

# Hussein's conviction leaves much justice to be desired



JACKIE  
AMBLER

There are two words that don't get said nearly often enough in our society. Okay, there are more than two—but the ones I had in mind were "thank you." With that in mind, I'd like to give our neighbours down south some love.

Once again, American Democracy has catalyzed the triumph of Good Stuff over various unnamed forces which will hereafter be denoted simply as Evil. Sure, maybe people saw it coming. Nonetheless, the evidence is in, and the results are heart-stirring. I'm not referring to the results of the recent mid-term elections, however, but a decision that some view as more important to the survival of the American Way: the sentencing of (former) Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to death on 6 November for crimes against humanity—specifically, for the wholesale slaughter of the residents of the Shiite village Dujail in 1982. The score now stands thus: Non-freedom, a really large number; Freedom, a really large number plus one.

In all seriousness, though, not nearly enough media attention has been given to the consequences of this development for a war now three years in the making, and getting longer (and costlier) by the day. It's safe to say, however, that despite White House press secretary Tony Snow's pronouncement that "this is a good day for the Iraqi people," Hussein's assassination probably isn't going to help. The reason for this is simple: many Iraqi insurgents don't place themselves in this "happy"

camp. Some critics believe that Saddam's execution, although not yet fixed, will simply turn him into a martyr in the Anti-American cause and galvanize the faction that remains loyal to his regime. It's therefore doubtful that this reasoning is what prompted the Americans to push so hard for Hussein's conviction, which has many pointing to the timely conviction as a belated "October surprise" designed to swing the election in the Republicans' favour—an attempt that has clearly failed.

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To claim that the team of American trial lawyers who've been working out of the country's embassy in Iraq are supposedly stationed there in order to hold up the trial's judicial neutrality would be a flimsy excuse, even if this was in fact happening. But according to Human Rights Watch, it isn't. The agency, after monitoring the trial and the treatment of its participants, has stated that the court has omitted elements of the trial that were designed specifically to ensure this neutrality—elements such as standards of proof, the ability of the defence lawyers to consult with their client, inadequate protection against self-crimination

and incomplete transcripts of the proceedings. These may seem like meaningless technicalities in the trial of a man whom virtually all Western people believe to be guilty. But if his guilt has already been determined, why are the Americans there in the first place?

The American intervention in the Hussein trial is unwarranted, and its accused judicial rights violations are depressing and hypocritical given that the US so adamantly professes to be a global supporter of them. They have remained, from the proposal of the idea until the present day, the world's most outspoken advocate of the International Criminal Court, an independent, international judicial body supported by 103 countries across the globe. It exists to try war criminals collectively, and, hypothetically, act to maintain the judicial standards under which this occurs.

The American justification of this opposition has always been that it interferes with the sovereignty of nations, and, less fundamentally, the ability of those affected by war criminals to hold them directly accountable. And yet, this is exactly what their interference has denied the Iraqi people: a trial that could have provided at least some semblance of closure for victims of the Hussein regime has been converted into what Columbia University law professor Scott Horton says Baghdad residents refer to as an "American puppet theatre."

The reasons behind this interference will probably be forgotten by history. But the trial's legacy will be remembered not as a "triumph of freedom," but as another stain in the record book of American foreign policy. So, thanks again to the Bush Administration. We can always use a reminder that, often, no amount of Good Stuff can negate the temptations of duplicity.

## A bit of war crime never hurt anyone



CONAL  
PIERSE

**"Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure these people were all terrorists, each one more deviant than the last. If it weren't for Rumsfeld's big brass balls, who knows what these people might have done? Sure, many of them might not have committed any crimes yet, but that doesn't mean they weren't going to eventually."**

I promised myself that I wouldn't write about politics anymore. I find the topic abhorrent, and politicians as a whole repulse me (though I would be willing to choke down the bile for a chance to bone Michaëlle Jean). However, this latest story put the vinegar in my blood, and I am compelled to share it with you.

Recently a group of human rights activists filed a suit asking German prosecutors to charge former secretary of state Donald Rumsfeld with war crimes for his alleged role in abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay. The suit is being filed under German law, which allows for the prosecution of war criminals regardless of where the crimes were committed, and has the added bonus of not being laughed out of an American court. I know plenty of you out there are thinking, "So what? Nothing's going to happen," right about now, but we can't afford to give

the Germans any leeway. You know what they say: if you give the Germans an inch, they'll invade Poland.

Just where do these human rights activists get off, attempting to charge a world leader with war crimes and then parading them around in a public spectacle with a foregone conclusion in what would be a complete mockery of the justice system anywhere else? When will you learn Germany? We're the ones who charge you with war crimes, not the other way round. If other countries like you start trying to police the world, it will only encourage fish-out-of-water buddy-cop films—and nobody wants that.

Really though, what's with all the hubub over Rumsfeld? I mean, sure he *might* have known about the mistreatment of prisoners, and he *may* have condoned such behaviour, but what's the big deal? Just because you aren't the man who *invented* rape-rooms doesn't mean you can't capitalize on

the idea. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure these people were all terrorists, each one more deviant than the last. If it weren't for Rumsfeld's big brass balls, who knows what these people might have done? Sure, many of them might not have committed any crimes yet, but that doesn't mean they weren't going to eventually. It's called preventative measures, people: his actions were simply the proverbial condom a high-school jock wears to prevent an unwanted pregnancy (ie terrorism) that would prevent him from taking advantage of a full scholarship to UCLA (which I guess can stand for oil, or something).

The fact of the matter is that innocent people never go to jail, and in the rare case that they do it's up to their brother to come up with an elaborate scheme to break them out. If anybody should be catching flack for this it's those lazy do-nothing siblings. For shame little brothers. For shame.



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