

# Armed and dangerous

## Saddam has proven he can't be trusted



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After observing a week chock-full of student protests, hasty pleas to prevent another Vietnam in the Middle East and unfounded criticisms of "hard-core" conservative military types, I found myself asking a couple questions.

For example: How did the United States get to be the bad guy in this unfolding saga in the sand? Where were all the protests and outcries when Saddam was busy executing his own people and experimenting on them with chemical weapons? Why would Saddam be willing to carry this ordeal out to possible U.S. military intervention unless he really had something to hide in those palaces?

It is my personal belief that those protesting and decrying possible military action against Saddam are looking at the big picture with very blurred vision.

Innocent human life, at any time from conception to death, and at any place in the world from Baghdad to Baltimore, is precious, valuable and should be cherished.

This is why I believe that the U.S. should take Saddam out.

Hear me out. The Iraqi dictator has shown time and time again that he holds absolutely no regard for any life but his own. Saddam has systematically led his people to long, bloody wars, has murdered thousands of his fellow Iraqis, including members of his own family and has shown an insatiable desire to manufacture any kind of weapon of mass destruction he can get his hands on.

Casualties are a part of any military action. It is a tragic and sorrowful fact. But how many future lives could be saved by putting an end to

Saddam's bloodthirsty regime now, before he is able to murder any more of his own people or develop any more weapons of mass destruction?

Saddam's past indicates that if allowed to stay in power, he will only continue to grow more murderous, more deceitful and more troublesome for not only his own country, but also for the Middle East and the rest of the world.

Saddam Hussein's whole life has been stained in blood. As a young man in the 1950s, he participated in numerous coups and countercoups to rid Iraqi government of Baath Party opposition. He was sentenced to death for an assassination attempt, but escaped by fleeing to Syria. He was arrested in 1964 for attempting to overthrow the ruling Iraqi president. Saddam played a major role in a devastating revolution in 1968, and since has manipulated numerous power grabs to become the sinister authoritarian he is today.

The most chilling episodes of Saddam's past, however, come from his frequent purges as a ruthless dictator. Graham Fuller, an expert on the Middle East with the Rand think tank, described Saddam's leadership as "the most unspeakable regime in the history of the modern Middle East."

He goes on to say in an article in a Nov. 1997 issue of U.S. News and World Report, "Saddam kills on the hint of suspicion, which is one of the main reasons he is still in power."

Indeed, according to the U.S. State Department Iraq Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, more than 2,000 political opponents of Saddam were executed in that year alone. The State Department also notes "reports suggest that far more people were executed merely because of their association with an opposition group or in an effort to clear out of the prisons anyone with a sentence of 15 to 20 years or more."

There have also been a great number of disappearances of those who have openly opposed Saddam's regime. Amnesty International places the number of these disappearances at more than 100,000 throughout the Hussein era.

In addition to the atrocities Saddam performs on his own people, he has repeatedly waged war against

neighboring countries, first Iran in the 1980s, and then Kuwait in the early 1990s. He has shown his capability to use chemical weapons in these wars and against some of his own rebellious countrymen.

ABC News has recently reported that "despite what the international community has done to try to keep weapons of mass destruction out of Saddam's hands, his arsenal of biological and chemical weapons is impressive."

In fact, Newsweek reported in a Nov. 1997 issue that "U.N. inspectors have established that Iraq produced some 8,000 liters of anthrax spores in the '80s — enough, by some estimates, to kill every person in the world. Saddam's forces also manufactured 20,000 liters of botulinum toxin ... and packed much of it into warheads."

Alan Dacey, a member of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) responsible for arms inspection in Iraq, in the same Nov. 1997 issue of Newsweek questioned why the American inspectors were ordered by Saddam out of Iraq last November. He stated "UNSCOM has never received full cooperation from the Iraqi regime. On some inspection missions, we've had to wait several hours because the Iraqis supposedly couldn't find the keys to certain sites we needed to enter."

"We have been denied access to facilities even as our air surveillance showed a team of trucks going out the back entrance. ... We have seen Iraqi officials burning documents and throwing the embers into a river."

So what can we take out of all of this? Some people, including the student protesters, seem to think that U.S. military intervention in Iraq would be an act of oppression by a nation that wishes to further punish the Iraqi people.

It is my belief, though, that this thinking is the very essence

of irrationality. Allowing Saddam to stay in power and add to his stockpile of biological and chemical weapons will only lead to more Iraqi civilian deaths and possible worldwide destruction. It seems much more humanitarian to me to successfully rid the Iraqi people of the totalitarian that has brainwashed and taken advantage of them for years.

Removal of Saddam may not be easy, but it is likely that strategic and carefully executed military strikes meant to remove Saddam from power would save countless lives and prevent further war in the future.

The bottom line is that we will

have to deal with him sometime. He has shown that he simply will not go away. The question asked by great former President Ronald Reagan so many years ago, "If not us, who? If not now, when?", should also be our attitude toward the termination of Saddam's tired regime.

Sen. Arlen Specter offered words of wisdom in his statements Monday: "We've had a lot of experience with Saddam Hussein. He does not keep his word. That's the reason the only answer is to remove Saddam Hussein from power."

Hopefully, people are listening.



MELANIE FALK/DN

# Gender days

## Americans should adopt Men's and Women's holidays



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My high school American teacher, a Peace Corps volunteer who came to Ukraine for two years, was astonished on hearing that we celebrate Men's Day and Women's Day.

"Yes," we said, "we really do celebrate these days annually."

Celebration of Men's Day and Women's Day became a tradition during the existence of the Soviet Union. I would like to talk about them today because this is almost the exact time we celebrate them.

Let me start first with Women's

Day (please don't see any discrimination of men in it — this holiday just started earlier).

You must be dead tired of my "history lessons" already, but the history of the holiday began almost 140 years ago.

It was March 8, 1857. Hundreds of women workers in textile factories in New York came to the streets of the city to strike against the long working day, low wages and inhuman working conditions. Being one of the first protests organized by women, obviously it was dispersed by police. Nevertheless, 53 years later, 15,000 women were marching down the same New York streets, demanding almost the same as the women did half a century ago. In addition, they were demanding the end of child labor and new women's voting rights.

That action also took place on March 8, but in 1910.

In May the same year, the Socialist Party of America decided to celebrate annual National Women's Day on the last Sunday of February. The next year, the holiday was suc-

cessfully celebrated in the United States, and soon Europe, too, began celebrating Women's Day on the last Sunday of February.

The next landmark event was also in 1910, when Clara Zetkin (a German socialist), at the meeting of Women Socialist International in Copenhagen, proposed celebrating an International Women's Day to mark the strike of American women textile workers. This proposal was accepted, but certain dates were not discussed.

The celebration of Women's Day came to Russia in 1917, though this one had nothing to do with the Bolshevik Revolution. Russia celebrated this day on Feb. 23. (At that time Russia used the Julian calendar and, according to the Georgian calendar, widely used in Europe, it was the March 8.)

In 1977 the General Assembly of United Nations announced the celebration of an official Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

In the Soviet Union it became one of the most important holidays of the

year: no school, no work — everything was closed! It became our national holiday, and the idea of the day of women's rights erased with time. The International Women's Day became simply the "Eighth of March."

It's a very nice holiday; I can say that, as I'm a female. All the male citizens care so much for the opposite sex on this day, that in most families men even cook and do all the housework before and after the Eighth of March. Men don't just give presents and flowers, they show their appreciation and care in every deed, even when they wash dishes.

It's another story with Men's Day. It's not even a story; it's completely nothing to talk about, really.

The Day of the Army was established after World War II and was celebrated on Feb. 23 by all the military men serving in the army and getting ready to serve there. It reminds me of the beginning of Women's Day in Russia — the same Feb. 23, only according to the new Georgian calendar. Later this holiday developed into a national holiday as well and received a nonofficial name

of "the Men's Day" (because every man had to serve in the army for two years!). We usually call it "the Twenty-third of February."

I personally think men were just envious that only women had their holiday and they had to give women presents!

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the tradition of celebrating these holidays remained in each republic. In some newly independent states, like Ukraine for example, they tried to change the date of the celebration of Army Day, but it was a pitiful attempt to ruin this old tradition. The holiday belonged to the twenty-third of February and no other day could be the Day of Army!

The Eighth of March is coming soon; it's not too late for America to celebrate it. Remember, it's an international holiday. Men, feel free to congratulate women you care about. Give flowers, smiles, presents and your love. Let them feel themselves as queens, though it's not necessary to have a certain day for it.

Do it every day — the spring is coming.