

## Leithner Letter Nos. 81-83

### 26 September – 26 November 2006

*We Americans have the dangerous tendency in our international thinking to take a holier-than-thou attitude towards other nations. We consider ourselves to be more noble and decent than other peoples, and consequently in a better position to decide what is right and wrong in the world. What kind of war do civilians suppose we fought, anyway? We shot prisoners in cold blood, wiped out hospitals, strafed lifeboats, killed or mistreated enemy civilians, finished off the enemy wounded, tossed the dying into a hole with the dead, and in the Pacific boiled the flesh off enemy skulls to make table ornaments for sweethearts, or carved their bones into letter openers. We topped off our saturation bombing and burning of enemy civilians by dropping atomic bombs on two nearly defenceless cities, thereby setting an all-time record for instantaneous mass slaughter.*

*As victors we are privileged to try our defeated opponents for their crimes against humanity; but we should be realistic enough to appreciate that if we were on trial for breaking international laws, we should be found guilty on a dozen counts. We fought a dishonourable war, because morality had a low priority in battle. The tougher the fighting, the less room for decency, and in Pacific contests we saw mankind reach the blackest depths of bestiality.*

*Not every American soldier, or even one per cent of our troops, deliberately committed unwarranted atrocities, and the same might be said for the Germans and Japanese. But we publicised every inhuman act of our opponents and censored any recognition of our own moral frailty in moments of desperation.*

*It is not my intention either to excuse our late opponents or to discredit our own fighting men. I do, however, believe that all of us, not just the battle-enlightened GIs, should fully understand the horror and degradation of war before talking so casually of another one. War does horrible things to men, our own sons included. It demands the worst of a person and pays off in brutality and maladjustment. It has become so mechanical, inhuman, and crassly destructive that men lose all sense of personal responsibility for their actions. They fight without compassion, because that is the only way to fight a total war ...*

*Peter Bowman summed up our victory to date in [Beach Red](#) when he wrote, "Battle doesn't determine who is right. Only who is left." We destroyed fascists, not fascism; men, not ideas. Our triumphs did not serve as evidence that democracy is best for the world, any more than Russian victories proved that communism is an ideal system for all mankind ... Today we stand on trial – we are either for peace or for war, and the rest of the world is prepared to move with us or against us. The burden of proof is on us; and our willingness to make peace, not our capacity to wage war, is the true measure of our good-neighbourliness.*

Edgar L. Jones  
"One War Is Enough"  
(*The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1946)

## Virtuous Leaders or War Criminals?

Charles Munger is so deeply sceptical about the human condition, wrote Roger Lowenstein in *Buffett: The Making of an American Capitalist* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1996), that Warren Buffett has called him “the abominable no-man.” A tenet of Munger’s approach to investing – and to life in general – is constantly to ask what can and likely will go awry. “Invert, always invert,” said the mathematician [Carl Jacobi](#), and for decades Munger has faithfully applied this maxim. Invited to address high school graduands, he did not laud the habits and qualities that would promote health, wealth and wisdom; instead, he denigrated those that would ensure emotional penury and material misery. In effect, he counselled his young audience “If you *don’t* do the things I’m going to talk about, then chances are you’ll be just fine.” More whimsically, he once wondered aloud where he would die “so that I never go there.”

Clearly, to “invert, always invert” is to mitigate the downside and let the upside take care of itself. It is also to see things from another person’s point of view; and a particularly illuminating way is to consider a contentious situation from the perspective of an opponent or adversary. If we can avoid harming others (or offer amends to those whom we inadvertently harm), then we lessen their incentive to hurt us; and if we can make habits of civility and neighbourliness, we will likely reduce some of the misfortune that life routinely tosses into our paths. Resentment and hatred seem to flourish longest and deepest among people who have lost (or never possessed) the capacity to empathise with those whom they have harmed, and also among the people who have retained the capacity to remember the harm they have suffered. How to avoid injuring others? We become more inclined to treat other people as we would want them to treat us, and thereby to increase the chances that we enjoy their goodwill, when we try to see their situation, predicament or grievance through their spectacles. Accordingly, a good way to avoid unintended consequences, mitigate what might go awry and return to haunt us is to walk in others’ shoes.

David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, seemed to be thinking along these lines when he said “If I were an Arab leader I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country ... We come from Israel, but two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler and Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?” (See also John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, [The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy](#)).

Alas, Ben-Gurion did not seem to be “inverting” when he said “We must use terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation and the cutting of all social services to rid the Galilee of its Arab population.” Even more regrettably, this apparent lack of compassion for people other than his own also spread abroad.

In 1948, the year the State of Israel was founded, he declared “We should prepare to go over to the offensive. Our aim is to smash Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, and Syria. The weak point is Lebanon, for the Moslem regime is artificial and easy for us to undermine. We shall establish a Christian state there, and then we will smash the Arab Legion, eliminate Trans-Jordan; Syria will fall to us. We then bomb and move on and take Port Said, Alexandria and Sinai” (see Michel Bar-Zohar, *The Armed Prophet: A Biography of Ben-Gurion*, Barker, 1967).

Viewing things from an unaccustomed, unconventional or unpopular angle often helps to understand them more thoroughly, appreciate their worth and acknowledge their flaws, and thereby promotes humility and inoculates against narrow-mindedness and intransigence. “Inversion” does not necessarily corrode one’s principles; still less does it inevitably overturn them. Yet once in a great while, it triggers a fundamental alteration of outlook. But because it is so emotionally difficult – indeed, because something akin to the [Stockholm Syndrome](#) usually prevails – people go to extraordinary lengths to avoid painful reappraisals of their rulers and their basic policies. Perhaps that is why so few Australians think seriously about how their rulers’ policies affect people in other countries. After all, these lands are usually distant and unfamiliar; there are only so many hours in the day to inform oneself about them; and other matters, from mortgage rates to petrol prices, seem to be more pressing. Accordingly, are not such specialised matters best left to the anointed experts in Canberra, the universities, think tanks and editorial pages? And in the final analysis, surely the motives of Australian politicians and their Anglo-American masters are unimpeachable?

But shortages of time and energy do not provide very satisfactory explanations of this general abandonment of the classical liberal virtue of vigilance. It is clear to anybody who opens his eyes that the policies of the political class routinely create messes and disasters at home: so why on earth should they foment anything other than chaos and misery abroad? Alas, few of the ruled ask this question. Instead, many avert their eyes and blindly accept what their rulers tell them about foreigners and far-off parts of the world. Why? Perhaps because if they saw things from the point of view of people at the receiving end of Western governments’ foreign policies, an awful truth would stare them in the face: during and since the Second World War, some celebrated Western “leaders,” particularly American and British, have, by the standards employed at Nuremberg, qualified as war criminals.

As an example, consider Harry S Truman. Ralph Raico, in [Harry S Truman: Advancing the Revolution](#), concludes “the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a war crime worse than any that Japanese generals were executed for in Tokyo and Manila. If Harry Truman was not a war criminal, then no one ever was.” America’s most senior military officers, including Dwight Eisenhower, Ernest King, Douglas MacArthur, Chester Nimitz and Carl

Spaatz, expressed deep reservations to say the least (and to say the most, condemned the atomic bombings as pitiless, spiteful and unnecessary). The assessment of Admiral William D. Leahy, Truman's chief of staff, was typical: "the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan ... My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make wars in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children."

In his memoirs, entitled *I Was There* (McGraw-Hill, 1950), Leahy compared the use of the atomic bomb to the treatment of civilians by Genghis Khan, and termed it "not worthy of Christian man." Curiously, Truman wrote (or requested that somebody ghost-write on his behalf) the Foreword to Leahy's book. In a private letter written just before he left the White House, Truman referred to the use of the atomic bomb as "murder," and stated that the bomb "is far worse than gas and biological warfare because it affects the civilian population and murders them wholesale" (see Barton J. Bernstein, "Origins of the U.S. Biological Warfare Program," in *Preventing a Biological Arms Race*, MIT Press, 1990; John Denson, [The Hiroshima Myth](#); Gary Kohls, [Whitewashing Hiroshima: The Uncritical Glorification of American Militarism](#); and Ralph Raico, [Rethinking Churchill](#), particularly [Part V](#)).

When analysed dispassionately, and like virtually all politicians, allegedly great and visionary leaders emerge as bald-faced liars, hard-nosed cheats and shameless thieves. Mired at the base of the political caste in America, Australia, Britain and other countries are multitudes of little known also-rans, hangers-on, hacks, grafters, drongos and carpetbaggers; and cemented at its pinnacle is a small élite of egomaniacs whose ranks include mass murderers. Perhaps the many don't want to think about the consequences of their rulers' belligerence against other countries because knowledge of it would reveal what voters' misguided support has wrought. It would reveal, in short, democratic states' inherent aggression (see also [Letter 75](#)).

By averting their eyes, holding their tongues and dutifully marking their ballots, many Germans and Austrians of the 1920s and 1930s facilitated the long chain of events that culminated in the evil deeds of National Socialism and the verdicts returned at Nuremberg. But there's plenty of blame: American, British and French voters elected Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau; and these politicians and their successors, at Versailles and afterwards, did much to create the chaos, bitterness and hatred under which German and Russian madmen could and did thrive (see in particular Jim Powell, *Wilson's War: How Woodrow Wilson's Great Blunder Led to Hitler, Lenin, Stalin and World War II*, Crown Forum, 2005, and also [Letter 57](#)). If so, then the Americans, Australians, Britons, Israelis, etc., of more recent decades deserve some of the blame for the crimes of the henchmen of their respective welfare-warfare states (see, for example, the writings of a former associate editor of *The Wall*

*Street Journal* and a former assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury, Paul Craig Roberts, such as [The Shame of Being an American](#)). One of the many terminal defects of democracy is that, by encouraging voters to elect criminals, it makes voters accomplices (some more willing, others less so) to these criminals' actions.

### **What Is a War Crime, Anyway?**

A war crime is a general label used to describe one of three specific crimes enumerated and described in Article 6 of the Charter of the [International Military Tribunal](#) (IMT). Immediately after the end of the Second World War, the governments of the "Big Four" (i.e., the U.S.A., Soviet Union, Britain and France) established the IMT in order to prosecute the leaders of National Socialist Germany and its allies. The Tribunal's Charter, published on 8 August 1945 (ironically, shortly after the nuclear explosion at Hiroshima and just hours before the second detonation at Nagasaki), declared in Article 6: "The following acts, or any of them, are crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal for which there shall be individual responsibility":

(a) "*Crimes against Peace*: namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a Common Plan or Conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing." In plain English, to invade a nation that has never threatened you and does not presently threaten you is a crime against peace.

(b) "*War Crimes*: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labour or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

(c) "*Crimes against Humanity*: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war, or persecutions on political, racial, or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of domestic law of the country where perpetrated."

Article 6 warns: "Leaders, organisers, instigators, and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a Common Plan or Conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan." Similarly, Section 7 states "The official position of defendants, whether as Heads of State or responsible officials in Government departments, shall not be considered as freeing them from responsibility or mitigating punishment." And Section 8 stipulates: "The fact

that the defendant acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior shall not free him from responsibility ...”

At a series of trials at Nuremberg, Germany, in 1945-49, these criteria were used to try more than 100 defendants. At the most important trial, of the top surviving leaders of Hitler’s government and military, twenty-two men were indicted on one or more of the charges listed in Article 6. Nineteen were convicted and three acquitted. Of those found guilty, twelve were sentenced to death by hanging, three to life in prison and four to terms of imprisonment ranging from ten to twenty years. No appeals were permitted, and the last surviving convict, Rudolf Hess, died at Spandau Prison in Berlin in 1989.

In late 1946, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution 95 (1), affirming [The Principles of International Law Recognised in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and in the Judgment of the Tribunal](#). In this and other respects, the premises, process, results and precedents of the Nuremberg Tribunal form cornerstones of civilised international behaviour.

### **The Trouble with Victors’ Justice**

The Nuremberg Tribunal explicitly prohibited *tu quoque* (“yeah, but you did it too!”) defences – hardly a surprise, given that it rendered victors’ justice. The prosecuting powers sought to obscure the inconvenient fact that during the war their civilian and military leaders, as well as a few of their officers and enlisted men, had also issued and obeyed orders that – to put it mildly – fell well short of the standards imposed upon Hitler’s henchmen. But surely justice, if it is worthy of the name, cannot be restricted to particular times, places and people? That is, if the invasion of Poland was a crime against peace when Adolf Hitler and high-ranking German officers and diplomats planned and executed it in 1939, then (to cite but one example) surely the invasion of Iraq, when planned and committed in 2001-2003 by George W. Bush, Tony Blair, John Howard and their military and diplomatic subordinates, is no less a crime against peace?

Apparently not: or, at any rate, few Americans, Australians and Britons seem to believe that their leaders could contemplate, let alone commit, such crimes. But if one peruses the public record and considers how Anglo-American governments have planned and conducted military actions, then time after time one encounters *prima facie* evidence that certain of their politicians, bureaucrats, senior military officers and a few soldiers and airmen have committed crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity as defined by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945.

In light of the voluminous evidence that now crowds the public domain, a *prima facie* case can be made that in 2001-2003 American, British and Australian leaders and their military and civilian advisers engaged in or acquiesced to the

“planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression.” It was obvious at the time (see in particular Justin Raimondo, [The Lying Game](#), 7 February 2003), and today is as plain as the nose on one’s face, that neither Saddam Hussein nor the Iraqi military posed any threat to America, Australia or Britain. The many revelations by former insiders, coupled with the [Downing Street Memo](#), the Lewis Libby indictment and numerous other sources, leave little doubt that these insiders intentionally deceived their own citizens and the world in order to invade a country that did not threaten them. (Think about it: if Saddam *really* possessed WMDs, and if these weapons *really* were as potent as Msrs Blair, Bush and Howard alleged, do you *really* think that they would have sent tens of thousands of their own troops to their certain deaths?)

Accordingly, and by the precedent set at Nuremberg, the misleading and ever-changing rationales uttered before, during and after the invasion exonerate nobody. Nor does the evasive special pleading uttered after the fact (“we acted on the best information available,” Mr Howard has stated repeatedly since the WMDs failed to materialise). To invade a country that has neither the means nor the intention to attack you – *whether or not the invaders know it when they plan and execute their invasion* – is a crime against peace. As Murray Rothbard put it in [The Ethics of Liberty](#), “It is important to insist, however, that the threat of aggression be palpable, immediate, and direct; in short, that it be embodied in the initiation of an overt act. Any remote or indirect criterion – any ‘risk’ or ‘threat’ – is simply an excuse for invasive action by the supposed ‘defender’ against the alleged ‘threat.’” Whether waged by Nazis or neocons, a preemptive war is necessarily a crime against peace. The ironic and rather pathetic fact that between 1991 and 2003 Saddam Hussein was the only person who spoke truth to power about WMDs in Iraq speaks volumes about the determination of Anglo-American politicians and their lackeys to twist information in order to indulge their inflexible prejudices.

Moreover, and again in the light of the massive and growing body of evidence available to anybody prepared to consider it, it appears that American and British politicians and bureaucrats (and some military personnel obeying their orders) have committed “violations of the laws or customs of war,” including “murder . . . of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war . . . plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.” Acts that seem to fit this description have occurred at [Falluja](#), [Haditha](#), [Mahmoudiya](#), [Samarra](#), [Tikrit](#), the [Abu Ghraib Prison](#) and other locations.

In one incident, reported in *The Washington Post* (20 May 2004), American armed forces allegedly killed more than forty civilians, most of them women and children, in the village of Makr al-Deeb in western Iraq. A military spokesman in Baghdad said “our sense is that this was a legitimate military target. We suspect that this was a smuggler or foreign-fighter route. It’s our

estimation right now that the [Iraqi] personnel involved in this matter were part of the foreign-fighter safe house.” Given the *suspicion* of unauthorised trade or border crossing, in other words, U.S. military forces, without warning, bombed and strafed an entire village. An Iraqi witness at the scene told the Associated Press: “The planes came in and shot the whole family. They kept shooting [from approximately 2:45 a.m.] until the morning, until they destroyed all the houses. They didn’t leave anything.”

In a follow-up report on 21 May, the Associated Press quoted a survivor of the attack: “One of [the dead] was my daughter. I found her a few steps from the house, her 2-year-old son in her arms. Her 1-year-old son was lying nearby, missing his head.” American forces claim that somebody first attacked them and that they returned fire; but Iraqis on the scene maintain that the Americans attacked people who had gathered in the village the previous evening for a wedding celebration, and that no shooting had occurred before the U.S. attack.

Regardless of whether American information about a “foreign-fighter safe house” was accurate, the indiscriminate killing of the village’s civilian inhabitants, and the bombing and firing from aircraft at a distance too great to discriminate combatants from non-combatants, looks *prima facie* like a war crime. Another survivor of the attack asked the obvious question: if the American soldiers suspected that foreign fighters were in the village, “why not seal off the area and make sure they were indeed foreign fighters?” This sort of incident has occurred again and again in Afghanistan and Iraq. As [Human Rights Watch](#) has concluded, Coalition actions “reveal a pattern of over-aggressive tactics, excessive shooting in residential areas and hasty reliance on lethal force.”

These incidents, it is thus reasonable to assume, are not isolated. Inevitably and by its very nature, war, occupation and counter-insurgency breed atrocities (see, for example, [Beyond My Lai: New Revelations of Vietnam Atrocities](#) by Jon Wiener). Accordingly, when neoconservatives babble their despicable blather (i.e., “we must not cut and run,” “we must stay the course,” etc.), their use of the pronoun “we” is disingenuous. What they really demand is that *somebody else* must continue the destruction of faraway places and the murder of other people. Equally deceitful is their invocation of a bogus and moronic “war on terror” and vast exaggeration of “the terrorist threat” (which, as [Letter 33](#) shows, is in probabilistic terms actually quite trivial). Hence an inconvenient question for the foreign policy interventionists: if pleas of military necessity did not excuse leading Nazis, then how can the alleged imperatives of a war on terror excuse The Three Amigos and their subordinates?

The parallels are troubling. In the dock at Nuremberg, did Hermann Göring not plead that concentration camps were necessary in order to preserve order and stability? Did he not say, “It was a question of removing danger”? Göring also shed disturbing light upon the political tricks that demented shepherds use

to frighten their flocks into the false belief they need more laws, services and protection. During his trial, he mused to an interviewer “Why, of course, the people don’t want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally, the common people don’t want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a parliament or a communist dictatorship” (see Gustave Gilbert, *Nuremberg Diary*, DaCapo Press, 1995).

### **Devising a Charge Sheet from the 1990-1991 Gulf War**

“Unfortunately,” wrote Henry Stimson in *On Active Service in Peace and War* (1971), “I have lived long enough to know that history is often not what actually happened but what is recorded as such.” The point deserves emphasis: if they experienced the repeated sufferings endured by the unlucky people at the receiving end of Western and particularly Anglo-American governments’ foreign policies, and if these horrific experiences were properly recorded and widely disseminated, then an awful truth would stare Westerners in the face: during and since the Second World War, some prominent Western “leaders” have, given the standards employed and precedents established at Nuremberg, qualified as war criminals. The West’s first war against Iraq’s military, infrastructure, economy and civilian population, i.e., the Gulf War of 1990-91, provides one of many possible examples. (The bulk of the information in this section derives from the *Joint WHO/UNICEF Team Report: A Visit to Iraq* (New York: United Nations, 1991).

1. The leading henchmen of the Government of Iraq possessed neither the means nor the intention to harm Americans, Britons, etc. But leading civilians and military men within the American and British governments and their allies possessed both the means and the intention to harm Iraqis. Before and during 1989, the U.S. in particular undertook a pattern of conduct intended to provoke Saddam Hussein; and Iraq’s responses were used to justify American military action against Iraq.

In 1989, Gen. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief of the Central Command, thoroughly revised and updated American military operations in and plans for the Persian Gulf. At that time, Kuwait was violating OPEC oil production agreements, extracting excessive amounts of oil from pools shared with Iraq and demanding repayment of loans it had made to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. Officials within the Bush Administration encouraged these Kuwaiti actions, and also urged the Kuwaitis to cease negotiations regarding its disputes with Iraq. Americans, it seems, sought to induce Saddam to retaliate against

Kuwait, and thereby to provide grounds that would invite their intervention.

Why would the Americans want to intervene? Yes, it has to do with oil – but not in the sense that is often asserted. It's not about the price of oil paid by the consumer, but rather about the profits generated from the supply of oil. The trouble was that Iraq, like Iran since the late 1970s (and unlike Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE from day one), had long been a “rogue” country in the sense that it lay largely outside the orbit of Western petroleum companies. As an example, since the 1930s Big Oil had developed close and very remunerative ties with the Saudi royal family. During the 1930s and 1940s, King Ibn Saud granted a monopoly concession respecting all Saudi oil to the Rockefeller-led Aramco (the Kuwaiti royal family granted a similar monopoly to British Petroleum); and the American taxpayer foot most of the bill for Aramco's royalty payments and pipelines in Saudi Arabia. Yes, during the 1970s the Saudis “nationalised” Aramco, but that change was much more apparent than real: most Saudi oil was (and still is) sold through Big Oil; and the proceeds from Saudi oil sales comprised (and still comprise) a vital portion of American banks' deposits. When the Iraqi army invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, Wall Street banks told reporters that they had virtually no loans outstanding in, or deposits owed to, Iraq.

But that's jumping a bit ahead of events. Early in 1990, Gen. Schwarzkopf assured the Senate Armed Services Committee that the new military strategy in the Gulf would, in the event of conflict in the region, protect American access to and control over Gulf oil. In July 1990, Gen. Schwarzkopf and his staff conducted computerised war games that pit American against Iraqi military forces. During the second half of 1990, the Bush Administration did not encourage Iraq to calm its increasingly strident rhetoric and threats against Kuwait. Nor, more generally, did it state that there was anything particularly the matter in the region. With the approval of their government, American engineering and construction companies continued (as they had done since the early 1980s) to seek major contracts in Iraq, and American arms manufacturers continued to peddle their wares to Iraq. Congress approved hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of agricultural loan subsidies to Iraq. And when Saddam Hussein requested that America's ambassador in Baghdad elaborate the State Department's testimony in Congress about Iraq's threats against Kuwait, she assured him that America considered this dispute to be a regional concern into which it would not intervene.

On 2 August, encountering light and sporadic resistance, Iraqi military forces invaded Kuwait. The next day, without presenting any evidence of a threat to Saudi Arabia and despite King Fahd's belief that Saddam Hussein did not intend to invade his country, President Bush vowed to defend Saudi Arabia. He sent Defence Secretary Cheney, Gen. Powell and Gen. Schwarzkopf to Saudi Arabia. On 6 August, Gen. Schwarzkopf told King Fahd that, in the opinion of the U.S. Government, Saddam could attack Saudi Arabia within as

little as 48 hours. American diplomatic and “intelligence” officers did what they could, which was plenty, to torpedo Arab efforts to defuse the crisis. Iraq never attacked Saudi Arabia; instead, its armed forces waited more than five months whilst President Bush assembled an international coalition and a military force of more than 500,000 soldiers – and began the systematic destruction, by aircraft and missile, of Iraq and its military. In October 1990, Gen. Powell referred admiringly to the military plan *developed in 1989*. And after the war, Gen. Schwarzkopf referred to the *eighteen months* required to plan the Kuwait campaign. This seemingly deliberate and opportunistic drive towards war constitutes a crime against peace.

2. From 2 August 1990, President Bush actively thwarted any interference with his plan to destroy Iraq economically and militarily.

During the first week of August 1990, and without consulting Congress, President Bush ordered 40,000 U.S. military personnel to spearhead the military built-up in Saudi Arabia. He arranged to receive a Saudi request for U.S. military assistance, and on 8 August proclaimed that his acts were “wholly defensive.” Waiting until the November 1990 Congressional elections had concluded, he then announced – again, without advising Congress – his earlier Executive Order to send more than 200,000 additional military personnel to Saudi Arabia. As late as 9 January 1991, he insisted that he possessed constitutional authority to attack Iraq without Congressional approval.

Concealing his intention to attack and destroy Iraq, from August 1990 until January 1991 President Bush continued the military build-up of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. When Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Dugan mentioned plans to destroy the Iraqi civilian economy to the press on 16 September, he was immediately dismissed (see Rick Atkinson, “U.S. to Rely on Air Strikes if War Erupts,” *The Washington Post*, 16 September 1990, and Eric Schmitt, “Ousted General Gets a Break,” *The New York Times*, 7 November 1991).

President Bush persuaded the UN Security Council to overlook the Chapter VI provisions of its Charter (“the Pacific Settlement of Disputes”), secured authority for any nation, in its absolute discretion and by all necessary means, to enforce an unprecedented series of resolutions. To secure the required votes at the UN, Uncle Sam paid multi-billion dollar inducements, offered arms for various bullies’ regional wars, threatened economic retaliation against recalcitrants, forgave multi-billion dollar loans (such as \$7 billion lent to Egypt in order to finance the purchase of arms) to governments that fell into line, and in other ways extracted votes – thereby creating the appearance of nearly universal international approval of U.S. policies toward Iraq. A country that

opposed the U.S., as Yemen did, lost millions of dollars of “aid;” one that remained relatively neutral, like Iran, enjoyed a few years out of the spotlight; and one that supported it, like Syria, found itself favoured and even feted in Washington after years in the doghouse. Syria subsequently returned to the doghouse, and now, together with Iran, finds itself high on the list of countries at risk of experiencing an American-led invasion. See also James Bamford, [Iran: The Next War](#) and Jorge Hirsch, [Who Benefits from the Israel-Lebanon Flare-Up?](#)

Beginning with its proposal of 12 August 1990, which he largely ignored, and ending with its mid-February 1991 peace offer, which he called a “cruel hoax,” President Bush consistently rejected and ridiculed Iraq’s efforts to negotiate a resolution to the crisis. He insisted that there would be no negotiation, compromise, face saving or appeasement, and thus “no reward for aggression.” At the same time, however, he excoriated Saddam’s alleged rejection of diplomacy! President Bush orchestrated a sophisticated campaign of demonisation. He called Saddam “a Hitler,” and repeatedly cited reports – which he knew were false – of Iraqi forces amassing on the Saudi frontier and of the Iraqi murder of babies in Kuwaiti incubators. Further, knowing that U.S intelligence doubted the veracity of these reports, he accused Saddam of using chemical weapons against his own people and Iranians.

After subverting Iraqi requests to negotiate and others’ offers to mediate, President Bush commenced the destruction of Iraq by answering his own question. “Why not wait? ... The world could wait no longer.”

**3. President Bush ordered the destruction throughout Iraq of infrastructure essential to civilian life and economic productivity.**

On President Bush’s command, and in order to coincide with television evening news in the U.S., aerial and missile bombardment of Iraq commenced at 6:30 p.m. EST on 16 January 1991. The bombing continued for forty-two days. It met no resistance from Iraqi aircraft, and no effective anti-aircraft or anti-missile ground fire. The United States military reported that it flew 110,000 air sorties against Iraq and dropped 88,000 tonnes of bombs (nearly seven times the equivalent of the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima). 93% of the bombs were free-falling ordnance, and most were dropped from an altitude of more than 30,000 feet (from which, to put it mildly, pinpoint accuracy is not guaranteed). Of the remaining 7% of bombs, i.e., those with electronic guidance systems, more than 25% missed their targets and nearly all caused damage beyond any identifiable military target.

Judging from its effects, the intention of the bombing campaign was not just to destroy Iraq’s military: it was to terrorise its population and reduce the country to a shattered, abject and pre-industrial condition. In a report to the Secretary General, UN observers reported that the bombing had left Iraq in a

nearly apocalyptic state. Among the facilities targeted and destroyed were electric power generation, relay and transmission infrastructure; water treatment, pumping and distribution systems and reservoirs; telephone exchanges and radio towers and transmission facilities; food processing, storage and distribution facilities; infant milk formula and beverage plants; railway transport facilities, bus depots, bridges, highway overpasses, highways, trains, buses and other public transport vehicles; commercial and private vehicles; oil wells and pumps, pipelines, refineries, oil storage tanks, petrol stations and fuel delivery tank cars and trucks; factories engaged in civilian production; and historical markers and ancient sites.

As a direct, intentional and foreseeable result, tens of thousands of people subsequently died from dehydration, dysentery and diseases caused by the lack of drinkable water, the inability to obtain effective medical assistance and debilitation from hunger, shock and cold. This conduct violated the UN Charter, Hague and Geneva Conventions, the Nuremberg Charter and Christian principles of justifiable warfare.

4. American and allied military forces intentionally bombed and destroyed centres of civilian life (i.e., commercial and business districts, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, shelters, residential areas, historical sites, private vehicles and civilian government offices).

The destruction of civilian facilities left the entire civilian population of Iraq virtually without heat, cooking fuel, refrigeration, potable water, telephones, power for radio or TV reception, and fuel for public transport and private motor cars. It also destroyed food supplies, closed schools, created massive unemployment, drastically shrunk economic activity and caused medical services to collapse. Residential areas of every major city and many towns and villages were attacked; so too were isolated Bedouin camps without military significance. In addition to deaths and injuries, the aerial assault destroyed between ten and twenty thousand houses, flats and other dwellings.

Shops, retail stores, offices, hotels, restaurants and other commercial establishments were also targeted and thousands were destroyed. Scores of schools, hospitals, mosques and churches were damaged or destroyed. Thousands of civilian vehicles on highways, roads and parked on streets and in garages were targeted and destroyed. The purpose of this bombing was to terrorise the entire country, kill people, destroy property, prevent movement, demoralise the people and encourage the overthrow of the government. (If senior civilians and military commanders had reviewed the results of the U.S. Government's own studies of the effects of its bombing of Germany, Japan and Vietnam, they might have realised that this wish was not realistic.)

The bombing of Iraqi facilities essential to civilian life killed additional tens of thousands of men, women and children. The week before the war ended, the Red Crescent Society of Jordan estimated that 113,000 civilians, 60% of them children, had been killed. The deliberate indifference to civilian and military casualties is exemplified by Gen. Colin Powell's dismissive response to a press inquiry about the number of people killed in the air and ground campaigns: "It's really not a number I'm terribly interested in" (see Patrick E. Tyler, "Powell Says U.S. Will Stay In Iraq," *The New York Times*, 23 March 1991). This conduct contravened the UN Charter, Hague and Geneva Conventions, the Nuremberg Charter and Christian principles of justifiable warfare.

5. During the war, Coalition military personnel killed Iraqi soldiers who were engaged in disorganised flight, seeking to surrender, unarmed and far from any combat zones; and after the ceasefire they randomly and wantonly killed Iraqi soldiers and destroyed Iraqi civilian and military materials.

During the first hours of the war's first phase, the aerial and missile bombardment, Coalition military forces destroyed the Iraqi military's capacity to mount effective military operations. Subsequently, Coalition forces systematically killed Iraqi soldiers who were incapable of resistance, defence or escape, and destroyed their mostly useless military equipment. Over a period of forty-two days, bombing killed thousands and possibly tens of thousands of defenceless Iraqi soldiers, separated them from food, water and other supplies, and left them in desperate and helpless disarray. When they had satisfied themselves that Iraq's civilian economy and military had been sufficiently obliterated, American and other political leaders ordered that ground forces enter Kuwait and Iraq, and attack disorganised and fleeing Iraqi forces wherever they could be found, killing thousands more and destroying any equipment found.

The slaughter continued after the ceasefire. On 2 March 1991, for example, forces of the U.S. 24<sup>th</sup> Division engaged in a four-hour assault against Iraqis just west of Basra. More than 750 vehicles were destroyed and thousands of Iraqi troops killed. American forces suffered not a single casualty. A U.S. commander said, "We really waxed them." It was called a "Turkey Shoot." One member of an Apache helicopter crew yelled "Say hello to Allah" as he launched a laser-guided Hellfire missile into a mass of Iraqi troops (see Patrick J. Sloyan, "Massive Battle After Cease Fire," *New York Newsday*, 8 May 1991). The intention of these actions went far beyond the ejection of the Iraqi army from Kuwait: it was to destroy Iraq utterly and completely. The ratio of Iraqi military to American military deaths exceeded 500 to one. Gen. Thomas Kelly commented on 23 February 1991 "by the time the ground war begins there won't be many of them left." Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf estimated that Iraqi military casualties totalled more than 100,000. The intention was to destroy all

military facilities and equipment wherever they were located, and more generally (and like Scipio at Carthage), to so annihilate the military-age male population that Iraq could no longer raise a substantial military on terms other than the victor's. This conduct violated the UN Charter, Hague and Geneva Conventions, the Nuremberg Charter and Christian principles of justifiable warfare.

6. The U.S. military used prohibited weapons capable of mass destruction, and inflicted indiscriminate death and unnecessary suffering against both military and civilian targets.

Among the known illegal weapons and illegal uses of weapons employed by American armed forces during this war (a) were fuel air explosives capable of widespread incineration and death, (b) napalm, (c) cluster and anti-personnel fragmentation bombs and (d) "superbombs" (2.5 tonne devices intended to assassinate foreign leaders in their bunkers). Fuel air explosives were used against civilian areas, oil fields, and fleeing civilians and soldiers on two stretches of highway between Kuwait and Iraq. Included in fuel air weapons used was the BLU-82, a 7,000-kilogram device capable of incinerating everything within hundreds of metres.

One infamous ten-kilometre stretch, dubbed the "Highway of Death," was littered with hundreds of vehicles and thousands of dead. Many were victims of these banned weapons, all were fleeing to Iraq for their lives, and among them were civilians of all ages and nationalities including Kuwaitis, Iraqis, Palestinians and Jordanians. Another 90-kilometre stretch of road to the east, following an attack on convoys on the night of 25 February 1991, was strewn with the remnants of tanks, armoured cars, trucks, ambulances and thousands of bodies.

In both Iraq and Kuwait, napalm was used to terrorise civilians and ignite oil wells. Cluster and anti-personnel fragmentation bombs were used in Basra and other cities and towns, and against the aforementioned convoys and military units. The CBU-75 carries 1,800 bomblets. One type can explode before hitting the ground, on impact, or be timed to explode at different times after impact. Each bomblet contains 600 razor sharp steel fragments that are lethal at distances within 15 metres of impact. The 1,800 bomblets from one CBU-75 can cover with deadly shrapnel an area equal to 157 football fields. Illegal weapons, in short, killed thousands of civilians and soldiers. Their use violated the UN Charter, Hague and Geneva Conventions, the Nuremberg Charter and Christian principles of justifiable warfare.

7. After the ceasefire, President Bush encouraged and aided Shiite Muslims and Kurds to rebel against the Government of Iraq, and thereby caused fratricidal violence, exposure, hunger, sickness and

thousands of deaths. After these rebellions failed, the U.S. military invaded and occupied parts of Iraq without authority and in order to increase division and hostility within Iraq.

Without authority from the Congress or the UN, President Bush recommenced military actions after the ceasefire. He encouraged and aided rebellion against the government in Baghdad, failed to protect the warring parties under American jurisdiction, and encouraged the migration of whole populations, thereby placing them in jeopardy from the elements, hunger and disease. After much suffering and many deaths, he then established bantustan-like settlements for Kurds in Iraq, and demanded that the government in Baghdad compensate the U.S. for its cost. When Kurds chose to return to their homes in Iraq, he moved U.S. troops further into northern Iraq. The conduct violated the Charter of the United Nations.

8. Before, during and after the war, Coalition leaders, particularly Americans and Britons, intentionally deprived the Iraqi people of essential medicines, potable water, food and other necessities.

A major component of the assault on Iraq was the systematic deprivation of essential human needs and services. To break the will of the people, destroy their economic capability, reduce their numbers and wreck their health, Coalition leaders and their civilian and military henchmen:

- imposed and enforced embargoes preventing the shipment of needed medicines, water purifiers, infant milk formula, food and other supplies;
- froze Iraqi funds, and forced other nations to do so, thereby depriving Iraq of the ability to purchase needed medicines, food and other supplies;
- controlled information about the urgent need for such supplies to prevent sickness, death and threatened epidemic, endangering the whole society;
- impeded or prevented international organisations, governments and relief agencies from providing needed supplies and obtaining information concerning needs;
- failed to assist or meet urgent needs of huge refugee populations including Egyptians, Indians, Pakistanis, Yemenis, Sudanese, Jordanians, Palestinians, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, and interfered with efforts of others to do so;
- diverted attention from health and epidemic threats within Iraq caused by the U.S. even after advertising the plight of Kurdish people on the Turkish border.

As a result of these acts, thousands of people died, and many more suffered illness and permanent injury. As a single illustration, Iraq consumed infant milk formula at a rate of 2,500 tonnes per month during the first seven months of 1990. From November 1990 to February 1991, it was able to import only 17

tonnes. Its own productive capacity was destroyed by Coalition bombing. During the embargo that stretched throughout the 1990s, at least 100,000 and perhaps up to 500,000 Iraqi civilians died. This conduct violates Hague and Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other covenants. By the precedents established at Nuremberg, it constitutes a crime against humanity.

### **A Grave Responsibility Mocked and a Desperate Effort Repudiated**

Today, more than three years after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and overthrow of Saddam Hussein, Americans, Australians and Britons have mostly forgotten the transgressions of the 1990-1991 war (if, indeed, they ever knew them). In these and other instances, they don't "invert" – that is, see things from others' points of view – because, by and large, they have convinced themselves that their rulers are right and just and others are wrong and crazed. Hence it never occurs to them that their politicians, in their name, commit war crimes; and they respond with indifference, denial or even hostility to the proposition that today's crop of Western politicians, like their predecessors at Versailles, are creating conditions under which extremists thrive.

Since 2003, much mainstream coverage and commentary about the second war against Iraq has focussed first upon the failure to send sufficient troops to pacify the country; and then upon the decision to disband the Saddam's army without training a new one; and more recently upon the failure to crush the insurgency and foresee the appalling communal violence; and now upon the highhandedness, cruelty and utter pointlessness of the occupation. But little analysis has pondered the legal questions arising from this and previous aggressions. The UN's Secretary-General has put his view in an unusually blunt fashion. In September 2004, Kofi Annan told the BBC: "the US-led invasion of Iraq was an illegal act that contravened the UN Charter."

If so, then an inconvenient question arises: should Anglo-American politicians and their top civilian and military aides be held to account for their repeated violations over the years of the laws promulgated in order to punish senior Nazis after the Second World War? Do the precedents established at Nuremberg apply to American and British officials? Or are they somehow immune from the laws that their predecessors invoked? If not, why shouldn't Bush, Blair, Howard and their inner circle be tried for the many deaths and untold misery their policies have caused?

If, on the same basis the Big Four employed to try Nazis at Nuremberg, the leading members of the American, Australian and British governments and armed forces were tried for actions taken in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in recent years, they might well be convicted (see Anwaar Hussein, [Dust Off the Nuremberg Files](#); Michael Mandel, [Nuremberg Lesson for Iraq War: It's](#)

[Murder](#); and Michael Gaddy, [The Ghosts of Nuremberg](#)). In his Opening Address at the Nuremberg Trials, delivered in November 1946, Justice Robert Jackson of the U.S. Supreme Court began with these words: “The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility.” Alas, during the intervening years, Western politicians have mocked and debased this responsibility to such an extent that Nuremberg principles are today little more than rhetorical devices uttered on ceremonial occasions. So the Three Amigos need not worry. Apparently, these principles apply only to captured thugs from Balkan or Third World countries.

Yet reading the transcript of the first Nuremberg trial, it is clear that all who were accused of crimes, from the humblest foot soldier to the highest and mightiest civilian and military leader, were considered responsible for their actions. In particular, the leaders and henchmen who initiated aggression were assigned primary criminal responsibility. None of the subsequent crimes would have been committed if the primary aggression – that is, the crime against peace – had not occurred. On 12 August 1945, Justice Jackson stated the objective of the American prosecution: “If we can cultivate in the world the idea that aggressive war-making is the way to the prisoner’s dock rather than the way to honours, we will have accomplished something toward making the peace more secure. ... We must make clear to the Germans that the wrong for which their fallen leaders are on trial is not that they lost the war, but that they started it.”

Justice Jackson’s subsequent statements concerning the Nazi leadership in the dock goes to the heart of the matter: “These defendants were men of a station and rank which does not soil its own hands with blood. They were men who knew how to use lesser folk as tools. We want to reach the planners and designers, the inciters and leaders without whose evil architecture the world would not have been for so long scourged with the violence and lawlessness, and wracked with the agonies and convulsions, of this terrible war. ... We have here the surviving top politicians, militarists, financiers, diplomats, administrators and propagandists of the Nazi movement. Who was responsible for these crimes if they were not?”

On 1 October 1946, the Nuremberg Tribunal delivered its judgement. Three Amigos, are you listening? “To initiate a war of aggression is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole ... Crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities; and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced.” The simple truth is that had Bush, Blair, Howard and others not unleashed their aggression, then tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians, thousands of American and hundreds of British and other military personnel would be alive today. Hence Justice

Jackson's last sentence of his closing statement speaks to contemporary Anglo-American leaders as much as the Germans on trial at the time: "If you were to say of these men that they are not guilty, it would be as true to say that there has been no war, there are no slain, there has been no crime."

Reviewing Justice Jackson's words prompts one to wonder: how would he and his team of prosecutors assess the legal basis of the Three Amigos' decision to wage war? Neoconservatives would do well to remember his injunction: "Our position is that whatever grievances a nation may have, however objectionable it finds the status quo, aggressive warfare is an illegal means for settling these grievances or for altering these conditions." And those who cannot visualise American, Australian and British defendants in a war crimes trial should also ponder Justice Jackson's words: "Let me make clear that while this law is first applied against German aggressors, the law includes, and if it is to serve a useful purpose it must condemn, aggression by any other nations, including those which sit here now in judgment ... This trial represents mankind's desperate effort to apply the discipline of the law to statesmen who have used their powers of state to attack the foundations of the world's peace and to commit aggression against the rights of their neighbours."

Sixty years later, it is clear that this desperate effort has failed. Ignore their babble: The Three Amigos are above any law and accountable to nobody. How on earth can this be? The "leaders" of welfare-warfare states are nothing more than, and have never been anything more than, the heads of criminal gangs (see Murray Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty*, New York University Press, 1998). They are not protectors: they are predators. Those who have yet to encounter – much less absorb – this self-evident truth cling ferociously to the fairy tale of the benevolent state. Accordingly, confronted with the logic and evidence that some of their most prominent and beloved statesmen are better described as war criminals, they reply either with denial or vitriol.

### **Contempt of Criminality Is Obedience to God**

In the world of business and investments, Charles Munger constantly asks what can and likely will go awry. Applied to rulers and their policies of welfare and warfare, the rule is: interventionism creates unintended consequences; and these consequences inevitably worsen the very problems that the interventions allegedly sought to resolve. What, then, to do? A first step is to disengage. In the absence of compelling reasons to the contrary, regard anything uttered by any politician – and certainly any Anglo-American politician – as an evasion, distortion, delusion or outright fabrication. Don't believe them when they assert, in effect, that they can wave a magic wand and give you something (be it "security" or "quality healthcare" or affordable childcare or low interest rates or cheap petrol) for nothing. Ignore their

vilifications of people in far-away places: if you have no reason to meddle there, then on what grounds have your rulers?

Why can't you believe the welfare-warfare caste? Jim Henley, in his blog *Unqualified Offerings* (3 February 2003), answers this question tartly:

*Because they lie. Routinely and often and deliberately. They said there were 100,000 people in mass graves in Kosovo. That was a lie. They said Iraqi soldiers were tossing babies out of incubators. That was a lie. They said Iraqi troops in 1991 were massing on the Saudi border. That was a lie. They said Saddam's attack on Kuwait was a total surprise. That was a lie. They said US troops had no combat role in Central America in the 1980s. That was a lie.*

*Right through the Gulf War, I believed that sh\*\*. By the time of Kosovo, I knew better. I'm 42 years old, I knew the Middle East existed before September 11, 2001, and if today's bunch sounds like a lot of previous bunches that turned out to be full of crap, my conclusion is that this bunch is full of crap too.*

Today, neoconservative politicians scream that Hezbollah, Syria and Iran are “threats to Western security.” These assertions, too, are bald-faced lies (see Justin Raimondo, [The Lying Game Revisited](#)). Another is that “they hate us for what we are.” The truth is that the victims of interventionism hate politicians’ relentless aggression, and the countless deaths generated in the wake of that aggression. It is flatly wrong, in other words, to insist that suicide attacks at Bali, London, Madrid, New York and Washington, etc., have been conducted by “Islamofascists” engaged in a religious onslaught against the secular West. Instead, “suicide-terrorist attacks are not so much driven by religion as by a clear strategic objective: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists view as their homeland. From Lebanon to Sri Lanka to Chechnya to Kashmir to the West Bank, every major suicide terrorist campaign – over 95% of all incidents – has had as its central objective to compel a democratic state to withdraw.” Suicide attacks, in short, are not a consequence of religious extremism: they are a response to aggression and interventionism. Suicide attacks occur over here because our politicians meddle so brutally over there. The good news is that “The history of the last 20 years shows that once the [occupation forces] withdraw from the homeland of the terrorists, [the suicide attacks] often stop – and stop on a dime” (see Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House, 2005). If so, then the bad news is that the more our politicians intervene over there, the more their attackers will retaliate over here. The Three Amigos alleged cure for terrorism is actually a cause of terrorism. Memo to politicians: Do you want to prevent suicide bombings? Then stop the

invasions, remove the troops and renounce interventionism (see also Patrick Buchanan, [Why Are They Killing Us?](#)).

The truth is that neoconservative lies are simply the latest in a long series of statist lies. Anglo-American politicians have repeatedly manipulated their subjects into war. These wars created unintended consequences; and the next batch of politicians treated these consequences with more interventions, more deception – and more war. Woodrow Wilson, for example, lied America into the Great War (see Thomas Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I*, Basic Books, 2003); and Wilson's war, which he glorified as "The War to Make the World Safe for Democracy," became, in terms of its effects, "The War That Made the World Safe for Fascism." Similarly, Franklin Roosevelt lied America into the Second World War (see Thomas Fleming, *The New Dealers' War: FDR and the War Within World War II*, Basic Books). FDR's war became "The War That Made the World Safe for Communism." And so too the Bushies: they lied shamelessly about Afghanistan and Iraq, and it appears that their aggressions will become known as "The Wars That Made the World Safe for Christian, Jewish and Islamic Extremism."

London's Lord Mayor, "Red" Ken Livingston, one of the few politicians in the Western world who seems to know that there are no traffic problems, only property rights problems, offered these wise comments when asked what motivated the attacks in New York, Washington, London and elsewhere:

*I think you've just had 80 years of Western intervention into predominantly Arab lands ... We've propped up unsavoury governments, we've overthrown ones we didn't consider sympathetic. And I think the particular problem we have at the moment is that in the 1980s ... the Americans recruited and trained Osama Bin Laden, taught him how to kill, to make bombs, and set him off to kill the Russians and drive them out of Afghanistan. They didn't give any thought to the fact that once he'd done that he might turn on his creators ... If at the end of the First World War we had done what we promised the Arabs, which was to let them be free and have their own governments, and kept out of Arab affairs, and just bought their oil, rather than feeling we had to control the flow of oil, I suspect [attacks by Muslim extremists in retaliation against the attacks of Western extremists] wouldn't have arisen.*

What to do? Secondly, respect history. That is, understand the course of events that has produced this sorry juncture, and extrapolate roughly where the actions that have created it, if they continue, will lead. For the past century, America's foreign relations can best be characterised as a series of subterfuges and excuses for empire-building (see in particular Ivan Eland, *The Empire Has No Clothes*, The Independent Institute, 2004); and for the past half-century, the foreign relations of countries like Australia, Britain and Canada have

comprised little more than the running of fools' errands for Uncle Sam. The trouble with meddling in foreign lands, in addition to the death and destruction it wreaks upon its victims, is that it extinguishes liberty at home. And the trouble with overt imperialism is epitomised in a troubling question that preoccupied Thucydides and Livy, absorbed America's Founders and will likely overwhelm today's political caste within the Beltway: when does empire corrupt and bankrupt once-great republics beyond the point of no return? (See also Laurence Kotlikoff's must-read [Is the United States Bankrupt?](#)).

The point for foreigners is that politicians in Anglo-American countries have no right to dictate to the world and remake it in their image. The point for Americans is that by dictating to the world they cease to be the Americans in the sense that Thomas Jefferson understood that term (and Benjamin Franklin rightly feared would disappear within a century). For Americans and non-Americans alike, the extinction of Jeffersonian America is a sad loss.

Interventionist foreign policies, in short, breed war; and war, in turn, spawns yet more interventionist foreign policies. Given this insight, what will the "war on terror" achieve? Much killing, vast destruction of property and liberty, and growing hatred. Grieving the death of his only son during the war to end all wars, in 1919 Rudyard Kipling wrote "if any question why we died, tell them because our fathers lied." The same point applies to the Americans, Britons, Canadians, Dutch and others mired pointlessly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Peace will not come until Western, and particularly Anglo-American, politicians abandon what they arrogantly believe is their birthright – the treatment of the Arab and Muslim world like a pawn on a chessboard, drawing its boundaries, making and breaking incompatible promises, occasionally invading it and constantly meddling in its affairs, and establishing and supporting puppets that oppress local populations. At various points during the twentieth century, Western politicians did little that mitigated – and much that encouraged – the rise of extremism. Today, they are doing exactly the same thing. A just and enduring peace can come only if politicians stop creating a state of affairs in which extremists thrive. Given their historical form, an unconscionably long time will pass before they come to their senses. In the mean time, countries like Australia, Britain and Canada should indeed adhere strictly to a staunchly pro-American policy. But it must be "pro-American" in the proper historical sense of that term – one, alas, that is alien to the best and brightest in Canberra, Ottawa and Westminster. As Amir Butler expresses it in an outstanding article, [Australia Must Follow Washington](#) – George Washington, that is.

What to do? Above all, Christians must abandon their moral relativism (whereby it's OK when Christians kill Muslims over there, but it's not OK if Muslims kill Christians over here) and craven submission to the state, and recognise the strict limits of their duty towards their rulers (see in particular

David Lipscomb's [Civil Government: Its Origin, Mission, and Destiny, and the Christian's Relation to It](#), Teresa Whitehurst's [Why Are Some American Christians So Bloodthirsty?](#) and [Letter 59](#)). Lipscomb (1831-1917) presents a biblical view of a voluntary society. He refutes the fantasy that governments are created for "the public good," and he demonstrates that peace, progress and civilisation do not and cannot depend upon the state. If Christians participate in politics, they mock the Ten Commandments. Instead, they should persuade people to renounce the use of force – in all its forms, including taxation – embrace God and emulate the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Christians should pray that their earthly rulers rule justly. But they should not glorify them; still less should they bomb and kill for them. What happens when Christians embrace Caesar? Consider the words from 1 Samuel (8:11-18):

*This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plough his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.*

*Chris Leithner*