

What About the Unprovoked U.S. Aggression Against Iraq?

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Referring to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an [editorial](#) in Saturday's Washington Post exclaims that Ukraine's "struggle is also a crucible for Europe and an assault against the most basic precept on which the Western system rests: the impermissibility of unprovoked wars of aggression."

In a follow-up [editorial](#) today, the *Post* calls for an international tribunal to try Vladimir Putin and his "henchmen" for waging a "war of aggression" against Ukraine. The *Post* quotes the Nuremberg tribunal:

"To initiate a war of aggression ... is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

What befuddles me, however, is why the *Post* doesn't also condemn President George W. Bush and his "henchmen" for their unprovoked invasion of Iraq and, further, why the *Post* doesn't call for a Nuremberg-type tribunal for Bush and his "henchman." After all, there is no statute of limitations on war crimes of this nature. Is it only Russia, Germany, and other nations that are to be condemned and put on trial for unprovoked wars of aggression? Why should U.S. officials be exempt from the Nuremberg principle?

It is an undisputed fact that Iraq never attacked the United States. The United States was the aggressor in this conflict from the start. Bush and his henchmen were upset that his father, President George H.W. Bush, had not ousted Saddam Hussein from power in the Persian Gulf War. They were intent on correcting what they considered was a grave mistake on the part of the elder Bush.

To justify their unprovoked invasion of Iraq, Bush and his henchman made up a lie about Saddam's supposed weapons of mass destruction. After all, when their lie was made manifest by the non-discovery of those WMDs, it is undisputed that Bush did not apologize for his "mistake" and immediately order a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. Instead, Bush ordered his army to remain in Iraq and to kill whomever objected to the new regime that he and his henchmen had installed into power.

But even if Bush's WMD claim had not been a lie, the fact that a nation-state has weapons of mass destruction does not legally or morally justify a war of aggression against that nation-state. Moreover, only the United Nations, not the U.S. government, has the authority to enforce its own WMD resolutions, and it is undisputed that the UN chose not to authorize an invasion and war of aggression against Iraq.

It's not just Bush the son who was upset over the failure of Bush the father to effect regime change in the Persian Gulf War. Throughout his term in office during the 1990s, President Bill Clinton waged war against the Iraqi people by enforcing one of the most brutal systems of sanctions in history, which contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi children.

Indeed, in 1996 Clinton's ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, declared that the deaths of half-a-million Iraqi children from the sanctions were "worth it." By "it" she was referring to regime change, by which Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein, would be ousted from power and replaced by another U.S.-approved dictator.

The idea was that the deaths of all those Iraqi children would cause Saddam to have a crisis of conscience that would cause him to relinquish power. The deadly scheme didn't work. Saddam remained in power and the deadly sanctions continued killing innocent Iraqi children for another five years, including after Bush the son was elected.

Why shouldn't Clinton, George W. Bush, and their henchmen be brought up on criminal charges for contributing to the unprovoked murder of all those Iraqi children? Why should a "war of aggression" apply only to bombs, bullets, missiles, soldiers, tanks, drones, and planes and not economic sanctions that knowingly, intentionally, and deliberately kill innocent people?

One irony in all this is that Saddam Hussein, whom U.S. officials were calling the "new Hitler," had been a partner and ally of U.S. officials in the 1980s, when he was waging an unprovoked war of aggression against Iran. U.S. officials were supporting Saddam in his war of aggression because they loved the fact that his army was killing Iranians. The reason they loved those killings was that they had still not forgiven the Iranian people for ousting the brutal dictator who the CIA had installed into power (the Shah of Iran) in CIA's 1953 regime-change operation against Iran.

Today, at least Russia can point to the U.S. threat to use NATO to place military bases, tanks, soldiers, and missiles in Ukraine as the reason for its "unprovoked" invasion of Ukraine. All that the United States can point to to justify its unprovoked invasion of Iraq is its own lie about non-existent WMDs.

In conclusion, permit me to repeat a critically important point: Iraq never attacked the United States. It was the United States that attacked Iraq. Throughout the conflict, the United States was the aggressor and Iraq was the defender.

Why doesn't the *Washington Post* recognize and acknowledge this fundamentally important point? Why does it apply the Nuremberg principle to Russia and not the United States?

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