out, foreign aid taxes poor people in rich countries for the benefit of rich people in poor countries.

Foreign aid originally was justified as a way of arming countries against Communist encroachment. But Cuba, China, and Vietnam all fell to the Communists after receiving massive amounts of American money and weapons. In fact, much of the military equipment given to fight the Communists eventually fell into their hands.

So the politicians no longer bother trying to justify giving your money to foreign governments. They just do it. And, not surprisingly, most of the money has strings attached — requiring that it be spent with politically connected industries in the U.S.

Much foreign aid is spent to fix problems that might not exist but for our government. For example, many Americans understandably worry about Israel's security, fearing that without American aid Israel will be overrun by its neighbors. But the most effective thing our government could do to help Israel would be to stop arming Israel's enemies.

Our government's eagerness to take sides in Middle East disputes has put billions of dollars of weapons in the hands of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Small wonder that it seems necessary to rush to Israel's defense when hostile governments can use American weapons to intimidate Israel.

Every American should be free to send money or weapons to Israel or any other government in the world. But our government has no business taxing you for the benefit of any foreign government.

3. Security against Attack

Are there bad people in the world who would conquer America if they could?

Most likely, there are. But how would they do it?

They would have to pulverize American cities to the point that we submit to an invasion and occupation. Or they would have to threaten to pulverize us and be believed.

In other words, all we have to fear are incoming missiles.

In 1983 Ronald Reagan made the most sensible military suggestion of the past 50 years — that America should have protection against missile attacks. Unfortunately, he assigned the job to the Department of Defense, and now — 17 years later — we are no closer to being protected than we were then.

The Constitution asks the federal government to defend the nation. But we should rely as little as possible on the political and bureaucratic worlds if we want to achieve anything useful. Instead, we should look to those who know how to solve problems and can be motivated to do so by the lure of big profits.

The government should simply post a reward — say, \$25 billion — to be given to the first private company that can produce a working, functioning, fool-proof missile defense. Not a prototype, not a plan, not a cost-plus contract — but a demonstration of the actual system successfully bringing down missiles. If such an offer were made, we probably would have a missile defense within five years.

Remember all the reasons given in 1997 that the Y2K computer problem couldn't possibly be solved by 2000? Even many computer experts said there wasn't enough time, there weren't enough programmers, and there were too many lines of computer code to be examined, altered, and tested. But somehow, people in search of profits found ways to overcome all the barriers and reduce the problem to a minor inconvenience.

In the same way, private firms competing to win a huge reward will achieve missile-defense goals that bureaucrats (and even scientists) working for the government might consider impossible.

Even the companies that don't win the race can profit if they find the answers eventually — by selling them to other governments that want protection from terrorist missiles.

What if the missile-defense technology fell into the hands of a savage dictator? That would pose no threat to us. We shouldn't be afraid of any country's ability to defend itself — only afraid of our inability to defend America.

When India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons, there was nothing the U.S. could realistically do about it, short of bombing or invading them. None of our government's admonitions could change anything, so our politicians should have kept their mouths shut.

If we had a missile defense, such nuclear tests wouldn't frighten us. We can't prevent other nations from fighting each other or developing weapons of mass destruction, but we can make sure their disputes and their deadly arms don't reach us.

Will a missile defense make us perfectly secure? Of course not. But neither will any other policy.

What a missile defense will do is make us far safer than we are today, eliminate the excuses for meddling in other countries' affairs, and remove one big reason for taxing us so heavily.

4. Target the Aggressors, Not the Innocent

Suppose that, even with a missile defense, America truly were threatened by a foreign ruler.

A Libertarian President would target the ruler himself. He wouldn't order bombers to kill the ruler's innocent subjects.

A Libertarian President would warn the ruler that any actual attack would be met by the offer of a mega-reward to anyone who could kill the ruler. Everyone would be eligible to

collect the reward, including the ruler's guards and wives. And the reward would be very big — perhaps \$100 million or more.

Would this prompt the foreign ruler to respond by putting a price on the head of the Libertarian President? Possibly.

But anything the U.S. President does to interfere with the ruler's plans could provoke an assassination attempt. Posting a reward for the dictator's death wouldn't add to the risk.

In addition to sparing innocent people in foreign countries, the assassination response would spare innocent Americans. Only those who want to try for the reward would be at risk. Americans wouldn't be drafted to fight and die invading a foreign country. And Americans wouldn't be taxed to pay for volunteers.

Please understand the limits of this proposal. It isn't a way to force dictators to change their spots or accommodate the U.S. It is only a means to prevent a direct attack on America. If the dictator withdraws his threat, the U.S. would withdraw the reward.

If our government followed a libertarian foreign policy, it's unlikely that any foreign ruler would want to threaten us. So it's unlikely that any such reward would ever be posted. But if a foreign ruler were tempted to threaten us, the fear of assassination would be more likely to deter him than the fear of losing some of his civilian subjects to U.S. bombs.

If you don't believe that's true, if you think assassination isn't nice, what is the alternative? Is it to kill thousands of innocent foreigners and to assure the deaths of innocent Americans?

That to me is the cruelest, most reckless approach.

DO WE TRUST GOVERNMENT TO MAKE US SAFE?

Those who tell us America can bring peace and democracy to the world don't seem to recognize that they're talking about the same American government that can't keep the streets safe in Washington, D.C. It's the same government that bleeds us with taxes, pits group against group in battles over quotas and privileges, and has devastated our cities with a futile War on Drugs.

If it fails to achieve any of its domestic goals, if it imposes alien values on its own people, why should you expect it to attain lofty goals overseas?

Politics Is Usual

And don't forget: we're talking about the government, after all.

Military decisions are made politically — just as new pork-barrel projects are chosen politically. The government's foreign policy is determined with reference to polls, voting blocs, rewards, and punishment. For example, Bill Clinton sent troops to Haiti in 1994, killing people along the way, just to gain the support of the Congressional Black Caucus for his domestic political agenda.

It's easy to imagine how our government could intervene to bring peace to some foreign region or to support "American interests" overseas. But the actual policy will never be the one you imagine, implemented in the way you envision. Instead, the politicians will define those interests by relying for "counsel" on those who have the most political influence.

To expect foreign policy decisions somehow to be separated from politics is as unrealistic as to expect politicians to refrain from buying votes with your tax money.

In short, foreign policy is as much a political boondoggle as any other government project. So be careful what you urge the politicians to do.

PEACE FOR ALL TIME

When America can defend itself against missile attack, the politicians will lose their best excuse for butting into the affairs of other countries and making demands upon you. That's probably why so little has been done to construct such a defense.

But it should be the first priority of anyone who pledges to support and defend the Constitution and the American people.

And when our government no longer interferes in other countries with military adventures and foreign aid, foreign terrorists will have little reason to threaten your city.

If in spite of these policies, some foreign leader still tries to make trouble for America, we should target the foreign leader for assassination, not target innocent civilians for bombing. But I doubt that an American government that minds its own business and provides a secure defense will ever have to resort to assassination.

These policies don't appeal to Democratic and Republican politicians, who see foreign crises as opportunities for greater power and more government spending, who demonstrate their courage by sacrificing the lives of others, and who see clearly what we too easily forget — that "war" is just another word for "big government," a way to make politicians more important.

The policies I've outlined should make it possible to defend this country successfully for no more than \$50 billion a year — contrasted with our current vulnerability, which costs

nearly \$300 billion a year. In 1952, at the height of the Cold War and the Korean War, the federal government spent less than \$50 billion a year on the military.

But, more important than the savings in taxes, you will know that your children will never fight and die in a foreign war — and terrorists will never target your city.

Finally, we will have a strong national defense, instead of a strong national offense.

ENFORCING PEACE

The U.S. Constitution was the best attempt ever made to limit the power of government. But because it wasn't self-enforcing, the politicians eventually found that they could ignore it with impunity.

I believe we need a new Constitutional amendment to restrain the politicians' ability to draw us into war. Here is my proposal:

Section 1. The United States shall be at war only after a declaration of war, naming the specific enemy nations, is approved by the President and by a two-thirds vote of the eligible members in both houses of Congress.

Section 2. The members of the House of Representatives and the Senate eligible to vote on a declaration of war are those who are between the ages of 18 and 35, or who have children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren between those ages.

Section 3. In the absence of a Congressional declaration of war, the President may deploy the military to repel an armed invasion of the United States, but may not deploy troops or engage in hostilities outside the United States.

Section 4. The United States shall enter into no treaty with any nation or organization if such treaty could oblige the United States to be at war without a declaration of war by Congress, and the United States shall not be bound to engage in war by any action taken by any organization of which they are a member.

Section 5. Except in time of war, as specified in Section 1, the United States will provide no weapons or other resources to foreign governments, will engage in no military action outside the borders of the United States, and shall deploy no military personnel or weapons outside the boundaries of the United States except that at any one time up to one thousand members of the military may be outside the United States for no longer than thirty days.

Section 6. Upon any violation of this article by the President, Congress shall institute impeachment proceedings within 14 days.

Section 4 doesn't preclude a missile defense or any other kind of defense of this nation. It only requires the President to wait before attacking a foreign nation until a declaration of war has been issued. Even if some incapacity prevents Congress from making a declaration quickly, America could still defend itself. It just couldn't attack anyone else.

This amendment is, I believe, an important first step in finding a way to keep politicians away from loaded weapons forever. That's the one kind of gun control that really will save lives.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harry Browne was an American free-market Libertarian writer and the Libertarian Party's 1996 and 2000 candidate for President of the United States. He was also a well-known investment advisor for over thirty years, author of "Harry Browne's Special Report" – a financial newsletter published from 1974 - 1997, author of 18 books and thousands of articles, co-founder of the libertarian Downsize DC Foundation, host of two weekly network radio shows -- one a political and the other a financial show, host of an ETV (internet-based television) show called "This Week in Liberty with Harry Browne" on the Internet based Free Market News Network, a consultant to the Permanent Portfolio Family of Funds, and a popular public speaker.

He was a little known investment advisor when his first book, *How You Can Profit from the Coming Devaluation*, was published in 1970. Recognizing the disastrous monetary policy of the U.S. government, he warned that the dollar would be devalued, inflation could be severe, and gold, silver, and foreign currencies should skyrocket in value. The book's theme clashed with the prevailing wisdom, but it struck a chord with tens of thousands of Americans, and the book made the *New York Times* bestseller list.

In 1973 he published *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World*, a self-help book that shows individuals how to take responsibility for their own lives. Many people consider the book to be a modern classic, and it remains in demand three decades after its first publication.

His 1974 book, *You Can Profit from a Monetary Crisis*, was an even greater success -- remaining on the *Times* bestseller list for 39 weeks and reaching #1. Its message amplified themes from his first book, and it allowed thousands of investors to hold their own and to profit during the turmoil of the late 1970s. He wrote six more big-selling investment books -- including one more *Times* bestseller. In 1999 he published his final investment book, *Fail-Safe Investing*.

His 1995 book, *Why Government Doesn't Work*, provided a provocative mix of ideas that spoke to hundreds of thousands of Americans who felt frustrated by big government. *The Great Libertarian Offer*, was published in June, 2000. His 2004 book was *Liberty A to Z: 872 Libertarian Soundbites You Can Use Right Now!*

In Browne's presidential campaigns, he made appearances in almost every state, and he appeared on over a thousand radio and television programs. His pure approach to smaller government was praised in scores of newspaper editorials and political columns. He won numerous Internet preference polls and was endorsed for president by dozens of radio talk show hosts and journalists.

During his career he appeared on the *Today* show, *Hannity & Colmes*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Meet the Press*, *Politically Incorrect*, *Wall Street Week*, *The Larry King Show*, and hundreds of other national and local radio and television shows.

Browne had a daughter, Autumn, and in 1985 married the former Pamela Lanier Wolfe. His main non-professional interests were classical music, fiction, opera and operettas, good food and wine, sports, and television. He was born in New York City, grew up in Los Angeles, and died from a motor neuron disease (e.g. ALS) at his home in Franklin, Tennessee on March 1, 2006 with his devoted wife, Pamela, beside him.

“Our own share of miseries is sufficient: why enter then as volunteers into those of another?”

Thomas Jefferson
Letter, October 12, 1778, to Maria
Cosway.