

Why Saddam would love a trial

By BILL FERGUSON
Well, we got him. Now the question is — what are we going to do with him? Surely some sort of trial lies in Saddam Hussein's future, whether it takes place in the United States, in Iraq or somewhere else. And there probably isn't a "dream team" of lawyers anywhere on the planet who can save his keester at this point.



■ Saddam Hussein

But he may still be able to do some damage to his American adversaries even in his weakened state. At the very least, Saddam could take some of the shine off the American victory in Iraq if he is tried in a public forum and the complete history of his relationship with the United States is detailed for all the world to see.

Saddam has been a thorn in our side since he invaded Kuwait in 1991, and a lot of people feel that taking him down was not only the right course of action but also long overdue. Iraq is better off without him, the Middle East is better off without him, and yes, the United States is certainly better off without him.

If we go back no further than 1991, it would seem America has a firm hold on the moral high ground with respect to the Saddam situation. But if you go back further, that ground starts to get a little unstable, and you can bet Saddam would enjoy telling the world how the United States cozied up to him (despite his penchant for ruthlessness and brutality) when it suited our purposes to do so.

If we turned back the clock to 1983, we'd find Donald Rumsfeld (then a special envoy for President Ronald Reagan) traveling to Baghdad to assure Saddam of U.S. support in his war with Iran. At the time America was still smarting from the religious upheaval in Iran in the late '70s that brought about the ouster of the Shah (another one of our less-than-savory allies) and Reagan's foreign policy team saw Iraq as a necessary check on the spread of Islamic extremism in the Middle East.

America had some inkling of the kind of man we were dealing with even then. We knew, for example,

that he was using chemical weapons against the Iranians and against the Kurds in his own country. Still the aid and intelligence flowed uninterrupted to our "friend" in Baghdad. By 1985 we had supplied Saddam with \$1.5 billion in weapons equipment and technology, including some items that eventually aided their infamous WMD program.

We're wrong to support Saddam with guns and money even though we were aware of his low character? It's hard to say. Foreign relations is a complex business, and I'm sure that Reagan, Rumsfeld, and the rest of the gang were doing what they thought were in our best interests at the time.

I don't know how successful their strategy was, but the cost was obviously enormous. We helped to create this monster, and now we are paying for it to the tune of billions of dollars and hundred of American lives lost, and counting.

For now we can only add Saddam to the list of poisonous snakes we have come to regret embracing, a list that also includes the Shah, Noriega in Panama, and Pinochet in Chile. It is hoped our current and future presidents will think long and hard before they decide to use thugs like Saddam Hussein to do our dirty work again.

Bill Ferguson is a columnist for the Macon (Ga.) Telegraph. Readers may write to him at: The Macon Telegraph, 120 Broadway, Macon, GA 31201-3444.

'Made in China' killing U.S. jobs

I'm checking out the Christmas ornaments at the tree nursery. The air smells of warm cider and resounds with familiar tunes. The line of ornaments, which went by the brand, "Midwest America," reflects the tastes of yesteryear.

I pick up a Santa — a dignified, slimmed-down version — and look under his boot. The "Made in" label reads, "China." I examine a boy on a sled. Again, "China."

Simple wooden boxes sit stacked on a nearby table — each bearing a painted scene of a fisherman in a rowboat. If some woodsman in Michigan's Upper Peninsula didn't craft this box, I think, I'll be darned. I am darned. "China," it says on the bottom.

And that is the label on nearly every Christmas item I've seen this season. "China" on the holly tablecloth. "China" on the candlesticks. "China" on the china.

The Chinese seem to be making nearly all the things we buy, which means we're not making them. Some 3.1 million manufacturing jobs have disappeared since March 1998 — a big chunk of them moving to China. Even jobs that go to Mexico end up in China. China's labor is so cheap, factories are leaving Mexico and heading west.

Fashioning a response to the crisis in American manufacturing is not easy. But clearly the Bush administration should be doing more than

Froma Harrop

it is doing, which is next to nothing. For example, it could force China to raise the value of its currency, the yuan. China keeps its currency value artificially low to undercut the prices of U.S. products. Some economists put the yuan's discount against the dollar at 40 percent.

Leading the charge is Rep. Phil English, a Republican from the industrial northwest corner of Pennsylvania. His demand that Treasury Secretary John Snow push China to revalue the yuan was met with a yawn. The Bush administration regards cheap consumer goods as a bedrock value. It won't do anything that would raise prices. Wal-Mart wouldn't like it.

But chances are good that the president will make some gestures toward the industrial heartland as the election approaches. Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan are all "battleground" states — and they are bleeding badly from losses in manufacturing.

Business looks especially grim in places like Meadville, Pa., 40 miles south of Erie. Meadville calls itself the "Tool and Die Source for the World." Its small precision machine shops are run by good bosses who employ good workers at good pay. But their Chinese competitors are crushing them. Meadville has lost 30 of its 150 machine shops in only

about three years.

Policymakers should note that Meadville's factory owners are not asking Washington for cheaper workers and weaker environmental regulations. Rather, they want China to raise its own environmental and labor standards — as well as the yuan's value.

But their future is rather depressing. A recent Federal Reserve Bank of New York study says that most manufacturing jobs lost in recent years are gone forever.

When labor becomes a significant cost in manufacturing, Americans are sure to lose out. Add to that the Wal-Mart mentality — whereby discounters replace American suppliers with any foreign sweatshop that can shave a few pennies off the price — and we have a disaster in our industrial sector.

I've just read that the Ohio Art Company is sending its Etch A Sketch operations to Shenzhen, China. A moment of silence, please. Workers in Bryan, Ohio, made these drawing toys for 40 years. Etch A Sketches have been a rite of passage for American children since most baby boomers stopped crawling.

The move overseas has not entirely surprised the 100 replaced workers. They've been training their Chinese replacements to do their jobs.

Froma Harrop writes for the Providence Journal Bulletin.

Rowland's state of denial

The New York Times published this editorial on Tuesday, Dec. 16:

John Rowland may be the governor of Connecticut, but he's living deep in the state of denial. He wants to regard the scandals that swirl around his administration as a minor irritant. But they are making it impossible for him to run the state effectively.

Rowland reversed himself and admitted — after facing questions first pursued by The Hartford Courant — that "friends" had helped him finance renovations on his waterfront vacation home several years ago. Those are some of the same pals whose escapades have already spawned a federal investigation and many unanswered questions.

Rowland has not been charged with any crime, but the issues raised are still serious. He lied about allowing a contractor who has been awarded state business worth hundreds of millions of dollars to work without pay on his vacation home. Other generous "friends" provided a new ceiling and a hot tub, while payments for heating and water upgrades were made by two aides who have since

been implicated in other scandals. One, the governor's former deputy chief of staff, has pleaded guilty to accepting an unspecified amount in gold coins in exchange for steering state contracts and is now cooperating with federal investigators. The other, a Rowland co-chief of staff who also led the state's trash agency, resigned last year after a bad deal between the agency and Enron cost Connecticut taxpayers more than \$200 million.

Along with other ethical lapses, all this has led state Democrats to ask that Rowland, a third-term governor, step aside while investigations go on. Other critics have called on him to resign, or muttered about impeachment.

Politicians battling for survival do not generally respond to pleas to think about the good of the state. But a governor who is juggling multiple legal investigations into the workings of his administration is not likely to be a strong chief executive.

Unless Rowland can quickly put to rest doubts about his honesty, he should turn the reins of government over to someone who is less distracted. It would give him more time to enjoy the view at his vacation cottage.

Governor, first lady on Santa's bad list

To the Editor of the Day: Who's on Santa's good list and who's on Santa's bad?

Patty Rowland thinks the news media boys and girls are getting coal. Let's see. The news media boys and girls haven't lied or cheated and have only told the truth.

They are not getting coal. They are on the good list. Santa's bringing them shiny new pens and sharp pencils and even a new laptop. All they have done is show the people of Connecticut the truth of naughty Little John Rowland.

For little Patty Rowland, Santa is very sad. She believes little John Rowland's lies and helps him hide the truth, which makes her almost as naughty. Santa won't be bringing her pretty bows or a pretty dress, for she is on the bad, bad list.

For little John Rowland, Santa can't believe his eyes and ears. John Rowland can't stop lying even when the truth has been told. Look how he apologized — still not admitting he lied and still blaming others for his naughty little games. The state is in financial despair, but he gave himself a big fat raise. He cut state jobs, even taking jobs away from the blind. What a naughty boy. He brags about Adriaen's Landing and the

new University of Connecticut football stadium he fought so hard to get built. One might wonder the real reason. Maybe it was to give big contracts to his contractor friends. For all his naughty deeds we know about, there must be ones we have not found. Every time he says he's done nothing else, another lie pops out. He's made Santa's naughty of the naughtiest list.

Maybe Santa will send little John Rowland two federal agents to take him on an extended vacation to the federal prison. What a wonderful gift that would be for all the good boys and girls of Connecticut.

Sue DeBartolo
Waterford

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