

## The Beast is in its Cage: And so is Saddam Hussein

Sean M. Maloney, PhD

I received a call from an overseas friend of mine very early Sunday morning who informed me that Saddam Hussein had been captured by coalition special operations forces. I switched on CNN to see reporters, Iraqi reporters, jubilantly and spontaneously shout “God is Great!” and “Death to Saddam!” when video of Saddam’s post-capture medical examination (to ensure he didn’t do a “Hermann Goering” with a poison capsule, I assume) was presented by the victors to a stunned audience. Ecstatic Iraqis fired celebratory rounds in the air while journalists donned Kevlar helmets. The Iraqi people have started to emerge from their nearly forty-year long nightmare. The beast is in a cage.

On the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Newsworld, however, the disbelief of the cosmetically-challenged host was palpable. Rather than presenting the Canadian people with Berlin 1989-like scenes or interviewing Iraqis in the street, the CBC launched a few sleepy talking heads to bore us. This in itself is not surprising. What was more disturbing was the tone, which approximated, “Well, they have Saddam. But the real issue is the legality of the war against Iraq. Should the war have been fought in the first place?” It is one thing to be contrarian: this was something else. Immediately, the CBC initiated a discussion as to whether Saddam’s capture would break the insurgency. It did not examine or show for us the festive nature of a people who are one more step closer to being free of the remnants of a vicious, totalitarian apparatus. It focused on the negative, almost willing the insurgency to continue.

What comes across on our government-funded television network is that the CBC and the commentators it selects are still philosophically disabled by moral equivalency and related post-modernist constructs. These perspectives would have us believe that Saddam Hussein should have stayed in power, continued to murder the citizens of Iraq, and continued with proscribed weapons of mass destruction programmes. Why? Because he is a counterbalance to Israel or, he is a symbol of Arab self-esteem. Or: the United States has nuclear weapons, why not Iraq?

When their audience doesn't buy into these more esoteric perceptions, there is always the legalistic path. The take-down of the Hussein regime was "illegal" and not a "just war." Again, the CBC and its commentators are still caught up in dangerously obsolete notions of UN legality. I would suggest these same people viewed the 1999 intervention into Kosovo as "illegal." Damn the legality: in the case of Kosovo, nearly one million people were displaced from their homes using violent coercion which in turn threatened the tenuous, hard-fought peace in the Balkans. In Hussein's Iraq, the Mukhabarat horror show orchestrated by Thing 1 and Thing 2 (Qusay and Udday) and the devil that spawned them was far in excess of methods employed by the "usual suspects" deployed by the aging Left: Pinochet and Chile, for example, a remote Cold War event of some thirty years ago no longer relevant or even identifiable today by Canada's youth.

The Hussein regime was a national socialist regime whose leader drew inspiration from Hitler and Stalin and employed the same methods, including the use of gas to eliminate ethnic groups that didn't go along with the programme. By downplaying the facts of this decades-long bloodbath, and instead pumping up suspicion of American economic and strategic motives in the Gulf region, the CBC and its select group of commentators have presented us with the moral equivalency of the following scenario:

Dateline: Berlin 1945.

Misunderstood former artist and leader of the German people, Adolph Hitler, has been found dead in his Chancellery spider hole this morning. After months of bombing by the morally questionable strategic air campaign led by Air Marshal Harris and marauding Soviet troops, the German leader tragically took his own life. Caught in a squeeze play between the economic interests of the Soviet Union and the United States, Germany was merely trying to hold off globalization by appealing to nationalism and the unique identity of his people. The fact that certain ethnic groups had to be expelled or eliminated was necessary to ensure the German people's self-esteem in the face of Jazz, Swing, a new device called "television" and the "Four Freedoms" all of which would have been imposed on Germany by western culture.

Please.

The Canada I grew up in had a proud tradition of standing up to totalitarianism and defeating it, especially when it threatened our interests. We stayed out of this one because elements in the Canadian media and academic communities have a 1960's conception of how the world works rather than a 1940's (or a 21<sup>st</sup> Century's) conception. Continued squawking over the declared motives for the war in Iraq and the "legality" of it are now moot. And should stay that way. We have one beast in a cage: time to put the other one in too. Onto Osama Bin Laden....