

We are a terrorist nation? 2-9-98

Why is it we are preparing to bomb Iraq? Most of the public discourse seems to involve calls for it, and a bit of hysteria. But why?

The president has claimed that his goal is not to get rid of Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein. Some in the Congress are overtly advocating that goal, as we are moving ever closer to war. The president implies that his goal is to prevent Iraq from developing chemical and biological weapons – which they may or may not have.

We are to go to war for this?

According to press accounts of US diplomatic activity and statements, these people do not claim that bombing would eliminate an Iraqi weapons program, if such a program actually exists (its existence being the question before the UN inspection teams, who have thus far not found one). So, if bombing Iraq is not designed to kill the president and is not expected to eliminate any theoretical weapons program then why? It can only be to destroy things and kill people.

We are to go to war for this?

Perhaps, our president does actually intend to get try to rid of Iraq's president, but in the only way he knows how. What is the purpose behind bombing the people of Iraq? If the purpose of rampant destruction and killing is not to get rid of weapons, or to kill their president then why do it? We must presume that the people making the decision go through a cost benefit analysis. We can only surmise their actual goals from likely or real outcomes. Why would we bomb a people who we claim are not our enemy?

People define their government. This process is not necessarily democratic; it involves the exercise of power – as in our country where the wealthy disproportionately determine national policy. So it is with Iraq. No one is suggesting that the Iraqi people as a whole put Saddam Hussein in power, or support his remaining there. Yet we are to bomb these people – innocent victims of a dictator previously armed and propped up by our government?

Bombing the civilians of a country when one is unhappy with its leadership can only be purposeful if the intent is to convince them that we are prepared to make their lives so miserable that they are forced to rise up. You terrorize them into acting the way you want them to act.

We are to go to war for this? To terrorize the Iraqi people into forcing change in their government?

In Iraq the president and the government generally claim that the people need to support them because of the hostility of the US and England. Well, if we bomb these same people doesn't that just prove that the Iraqi government position is correct? After all, who poses the greatest threat to the Iraqi people? The people preventing them from getting food and medicine and threatening to bomb them? Or their own government which at least pretends to care?

I could believe that all of this was necessary and not just an exercise in terrorism if there was some imminent threat from Iraq. Yet, no one is claiming that this is the case. We are told that a potential danger in the future exists. This seems vaguely important. We are meant to support; 1) the continuing slow murder of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians – especially children – through the continuing sanctions, and 2) the upcoming bombing – and perhaps invasion – of Iraq which will undoubtedly result in the

death of millions of civilians. And the purpose of all of this death, terror, and misery is what?

Who do these warmongers in Congress think they are to determine who should be the President of Iraq or of any other country? What would these same so-called advocates of liberty say if some other country were threatening to bomb us to force President Clinton out of office? We would, rightfully, be indignant that people in another country should determine who our president is.

Obviously, war is not about leaders; war is about resources. In the post Cold War world, it has become even more important to the ruling class here that other nations respect the power relationships inherent in an imperialist world. Iraq provides a bad example, and thus must be punished. That's the terminology they use. But punishment is murder.

We are meant to go to war for this, an exercise in the undemocratic domination through terror of another people because they are a bad example?

Of course. This is not new, and we have used terror against civilians, innocent and not so innocent, for centuries now -- most memorably in Tokyo and Dresden.

These are the actions of our government, are we going to allow this terrorism today and into the future or not?