

STAHLER 2002

commentary

from other pens...

Next time, Bush says, war criminals will pay

President Bush is sending a message to Iraqi generals who, if and when the fighting starts, decide to obey Saddam Hussein's orders instead of ignoring them.

The generals, Bush said in his Cincinnati speech this week, "must understand that all war criminals will be pursued and punished."

Bush believes that, given the proper incentives, Iraqi generals could desert Saddam, leaving him bereft of the military leadership he needs to counter invading Americans.

This could spare U.S. troops who might otherwise have to face nightmarish chemical and biological weapons attacks.

Bush's comment Monday night begs the question of why Saddam and his top lieutenants haven't been hauled before a war crimes tribunal already for past misdeeds, or at least indicted.

A partial list of Saddam's abuses over the past 15 years includes: a genocidal 1987-88 campaign against Iraqi Kurds, the invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990, and the suppression of the 1991 post-Desert Storm uprising in northern Iraq, with a death toll of some 30,000.

The Clinton administration spent many hours plotting ways to persuade the U.N. Security Council to create a war crimes tribunal for Iraq.

But the effort fell short, a victim of international politics, said Ambassador David Scheffer, a former top legal aide in the Clinton administration.

Scheffer said critics of a special tribunal for Iraq argued successfully that pursuit of indictments could have impaired Iraqi cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors and with the U.N.-approved oil-for-food program.

Scheffer also said the Soviet Union, which survived for a time after Desert Storm, and China were worried that creation of a tribunal for Iraq could set a precedent that some day could be used against them in light of their own misdeeds over the years.

Much like Saddam, Scheffer noted, Cambodia's Khmer Rouge leaders also have escaped prosecution by the world community even though their late 1970s genocide record is far bloodier than Saddam's.

As Scheffer sees it, expediency in such matters should not be allowed to prevail indefinitely.

"Ultimately, war crimes accountability has to be addressed," he said. Richard Dicker, of the New York-based Human Rights Watch, said the failure to indict Saddam and his colleagues dramatizes the need for a permanent international tribunal to deal with war criminals.

He said the International Criminal Court, created by the United Nations over the summer, will fill that need but has no authority to pursue crimes against humanity that occurred before its founding.

David Mack, an Iraq expert and former State Department official, said the number of Iraqis implicated in the crimes of Saddam's regime probably number in the tens of thousands.

He said it is unrealistic to try to hold these people accountable for their abuses because this would reduce their incentive to break with Saddam.

Many thousands of troops defected at the time of Desert Storm. Of these, large numbers have either returned clandestinely to Iraq, been resettled in the United States or other countries or languish at refugee camps outside Iraq, Mack said.

Many are guilty of serious crimes from their military days, he added. In the interests of justice for their victims, he said he was hopeful that at least some will be brought to justice.

Douglas Feith, an undersecretary of defense, said disaffection within the Iraqi military continues to be widespread.

In a war with the United States, Feith said, senior Iraqi officers who are faced with the certainty of an American victory "would think twice about fulfilling orders to use weapons of mass destruction."

Indeed, he said, disobedience may be the best option for a disgruntled Iraqi officer, the alternative perhaps being an appointment with a war crimes tribunal prosecutor once the dust settles.

EDITOR'S NOTE — George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.



Looking for something to remind me of the trip

I like to travel, and I seem to have been doing a lot lately.

Each place I visit, I try to find a cookbook, something from the area to remind me of what happened during that place and time.

In the front of these books, I write a little note so that I'll know next year why the heck I got that really weird cookbook. Usually it's because it was the only one on the rack.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've been to the Missouri Press Convention at the Lake of the Ozarks and down to visit relatives in central Arkansas.

On the way back from the Ozarks, we stopped at a little antique store. I found a great set of Pyrex bowls similar to a set my mother received for her wedding anniversary 50-plus years ago. (Actually she got four sets, and shared them with her mother and sisters.)

I also found a great cookbook called "Forgotten Recipes."

On the first page, I have my memories of the



cynthia haynes

• open season

convention and the resort, and on the front cover are "household discoveries — tips from 1930."

Here are some samples:

Left Over Bits of Soap

It is often a problem to use left-over bits of toilet soap. After a quantity of soap has accumulated, I add a little water and melt the small pieces of soap in a pan over the fire. Then I pour the mixture into gem tines and allow it to harden. The result is handy little cakes of toilet soap.

A Tea Kettle Knob

When the original knob on the teakettle lid has come off, I find an empty spool, cut it in two and fasten it on with a bolt and burr, a very practical

substitute.

On my trip to Arkansas, we visited Petit Jean Mountain near Dardanelle.

After a great lunch at the lodge, I bought "Cook Book Recipe, Legends & Such from Pickles Gap, Skunk Hollow and Toad Suck, Arkansas."

These places all claim to be near Conway, Ark., and the book tells the legends of the place names. Here's one:

The Legend of Toad Suck

Long ago, steamboats traveled the Arkansas River when the water was the right depth. When it wasn't, the captains and their crews tied up to wait where Toad Suck Ferry lock and dam now span the river. While they waited, they refreshed themselves at a tavern there, to the dismay of the folks living nearby, who said, "They suck on the bottle 'til they swell up like toads." hence, Toad Suck. The tavern is long gone, but the legend lives on.

And you thought that I got recipes out of those cookbooks, didn't you?

Can Bush beat Saddam Hussein without a war?

President Bush routinely says that he prefers not to go to war with Iraq to achieve U.S. aims. No one thinks he means it. But maybe he does.

Conceivably, Bush has scenarios in mind whereby the United States could achieve Iraqi disarmament and/or Saddam Hussein's ouster ("regime change") without war.

If Bush could end the threat posed by Iraq without any significant loss of life, it certainly would be an astounding accomplishment — probably guaranteeing, among other things, his re-election. And, maybe, a Nobel Peace Prize.

Three scenarios come to mind. They might be termed the Colin Powell option, the Ari Fleischer option and the Idi Amin option — that is, disarmament without regime change, regime change through assassination, and regime change by abdication.

Secretary of State Colin Powell told USA Today last week that regime change is not a necessity but that "the issue is disarmament." He is working on a new United Nations resolution demanding intrusive inspections and the dismantling of Iraq's capacity for weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile, White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, not a man known for free-lancing, floated both the exile and assassination scenarios, though only the latter earned headlines.

He said, "I can only say that the cost of a one-way ticket is substantially less than that [of war]. The cost of one bullet, if the Iraqi people take it on themselves, is substantially less than that. The cost of war is more."

Various unnamed sources have floated the idea that Hussein might be induced, like one-time Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, to go into exile — in Amin's case, to Saudi Arabia.

All three options require that Bush seem — as he does — hell-bent for war and fully prepared to wage it on a unilateral basis, if necessary.

That's the only way to get the United Nations to enforce its past resolutions and enact a new one, to force Iraq to even consider weapons inspections, and to inspire Iraqi generals to think about killing Hussein to save themselves.



morton kondracke

• commentary

All of the options would be further bolstered if Bush could form a broad international coalition against Hussein, including his sometimes protectors, France and Russia. If they told him he had to yield — or else — he just might.

Admittedly, there are many reasons to doubt whether the United States can achieve Iraqi disarmament or regime change without war.

And, even if we could, it would probably mean giving up on the idea of converting Iraq into a democracy, the dream of U.S. hawks and of the Iraqi resistance movement in the United States.

I tried the three scenarios out on representatives of both groups gathered last week for a conference on post-Hussein Iraq at the American Enterprise Institute.

Harvard scholar and Iraqi exile Kanan Makiya, author of the groundbreaking book "Republic of Fear" (University of California Press, 1998), said that Hussein "will never go into exile willingly" and added, "There have been dozens of coup attempts against him over the years, and Saddam has killed everyone involved."

American hawk Richard Perle, a former Reagan administration defense official, said, "I can't conceive of an inspection regime that would give us any confidence that Saddam Hussein has given up his weapons of mass destruction."

Makiya, Perle and most other conference attendees expressed disappointment that, despite Bush's ringing expressions of support for Iraqi democracy, his administration has given little support to anti-Hussein dissident groups such as the Iraqi National Congress (INC).

Ahmad Chalabi, president of the INC, told me that the State Department and CIA continue to deny his group permission to give assistance to dissidents inside Iraq, claiming it would either violate

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