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## America, Are You Ready for This War?

By William Rivers Pitt  
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For the sake of argument, let's say that Saddam Hussein does indeed have chemical and biological weapons somewhere in Iraq. (Leave off the nukes, as the IEIA has bluntly stated that no such program or weapon exists in Iraq) Hussein is and has always been a weapons junkie, and his jones was amply fed by science, training and materials given freely to him by the Reagan administration and a number of prominent American corporations.

One could argue that the best evidence Colin Powell could show the UN on Wednesday is a pile of shipping manifests from 1986, but that is not likely to happen. After all, the American names on those manifests would bear a striking resemblance to current door plaques along the halls of power in the White House and Defense Department. This could present an uncomfortable situation.

UNSCOM basically razed Hussein's weapons program to the ground from 1991 through 1998, taking care of pretty much everything the Gulf War bombs missed. The inspectors wrecked all the equipment and destroyed every missile, bomb and laboratory they could find. They were tantalizingly close to declaring Iraq fully disarmed when the wheels came off UNSCOM in 1998. In the intervening years, no evidence has been put forth demonstrating Iraq's procurement of new weapons development equipment and material, items that are watched very closely. Our satellite technology can read a watch ticking on an arm in downtown Baghdad, and is more than capable of noting whether or not Hussein's soldiers and scientists have been busy in the deserts outside Basra. No such documentation has ever been presented.

Forget all that. Accept the flawed but widely accepted premise that Saddam has these weapons practically falling out of his ears. Let's take a walk down a path to the future.

Powell gives his spiel to the UN, which is so dazzling that a resolution for war is immediately granted. The tanks roll and the jets fly. The 'Shock and Awe' plan developed by the Pentagon and reported on last week by CBS is put into effect - 800 cruise missiles are fired into downtown Baghdad, a city of five million people.





Those cruise missiles are followed by a fusillade of 'smart bombs' which will be proven to be 100% accurate because all of them will hit Iraq.

Saddam doesn't quit. His army and security services don't turn on him. The people of Iraq do not rise up either, as they will be busy dying, hiding and mourning. Because we have absolutely no intelligence on the day to day location of Hussein, our rain of weaponry does not kill him. He hangs on, waving his middle finger into the cameras of the Al Jazeera network, which will film this alongside the shattered bodies of tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians. The necessity of sending in ground troops to finish the job becomes manifest, at which point America will be forced to absorb casualty figures not seen since Vietnam. In the worst case scenario, those troops get bogged down in Baghdad, at which point the newly minted rules for the release of tactical nuclear weapons come vividly into play.

There are two diverging nightmares arising from this entirely possible scenario, both of which arrive at your doorstep. If the worst comes to pass, and our forces use a nuclear weapon to seal the deal and release our troops from the bloodbath of street-to-street combat, it is absolutely certain that Pakistan or Iran, or both, or someone else entirely, will deliver a nuclear weapon into the hands of al Qaeda. When the mushroom cloud goes up in Iraq, all bets are off.

Perhaps more disturbing is the scenario that comes if everything goes completely according to plan. Iraq is a nation that is 97% Muslim, and the civilian casualties that will come from a picture-perfect execution of the American war plan will motivate a shadow army of terrorists who would, under normal conditions, welcome the death of the secular heretic Saddam. This war has nothing to do with dealing with that threat, but it will unleash the fury of that army upon us immediately. They will see the corpses of innocent Muslims, and they will come for us. Here. The front lines of this war will move to your neighborhood and mine.

That is the best-case scenario, and that is the rub. Whether or not nuclear weapons come into play, our incredibly agile and effective terrorist foes will attack us on the home front, should we kill Iraqi civilians. The best laid plans involve this, whether we like it or not. Meanwhile, George W. Bush has done absolutely nothing to make sure we are safe here at home from the inevitable blowback.

The Homeland Security Department has been created, but is still tied in knots trying to streamline communication and interaction between dozens and dozens of intelligence agencies. The same CIA, FBI and NSA that allowed the September 11th attacks to bruise the skies above New York and Washington are still responsible for our safety, and there has been no interior reform whatsoever to solve the security holes that allowed the terrorists to attack us in the first place. The independent investigation meant to cure these ills has gone dark and silent. Our ports, borders and airports are still security sieves. Not one city or town is prepared to handle a biological or chemical attack. Hussein may not have those weapons, but it is entirely possible that al Qaeda does.

In essence, the King is calling for war while his own castle walls lay in ruin around him. The battlefield will not be in some faraway land, but right here, inside the moat.

This is not some mealy-mouthed appeaser argument. This is fundamental tactical analysis, and it says we are not ready for this war. During the entirety of the 20th century, we could feel relatively safe behind our oceans, because the wars always took place on someone else's ground. After September 11th, that changed, and we were not ready for it, and we are still not.

Bear this in mind when you realize that Saddam Hussein has been in office since 1979 and has never, not once, made an aggressive move against the United States. Bear this in mind when you understand that Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, two very viable foes who have actually attacked us, want nothing to do with Hussein because he is a secular dictator who has been crushing Islamic fundamentalism for thirty years. If we attack, those forces will move against us in the name of Iraq. They are, in fact, just waiting for us to move.

Bear this in mind when you consider the inspectors, whose work will eventually uncover any weapons while simultaneously protecting us against terrorist blowback from a war. That's right: The United Nations, so denigrated by the Bush administration, is currently working overtime to save your life.

What is this war worth to you? Are you willing to have it come to your city, to your family? It will. Bank on it. The U.S. military may be all set to fight. We as a nation are not at all prepared to defend ourselves against it here at home. Bank on that, as well.

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