

Sayonara, Saddam ...

Commentary: 12/30/06

<http://www.jihadwatch.org/archives/014610.php>

On balance, the execution of Saddam Hussein by the fledgling Iraqi nation for his dictatorial excesses is a good thing, and probably should have happened sooner - and definitely not any later.

We can nit-pick the details, and the "what-if's", and the supposed benefits of keeping him alive, but when you come right down to it, the Iraqi government needs to act strongly and decisively in order to gain the upper hand in its struggle for control and legitimacy. The (relatively) swift trial and execution of the former dictator helps do that. In a more perfect world, Al-Sadr would be next on the list …

As to the rest, this is probably a no-win situation. Kill him, and you may create a martyr, a rallying point. Keep him alive, and you have a living symbol, a rallying point, and one who may one day be freed or escape. Better off dead, I think. Death is a message with some weight to the Islamic mind. Remember, Saddam thought it beneath him to be hanged, and wanted instead to be shot - an end he thought more befitting a leader of his high station.

"When you lie with dogs, you're bound to get fleas …" For its own purposes, the US and its allies practically created Sadaam in the old days, in part for his value as a foil against the Soviets and the Iranian Islamists. Until his ego got the better of him and he thought he had outgrown his handlers.

Shame on us for our complicity in looking past his atrocities, as well as to the news agencies like CNN who failed to tell us about them as they occurred. But having helped create the monster we did in the end bear some responsibility for eliminating him, and for doing what we now can to replace him with something better.

With all deference to the late President Ford, there IS a "national interest" at stake in Iraq, albeit a strategic and perhaps long-term one.

And when a thug has his finger in his pocket claiming to have a gun that he's willing to use, you are justified in taking (deadly) action based on that assumption, even if it later turns out only to be an (unloaded) finger.

We do the best we can with the information we have. Sometimes we do the right things for the wrong reasons. Sometimes we don't do anything at all, immobilized by our own indecision. Islamists are increasingly depending on this aspect of Western culture, oft known as "political correctness".

In leadership training, students are often admonished to "do something, anything … even if it's the wrong thing.", rather than to take the "easy" road of gutless inaction, which really isn't leadership at all.

We can do better, of course. We can learn and adapt. That is one of our strengths, and one of the great strengths of our military forces.

Not the poll-driven "policy initiative of the day" so popular during the Clinton years, but a combination of a firm and steady drive toward a goal, together with tactical adaptations and adjustments to meet the needs of a changing and fluid battlefield.

Our soldiers and their military leaders know this. They are trained to it. Our politicians seem less aware. Our popular media seems almost clueless - and the "talking heads" and professional pundits (including unfortunately all too many retired and former military officers) know that the way to get face time and media attention is to present the "opposing view", or the one that challenges the current thinking of those actually on the ground and making the decisions.

The Arab/Islamic mind admires (or at least respects) strength, and abhors weakness. One does not need to be brutal to be strong, but one does need to be firm and steady, and to stand by one's friends and allies.

One of the greatest difficulties we face today in the region is the fear that we will "cut and run" before the job is finished, leaving our allies at the mercy of their, and our, enemies.

We've done it before, and they know it. As recently as Iraq in the 1990's, in Israel, Somalia, Lebanon, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and in the Bay of Pigs. And the list goes on and on.

There is strength in intellectual diversity, and in honest debate. So much of the recent debate regarding our collective response to the Islamo-fascist threat however, seems completely gratuitous, and intended more to serve the political needs and aspirations of a particular political creed, whose antagonisms to Western culture and liberty might not be so different from those of the Islamists, who are today's primary global threat to peace and freedom.

Posted by Breckshire

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