



"Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide."

—John Adams

11-Jul-03

Intrinsic Governmental Corruption

The "big news" of the past week or so has been the revelation that a major plank in President Bush's reasons for invading Iraq to liberate its citizens from its dictator, Saddam Hussein, was based on a forgery. Someone, somewhere—exiled Iraqis, the Italians, or someone else with a vested interest—manufactured "proof" that Hussein tried to buy uranium from Niger to reconstitute his nuclear weapons program. This nuclear threat, announced to the nation in a State of the Union address no less, trumped all other threats of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), virtually guaranteeing the U.S. strike against Iraq.

How much President Bush knew about the shakiness of the Iraq-Niger deal is not known, but someone high up in his administration certainly knew. Whether this official apprised the president of this fact or not, the administration showed its willingness to fudge the facts to persuade Americans to support military action in Iraq. In fact, the entire WMD argument for war is appearing increasingly illegitimate as time goes on without significant finds on the ground. Moreover, even if Hussein had WMD, no one has yet discovered evidence that he had the means to use them.

Such tinkering with the facts to sway public opinion is not new. In fact, the evidence is mounting that the sitting presidents of the time manipulated events and proof to push America into its three biggest wars of the twentieth century. Before WWI, Woodrow Wilson's administration not only supplied the Allies with munitions while still neutral, it is also considered to be complicit in the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, in which 1,201 people lost their lives. Prior to America's entry into WWII, Franklin Roosevelt's administration also secretly aided the Allies while technically neutral, and significant evidence exists to show that it did nothing to stop the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, though it had advance warning of what was coming. Finally, the Lyndon Johnson administration used the Battle of Tonkin Gulf on August 4, 1964—an unprovoked attack on U.S. destroyers for which little credible evidence exists—to urge the American public to support a congressional resolution to fight the North Vietnamese.

Although the Founders included vigorous checks and balances into the U.S. Constitution, time and use have eroded their effectiveness. Congress is supposed to be the only branch of government able to declare war, but over the last fifty years presidents have been waging war on their own authority, seeking only congressional "approval" and "appropriations." Only Congress has the authority to make law, but both the executive and judicial branches have taken some of this power to themselves. In addition, the ponderous federal bureaucracy promulgates thousands of regulations each year that carry the force of law nationwide.

Power does indeed corrupt a human heart, and this corruption has become institutionalized in all levels of American government. Good people elected or appointed to office learn to compromise with a system that works "best" when the truth is slanted and the wheels greased with "favors" and quid pro quo. Most of the ethical politicians—ones who live by principle and desire to use their position for America's benefit—throw their hands up in disgust after one term, tired of the futile battles and the stench of dishonesty and fraud.

This great political experiment in freedom has seen its best days. It has thrown off its birthright to be like all the other nations, and it shows. It may still be the best mankind has to offer, and that says a great deal about

mankind's ability to govern itself. If even the best of humanity's attempts end in corruption and abuse of power, what hope do we have?

Only one: the intervention of "a strong hand from someplace."

That lone hope is the [return of Jesus Christ](#) as [King of kings](#) and Lord of lords ([Revelation 19:11-16](#)). As Isaiah writes:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty [God](#), Everlasting Father, Prince of [Peace](#). Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. ([Isaiah 9:6-7](#); see also 11:1-5)

This is all the more reason to pray, "Your kingdom come" ([Matthew 6:10](#)).

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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[Government \(Part One\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Most people have an ambivalent attitude toward government, on one hand fearing it as an evil instrument to deprive rights and on the other hand an instrument for social progress. God intended government to be a positive force of bringing order out of chaos, keeping on a straight course, educating, edifying, and to give laws which ensure an entity (family, organization, or country) does not become extinct. Governmental leaders from governor to judge to head of the family have the awesome responsibility to instill the proper fear of God and His commandments, giving instructions on the process of attaining abundant life (Deuteronomy 30:11-16).

From the Archives: Featured Article

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by John W. Ritenbaugh

Have you ever considered what it will be like right after Christ returns? What will you do, as a king, to help and govern the people placed under you? Believe it or not, you are already developing those skills!

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