

## **Buh-Bye, Saddam** **by Dan Jacoby**

Saddam Hussein has been captured, and the world is safe for democracy.

Well ... at least Iraq is safe for democracy. Isn't it?

The manner and condition under which Hussein was captured indicates that he was not in command and control of the forces that are fighting the American invasion and occupation of Iraq. Those self-appointed pundits who said that Saddam Hussein couldn't live in a cave were absolutely right. It follows, then, that since the leader of the resistance forces (if, in fact, there is a leader) has not been caught, the resistance will continue.

In fact, we can expect attacks on the American occupation forces to increase. Many Iraqis were reluctant to join in the resistance for fear that Saddam Hussein would regain power the day after America retreated. Now this fear is gone, and the people who will surely call themselves "freedom fighters" can come out of hiding.

But we face an even larger and more horrifying threat.

Despite all the Bush administration bungling, the invasion of Iraq was a tremendous military success. And despite all the Bush administration infighting, the occupation of Iraq has not been seriously challenged. What does this mean to the rest of the world? It means that America has become the schoolyard bully, exerting its will through military force whenever, wherever and for whatever reason it wants. It means that America can invade, conquer and occupy anyone it wants. It means ...

Be afraid. Be very afraid.

And afraid many people are. Millions of people – make that billions of people – look over their shoulders, and over their heads, and wonder when we'll start dropping cluster bombs on their cities and shooting their leaders. They wonder what lies the U.S. President and his diplomatic lackeys will tell the world in order to defend these actions. They wonder what humiliations America will subject them to in the phony name of "bringing democracy" to their country. They wonder whether our voracious appetite for nation building – or is that empire building – can ever be sated.

And eventually, they will do what the world always does when someone tries to conquer and rule through fear. Countries from the Arab world, Africa, possibly South America, and almost certainly China, will band together in an alliance (read "coalition") to fight the United States. And they'll use whatever weapons they need to defeat us. And we, of course, will use whatever weapons we need to defend ourselves.

Albert Einstein once remarked that he didn't know what weapons World War III would be fought with, but that World War IV would surely be fought with sticks and bones. Is it down this road that the Bush administration is leading us? The lies, the use of brute force instead of diplomacy, and the apparent imperial aspirations of George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, their friends at Halliburton and other war profiteers could easily lead to disaster for everyone.

After almost sixty years of trying – and failing – to spread democracy through gunboat diplomacy, it's time America grew up. It is said that the difference between men and boys is the size of their toys. The real difference lies in knowing when not to use those toys. The real difference lies in finding better ways to work and play with others than by being the schoolyard bully. The real difference lies in being able to get your way – or accept not always getting your way – without killing thousands of people.

And George W. Bush has never grown up. He is acting like – he is – a little boy with big toys. Maybe the next time Osama bin Laden or his associates strike inside our borders, we will grow up enough to understand that George W. Bush's overuse and misuse of these dangerous toys is getting us all in trouble. All that's certain is that he won't.

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