

When Logics Die

Rage Against the Regime!

by WILLIAM A. COOK

I went for a walk around Lake Gregory this past Sunday afternoon searching for peace, the freedom that comes with peace of mind. The sun's heat spread through the cobalt blue sky over this lake that sits five thousand feet up in the San Bernardino Mountains east of Los Angeles, while sparklets of light glistened on the lake's surface that nibbled slowly at the shore ... a glorious day in mid March here in the mountains.

I went to the lake to find peace, this being the week the president gave one of his rare prime time press conferences, the only opportunity we, the public, get to see him perform. It's also the week America goes to war. I went to the lake to find peace of mind, the ultimate state that comes with freedom, the state of being that is the primary goal of all religions, the end mystic's dream of achieving and eastern faiths call Nirvana. I went to the lake to find the freedom Dubya claims others want to take from me, the freedom promised in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights: freedom to believe as my conscience dictates, freedom to accept the beliefs of others most especially those who differ with me, freedom to pursue my talents and respect the right of others to pursue theirs, freedom to live a healthful life, to speak freely, to learn, and to seek just protection before the law. I went to find freedom; I found none. I found no peace of mind.

As I walked around the lake, I could not help but think that this was Sunday, the day God rested from His labors. Three faiths worship that God of Abraham including 90% of Americans, some are Jews, some Christians, and some Muslims. In a few years more Americans will declare the Koran their book of faith than those who declare the Torah. With all these people worshiping the same God, why do we have such division in this country? As I walked the path around the lake, it occurred to me that it's the leaders who cause the problems. Consider Jerry Falwell, Pat Robinson, Hal Lindsey, Dale Evans, Frederick Graham and his father Billy (to name a few), who deride the prophet Mohammad and declare the Muslim faith to be one of violence. Consider also how they use the Jews to bring about their belief in the Book of Revelation, needing the Jews to establish themselves in Israel if the Second Coming is to happen. Consider how they call upon the Christians of the world to unite to fulfill God's master plan even if it means a nuclear holocaust. These are the weapons of mass destruction! Minds filled with the certitude that only belief in myth can allow.

And Sunday is the day Christians set aside to worship that God. This Christian God, this Jesus, asked His followers to "turn the other cheek," to perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, in short to care for all God's creatures. Yet this Sunday as I walked about the lake watching children toss their fishing lines

out from shore, as others played "T" ball in the park, as young lovers cooed by the side of the lake, as the old and infirm watched from their bench above the path, I heard the whistle of the missiles slam into Baghdad and saw the mothers grasp their children to their breasts as they fled in horror at the searing flames and saw the walls of their homes shatter before their eyes. I saw this born-again Christian president order American boys and girls to "take up the cross" in defense of their homeland: to defend America against those who have inflicted no harm on America; who have in 12 years not molested any nation; who have claimed they possess no WMD and no nuclear capability verified by international inspectors to be the case; who occupy no other people's lands; who have been subjugated to eleven years of deprivation by a coalition of nations that deprive them of basic medical, sanitation, health and economic necessities; who live in daily fear of American and British war planes that arbitrarily destroy their defenses and kill innocent civilians; and who are surrounded by the greatest massed force of destruction ever assembled in the history of humankind.

This president claims that he will bring freedom to the Iraqi people, not America's gift of freedom, but God's! This president will liberate the Iraqi people even as he slaughters an estimated 500,000 innocents, a liberation of questionable value one suspects. This president will bring democracy to Iraq whether they want it or not, a gift that Americans don't even enjoy when he is president by selection of five judges! This president will decide the conscience of the American people since he disregards their voice both at the voting booth and in the streets. This president elevated Iraq to the stage of enemy number one by claiming it had connections with the terrorists that caused 9/11, a contention proved to be a lie. This president claimed that Iraq had biological weapons of mass destruction, but failed to tell the American people that his own father sold Saddam those weapons illegally and surreptitiously. This president claimed that Saddam gassed his own people, the Kurds, and Iranians against international law and the Geneva Conventions, but failed to tell the American people that the government at the time, the Reagan/Bush government, not only did not object to this action but provided the means to do it. This president claimed that Saddam did not comply with Resolution 1441 when he submitted a 12,000 page report, but failed to tell the American people that his administration removed 8,000 pages from that document, pages that contained sensitive material including the names of American, British, and German firms that supplied Saddam with the chemicals and equipment needed to produce WMD. This president claimed that Iraq was in a position to acquire nuclear arms within a few months, a potential threat to America, but failed to tell the American people that he would disregard other nations that possessed or would soon possess nuclear arms including two nations of the three that he called the "Axis of evil," Iran and North Korea.

This president claimed that Saddam was a vicious dictator who used torture, oppression of women, and the jailing of dissidents to stay in power, but failed to tell the American people that his own father let Saddam stay in power because he was a known quantity and any replacement would not necessarily follow America's

orders. Nor did he tell the American people that he would authorize torture if done by another nation for America, or that he would incarcerate people without access to lawyers, trial, or jury, indeed, without even a charge of criminal conduct. And, finally, this president claimed that Iraq must be taken down by force because it defied the 17 UN resolutions that called upon it to disarm and respond to human rights violations, an action that if not taken would result in making the UN irrelevant, but he failed to tell the American people that America supports the state of Israel that has defied 155 UNGA and UNSC resolutions since 1948 and 69 UNSC resolutions (28 vetoed by the US) since the 1967 war, a defiance that far overshadows the 17 resolutions Iraq has defied. How irrelevant can the UN be if this is the criterion? What power does the UN possess to enforce its resolutions? Only the moral will of its members. It has no army; it has only the willing acceptance of the rights of all humans to life, liberty, respect, and dignity as determined by its member states. Thus when the most powerful member state disregards the moral stand of that bodies membership, when it resorts to bribes and coercion to have its way, it denies the only strength the UN can bring to bare on wayward nations. The claim of UN irrelevancy is specious, indeed, each and every contention made by this president has been shown to be demonstratively false. When logics die, leaders lie!

Patriotic platitudes, vapid values, and incongruous ideals cascade from our leaders mouths like waters over the cliffs of Niagara. Witness the recent babbling of Blair, Bush, Powell, Rumsfeld and Rice as they resort to condemnation of Iraq for defying the 17 resolutions passed by the UN, defiance that castrates the authority of the UN and cries for resolution by force regardless of the effectiveness of inspections or the will of the world community. Witness their despair that Iraq, after eleven years, will ever succumb to the will of the nations that passed these resolutions. Witness their declamations that the security of the US and the UK depends on immediate action against the treacherous dictator who gassed his own people 15 years ago (without objection by the US or the UK) and carried forth this same warfare against the Iranians with full approval of the US and the UK, indeed to the supplying of the materials. Witness their lamentations over those citizens who would object to a war that would instill "shock and awe" in this terrible enemy even as it liberates an estimated half million Iraqis by slaughtering them, saving them from continued oppression by Saddam. Witness their invoking the twin absolutes of freedom and democracy that will be the offspring of this war even as they prepare to occupy a foreign nation-state and force their will on its people, thus making moot the meaning of freedom and democracy. When logics die, what hypocrisy!

I have waited anxiously for a reporter to question these men and this woman about their resolve to hold Iraq to the authority of the UN resolutions. Why Iraq only? Why now? Why not other countries? Why not Israel and Palestine, for example, since most world leaders and the majority of the people in the nations around the world seem to find the Israeli/Palestinian crisis of greater consequence to peace in the mid-east? Do we not raise the specter of Israeli occupation and

aggression against the Palestinians before the world body because we will be condemned as anti-Semitic? Do we not raise the issue of the Palestinian people resorting to suicide bombers because it casts condemnation on the members of the UN for allowing this crisis to continue for over fifty years? When will we invoke the authority of the UN to make both the Israelis and the Palestinians meet the demands of the international community and international law? When will we declare the hypocrisy of our stance before the world that the US and the UK believe wholeheartedly in the ideals of the world body and its authority in matters of international conflict? When logics die, leaders lie..

Lies, deceit, hypocrisy couched in euphemisms as evidence, security concerns, and ideals beneficial to the international community about the imminent threat posed by Iraq dominate the mainstream media effectively hiding the reality of the savagery being waged in Israel and Palestine. Beyond the lies uttered without shame by Blair and Powell justifying war, are those lies of omission that force Iraq to prominence now to hide the administration's acceptance of Sharon's war against the Palestinians. Why blanket the truth? Why not speak straightforwardly to the American people? This administration has capitulated to Sharon's demands even as he cloaks his actions in Bush's own terms, "defense against terrorists." As Sharon has told the Knesset, "Don't worry about American pressure on Israel, we, the Jewish people control America, and the Americans know it." Why hide the truth? Tell it like it is: a war against Iraq can bury what is happening in Israel; a war against Iraq will bury the new Sharon coalition that depends on 13 members who are adamantly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state; a war against Iraq will hide the request by Israel to have the US cover 15 billion in loans and grants to bail out their floundering economy even as the US states fall deeper and deeper into the ditch of debt. When logics die, leaders lie!

Contrast the demand that Iraq surrender to UN resolutions with the silence that greets the question, "Why not Israel?" Israel has defied the UN for 55 years, Iraq for 12. Israel has invaded and continues to hold illegally land that belongs to Palestinians, defying UN resolutions for 35 years to return the land; Iraq invaded Kuwait 12 years ago with CIA collusion and went to war with Iran 15 years ago with US approval and support. It occupies no foreign land now and is not considered a threat by its neighbors. Israel has and continues to defy not only UN resolutions that it abide by the Geneva Conventions to protect human rights, but spurns all Human Rights Watch Reports that request investigations into behavior that demeans human dignity and defies international law; Iraq has been forced to release control of its northern territories, that occupied principally by Kurds, and to give up absolute control in the south, a "no fly zone" controlled by the US and the UK.

Israel has used the "war on terror" to define the Palestinian people, thus giving them absolute right to determine who is a criminal and who will die, without trial by jury, without the right to a lawyer, and without appeal, actions all in defiance of international law; the Iraqi people are victims of this same logic that provides for

the use of 7 _ times the destruction visited upon Hiroshima to be visited upon the Iraqi people to catch one man. Israel has WMD and openly admits this fact. It also has nuclear weapons and, in the words of one Israeli Professor, will use them on European capitals as well as against Iraq if needed to ensure the existence of Israel. It also occupies and suppresses Palestinians using tanks and bulldozers to destroy property not belonging to them. They also use the third largest military force in the world against a people that have no defense except old rifles, missiles and stones. Iraq has no comparable WMD, nor does it have nuclear capability; it does not occupy any territory owned by another nation and hasn't in the past 12 years; its military forces are a third of what they were in 1991 and incapable of defending the nation against the might of the US.

Israel has visited terror of an indescribable nature on a defenseless people, from refugee camps surrounded by dozens of tanks, thousands of foot soldiers, Apache helicopters, F-16 fighter jets, and the latest in state of the art technology to subdue the defiant few who will use their life as a weapon in a futile effort to turn the tide. Israel creates these suicide bombers by using vengeance to impregnate the deprived and the hopeless. America supports this state run terror with our tax money and our military hardware thus ensuring that America becomes a silent victim of Israeli vengeance. Why Iraq? Why now? Why not line up all who defy UN resolutions and force them to abide by UN authority after we have forced this on Iraq, including US defiance of such resolutions? When logics die, leaders lie!

As I walked around the lake on this Sunday before America slips ineluctably into chaos, I could find no sense of freedom here in America. I have as much chance of defying Bush as an Iraqi citizen has of deposing Saddam. I am a victim of a man who can use my tax dollars to do whatever he wishes, whether that be to support Sharon's savagery or to inflict devastation on Iraq. Freedom to speak is no freedom if those in authority defy the voice of the people. Freedom to representative government is no freedom if our representatives abdicate their responsibility under the Constitution. We do not elect another person's conscience when we enter the voting booth; we must stand against those who ignore the people even as they march in the streets and declare their desires before the world. There is no freedom if there is no democracy, if the voices of the people are overridden by the corporate voice, the voice of the military/industrial powers, and the wealthy elite who buy their freedom of speech. There is no democracy if we force it in name on other nations of the world because we demand that they "accept God's gift" regardless of their beliefs and we force America's gift of consumerism on other nations because it is the way to provide heaven on earth. Ultimately, the Presidency of a democracy must be the laws of the land, not a man who willingly twists the laws to his own end.

I could find no freedom, no peace of mind as I walked about the lake because the Constitution of the United States has been stolen by this administration to be used as a document to control, because it has subverted the freedoms guaranteed in that document and placed our freedom in the hands of a religious zealot that by

definition does not accept freedom, because it has preempted freedom by adopting a policy of preemptive strike based on the belief of evil determined by one fanatical man sitting illegally in the White House, and because this administration is oblivious to the plight of the unemployed, the homeless, the elderly, single mothers, and the sick and the dying. I have lived through half a century of slaughter, witnessed America defy itself as it languished in segregation, oppression of women, and governmental inquisition under McCarthy; I have witnessed it justify non-intrusion into genocidal savagery, accept without question the need to carpet bomb whole cities in the cause of peace, and add collateral damage to the lexicon of euphemisms that give credibility to slaughter, but I have always lived with the hope that America's acceptance of a world court, of values inherent in the Nuremberg trials, of mutual cooperation with other nations would lead to a 21st century of peace and equanimity throughout the world. When logics die, cynicism thrives.

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