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## Another Phony Justification for Invading Iraq

by [Jacob G. Hornberger](#), September 10, 2003

In a 15-minute speech explaining why the American people should support the occupation of Iraq, President Bush offered another phony justification for the U.S. government's invasion of Iraq: to fight the "war on terrorism."

There's at least one big problem with that justification: It is the U.S. government's own interventionist policies in the Middle East — including the 13 years of brutal economic sanctions on Iraq which contributed to the deaths of multitudes of Iraqi children — that are directly responsible for terrorist attacks against America in the first place.

Such being the case, keeping U.S. troops in Iraq for the indefinite future will only guarantee that terrorist attacks against America will continue. That's why President Bush didn't even have to taunt all those people in the Middle East who hate U.S. foreign policy with his "Bring it on" dare; his decision to continue occupying Iraq by concentrating U.S. troops in the midst of people who hate our country was certain to attract more than enough attention.

Moreover, we can be sure that if the terrorist attacks take place here in the United States, there will be renewed governmental assaults on our civil liberties — in the name of keeping us safe from terrorism, of course.

In his speech, the president failed to explain why no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq, despite the fact that that was the primary justification for invading that he pounded into the heads of the American people in the months leading up to the attack.

And failing to provide one iota of evidence for his repeated insinuation that Saddam Hussein conspired to commit the September 11 attacks, the president instead repeated the canard that has become popular of late among U.S. officials — that the U.S. occupation of Iraq is comparable to the U.S. occupation of post-World War II Germany and Japan.

The comparison, however, is misguided. In World War II, America was battling two nations — Germany and Japan — that had invaded innocent countries, that is, countries that had not attacked them first. Moreover, Japan had attacked the United States, and both Germany and Japan had declared war on the United States. Finally, the U.S. Congress had declared war against both countries, as our Constitution requires as a condition of waging war against another country.

With Iraq, the United States is the aggressor nation, not the victimized nation. It attacked a country that never attacked the United States or even threatened to do so. Moreover, the Congress never declared war on Iraq.

Therefore, President Bush has yet to answer the critical question: Why are people automatically labeled “terrorists” for resisting an unlawful occupation that, as everyone now knows, was sold to the American people under false pretenses?

Why did the president feel he needed only 15 minutes to put forward his most recent justification for invading and occupying Iraq? The answer is easy: By framing the invasion of Iraq and the resulting occupation in terms of the “war on terrorism,” he knew that the members of Congress, as well as many others, would be more likely to immediately jump on board in support of everything he asks, including his request for \$87 billion to finance just the beginning stage of the occupation (on top of the \$79 billion that Congress gave him just last April to wage the war).

Let’s not forget that that’s how President Bush got Congress to enact the USA PATRIOT Act without even reading it and to maintain continued silence in the face of the greatest assault on civil liberties in our lifetime. Let’s also not forget that that’s why the Pentagon changed the name of its unpopular Total Information Awareness program to spy on Americans to Terrorist Information Awareness.

As the president and his associates have reminded us so often, in the “war on terrorism” you’re either on the side of the president or on the side of the terrorists. Thus, under the president’s “war on terrorism” rationale for invading and occupying Iraq, if you’re not for the continued occupation of Iraq and the billions of dollars in U.S. taxpayer money needed to fund it, not to mention the daily loss of U.S. soldiers, then you must favor the terrorists.

What more brilliant political use of the term “war on terrorism” than that? After all, who wants to be on the side of the terrorists?

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