



The Lies of Iraq, 11 Years Later – Plus Ukraine

Guest: Scott Horton

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WOODS: Today I wanted to have you on because there are two foreign-policy-related topics on my mind. One is Ukraine, for obvious reasons, and the other one is the Iraq War. Next month we're going on what—it'll be 11 years. I think it was March of 2003. Its 11 years old, and it's not a hot issue anymore. But for some reason it still consumes me with how stupid and evil it was, and I want to ask you some man-on-the-street objections to your position about it and see what you have to say. Okay, so are you ready?

HORTON: I hope I can be of help.

WOODS: Oh, get out of town, man. All right, let's start with Ukraine. From the Scott Horton perspective, how do you summarize what's going on there? As of a couple of weeks ago what was going on was, you seem to have a government that probably I wouldn't have wanted to live under, and you had a lot of opposition. Some of the opposition was fairly unsavory and almost certainly had some type of U.S. government backing to it. So you hardly know what your allegiances are supposed to be, and then you say, well, on the other hand, I don't have to have an allegiance, because it's none of my business. What do you take away from this?

HORTON: I think you summed it up perfectly. You have a bunch of no-goodniks overthrow a bunch of no-goodniks, and the American government is involved in the coup, of course. Just like they were last time, back in 2004, when they had the big Orange Revolution. You don't have to feel conflicted about who you're allied to, the Russians, the Americans, any faction of Ukrainians or anyone else, because you're a libertarian and it's none of your business. I mean, you can know about it and care about it, but it's not up to you to prescribe actions that favor one side or the other. So there's no real loyalty, no real reason to feel conflicted about it. I think you summed up what ought to be the universal American attitude perfectly, Tom, honestly. That's my exact same attitude.

WOODS: But on the other hand, in our private lives, certainly, we can say I prefer party A to party B. Is there a reason that I should prefer party A over party B in this case?

HORTON: Well, there's certainly a reason why you should prefer the American government butt out. Ukraine is a country that is deeply divided. It's not that they're fighting about religion or anything like that, because they're not. But just to kind of explain the who's who. In the east, they are predominantly Russian speaking and Orthodox Christians, and in the West they are Roman Catholics and speak Ukrainian—at least more than they do in the east, anyway. The communists really got rid of the Ukrainian language to a great degree. They speak it much more in the west.

All the oligarchs on all sides are just the same kind of crony capitalist corruption that we're used to here, kleptocracy like we have all over the world. The division's about who's who and who gets frozen out when the policy goes this way or that are pretty strong, where in America the Republicans, they're content, really. I mean they stir in their seat a little bit, but for the most part, they're content to sit out of power for four to eight years. They know they're going to be able to steal trillions when it's their turn again. But over here, they pretty much see it as an all-or-nothing game I guess. So even though this government, the one that was just overthrown, was a democratically elected government in fair and square elections, the people on the outs basically refuse to accept that.

What sparked the recent controversy was last fall the government was supposed to make a deal with the EU. They said they were going to make a deal, a new renewed trade deal with the European Union, and the president changed his mind at the last minute and tilted back toward Russia. He promised him \$15 billion.

This point is where, again, you ought to be wondering why you care about whether Ukraine has a trade deal with Germany or whether they have a trade deal with the Russians. It's the furthest thing from our backyard, right? I mean, if someone talks about the Crimean War, like if Mr. Burns mentions the Crimean War on *The Simpsons*, it's not just that it was that long ago. It's also that it's that far away from here. If the British and the Russians are fighting about Crimea I guess that's one thing, but it sure as hell shouldn't ever have anything to do with the United States of America. How could it possibly? Except that the game here is full-spectrum dominance, total global hegemony.

The policy is, no power will ever even be able to consider without breaking up laughing the idea of challenging American authority over the planet Earth. So that means expanding NATO all through Eastern Europe to surround—remember Donald Rumsfeld called France and Germany “old Europe.” New Europe means more dependence on American welfare and more loyal to our government's policies instead of France and Germany who have ideas of independence and their own kind of policy. Completely surround them and of course continue the Cold War that they never really stopped in trying to surround and ultimately dismember Russia.

There's a lot of oil under the Caspian Sea in the whole Caspian basin in there, so the game is to try to get all the oil pipelines to go south and east and west and anywhere but through Russia, so Russia's control over the European oil and natural gas markets is limited, and this kind of game. So that's the American interest over there. It doesn't sound very interesting to me, but that's what they are so obsessed with winning here. In fact, they even had—I think it was on the *Jon Stewart Show*; I'm almost positive it was *Jon Stewart's Daily Show*—the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, and he's basically giggling. He sounds like an idiot, basically, up there saying, yeah, we've got Putin distracted with the Olympics, and we're running off with Ukraine. Well, no, you're not. Not any more than in 2004 when they did their Orange Revolution and their big fake protests over the election of the same guy that they just overthrew this time.

They basically canceled that election. They had their Orange Revolution, but then it tore itself apart. It didn't really have the support of the people of Ukraine, so it didn't last. So the Russians ended up getting their guy in anyway, and it is their backyard, after all. Assuming that the Americans don't find a way to ratchet this thing up into some kind of real crisis, I think over the next couple of years the American sock puppets that they put in power there will end up losing out again just like they did the last time. The danger, of course, is that John McCain and John Bolton and the crazies—as bad as Obama is, he really hasn't been pushing very hard, up until now anyway, to bring Ukraine and/or Georgia into NATO itself, but that's certainly a project of the Republican Party in this country. I'm sure a lot of Democrats would like to see it, too, and that amounts to a war guarantee to the Ukrainians. That they could get us if western Ukraine gets into a civil war with eastern Ukraine and Russia intervenes on the side of eastern Ukraine to protect their interests in the Crimean Peninsula. Then that means you've got to trade your hometown. You've got to give up America to hydrogen bomb warfare in order to protect whoever's supposed interests in Ukraine. That's what it would mean to bring them in to NATO just like they've already done with Poland and Lithuania and

the rest of eastern Europe, all the way up to Russia's border.

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WOODS: Right, but you know, Scott, even to state that is to reveal the absurdity of it, because could you imagine even *boobus Americanus*—who was willing to accept any sacrifice, as long as it's financed by the Fed, to go wipe out Islamic terrorism everywhere, but even *boobus* doesn't care about what's going on in Ukraine. He doesn't care about some border in Georgia or whatever. He doesn't care about any of that. Isn't this going to turn out to be an empty threat on the part of the U.S. if it really does give war guarantees to these places?

HORTON: Yes, I hope. In the 1980s the line was West Germany. If the Soviets invaded West Germany, we would have nuked them. I think that's pretty believable, actually, that if it had come to that it would have gone to war over West Germany and the rest of western Europe. But eastern Europe? And without a Soviet Union that we're containing and countering here when the Russians are at least supposedly are our frenemies that we cooperate on so many other issues and trade with, etc.? No, I can't imagine the Americans would want to, and in fact, I think even the U.S. Senate, if you ask those crazies, I think that if it really came down to it—say Putin got all mad on steroids he borrowed from American cops or something, and he went crazy and invaded eastern Europe and tried to recreate the Soviet Union, I think that the American establishment would do like they did during the Hungarian Revolt. They'd just say I'm sorry, man, it's too bad that you live so close to Russia over there.

Yet the danger is that they could get us into a war with their bluff. That's what they're doing here. They're not just screwing around; they're screwing around with a bluff about mutually assured destruction. And Susan Rice, the American ambassador, went on TV last Sunday and said, "It would be a grave mistake for Russia to intervene militarily in Ukraine." Say they want to prop up the democratically elected government that America just did this filthy coup d'état overthrow against, including the use of Nazi brownshirts in the street. If they were to do that that would be a grave mistake. Well, to what degree is that a threat of nuclear war? It sort of kind of is one, isn't it? For her to talk like that. And what business in the world do these democrats have getting you and me and the other 300 million Americans involved in a dispute with Russia which still maintains thousands of nuclear weapons? People who know what they're talking about, whose opinion I respect greatly, like Eric Margolis—he's saying this reminds him of right before World War I. This is a lot of people making a lot of big boasts where they don't have the wherewithal really to back it up and yet it's sort of, you know, sleepwalking to war, blundering into what could be a terrible, the worst catastrophe of all, an exchange of hydrogen bombs if it came down to that.

WOODS: Scott, I want to talk about one of my pet issues. I don't mean to diminish it by calling it that. I just can't stop thinking about it even years on, how horrified I was as it was happening, how awful it was, how stupid it was, how evil it was, how premeditated it was, the Iraq invasion of 2003. I want to just run by you the typical arguments that you would have come across on the Internet from some schmo who doesn't know he's being snowed by his government, who just repeats their stupid talking points, and I want to run those talking points by you. I want you to smash them to smithereens. You ready?

HORTON: Sure.

[time 00:14:36]

WOODS: The most obvious one would be—well, we'll leave out the weapons of mass destruction thing, because some of them later admitted that was a hoax. They admitted there were no weapons of mass destruction. You know what? Let's start with that after all, because some people say there *were* weapons of mass destruction. We just telegraphed our invasion for so long that that gave Saddam Hussein time to tuck them away somewhere.

Now only an idiot would think he had *nuclear* weapons. Nobody thinks that. But the argument went that he had some chemical weapons—which obviously never would have been used on Americans anyway. He had some chemical weapons, and he shipped them off to Syria. And he had some mobile bio labs or whatever. What's the truth to that?

HORTON: Okay, none of it is true at all. It was Clapper, our current perjurer in charge of national intelligence, who was one of the ones who pushed the lie the most that Saddam had moved his weapons to Syria. Well, that's just not true. In fact, all the international inspectors from the chemical weapons division at the UN are in the process of moving all of Syria's chemical weapons out of the country. I haven't heard one squeak from them talking about hey, this is Iraqi!

WOODS: Right, good point.

HORTON: There's no evidence of that, and in fact, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, George Tenet, George W. Bush, they never claimed that. It was lower-level types, right-wing talk radio propaganda, *Weekly Standard*, *National Review* crap. But the actually official position of the government is not that that happened. The official position of the government is the Duelfer Report, which concedes the absolute fact that Iraq manufactured no chemical or biological weapons of any kind after 1991, how they did in fact lie in 1991 about some of the mustard gas. Then they got caught. It was all destroyed before New Year's 1992. All of it. They didn't make another drop of anything after that.

As Scott Ritter and so many others have explained, the entire question of whether maybe they were still holding onto something had been completely resolved in 1995, when Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel defected to Jordan and talked to the Jordanians, to the CIA of course, and to the IAEA and the UN Weapons Inspection Division. They went through everything. He brought all his papers with him, and he was in charge of destroying every last bit of it. He brought all the documents with him to prove it. Then he went back to Iraq and Saddam killed him. Then Saddam panicked, because Saddam didn't know exactly what it was his son-in-law had given them, and he didn't want to be caught hiding anything. So he gave the UN everything. And that was in 1995, and they knew then. There was nothing.

Any little bit of "uh huh, they found something" that you ever heard was just nonsense. It was the error ratio on dud shells out in the desert, shelf life expired 20 years ago. And of course, back when they were being used, when Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush were giving Saddam Hussein targeting information from our military satellite so he could target basically unarmed Iranian kids, human waves of Iranian fighters in the Iran-Iraq War with those chemical weapons to kill them all. Robert Gates was the Deputy Secretary of the CIA at the time, number two at the CIA at the time under William Casey, arranging it all. That's the chemical weapons.

The FOX News headlines, if you go back and look when the Duelfer Report came out, the Fox News headline is, "Official Conclusion: No Iraq Chemical Weapons Made or WMD Made after 1991." Even FOX News had to concede. It just wasn't true.

Which brings up the question: yeah, but what about all that stuff they said for a year when they said we want a regime change, and we're about to tell you lies for a year straight until you let us do it? Then they commenced with the lies, the aluminum tubes, the mobile biological weapons labs, the warehouses full of sarin and anthrax and VX and whatever other gases and all the rest of it. The supposed attempt to import uranium from Niger and all that. It was all lies, Tom. They were lying.

To a certain degree, perhaps, I guess they say that some CIA analysts just really thought he must have something, but they had no evidence of it. So maybe some of them were honestly wrong, but only honestly wrong with their gut assumption. But all their facts were outright lies. It just wasn't true, and they knew it. The aluminum tubes, those were never for centrifuges. Like you said, you'd have to be an idiot to think Saddam Hussein had some advanced centrifuge program in Iraq that the entire world didn't know about.

Give me a break. These aluminum tubes were for rockets. They were being sold by our allies in NATO, the Italians. They're for rockets for shooting out of the back of your pickup truck, mobile artillery for the battlefield. Nothing to do with centrifuges whatsoever.

And they knew they were lying. The Energy Department said so. The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research said so, etc. It was debunked in the *Washington Post* in September 2002, but that didn't stop them. That was the top headline on Antiwar.com: "Aluminum Tubes Are for Rockets." And it was a *Washington Post* story on page A34 or something from September 2002. They kept using that talking point: aluminum tubes. Like what's he going to do, hit you in the head with an aluminum tube? What aluminum tube? Oh, you're telling me he's making weapons-grade uranium, and he's going to make a bomb out of it, huh? Liars. They knew they were lying, Tom.

WOODS: Here's another kind of objection. I would get things like: you just don't think brown people can have democracy, or you think that it would be good for Saddam Hussein to continue to exercise his reign of terror over the Iraqi people. What would you say to that?

HORTON: I would say the Iraqi people were way better off under Saddam Hussein. Not to a man, but let's see: a million of them have died. He never killed a million of his own people. But the Americans invaded and oversaw a civil war that killed a million of his own people, because they installed democracy where they gave majority rule. The majority that had been on the outs all along. Then that required waging an eight-year war on their behalf to sectarianly cleanse the capital city of Sunni Arabs and give it to the Shiites. It's the first time the Shiites have controlled an Arab capital city in 1000 years. And already leading to massive consequences like Israel insisting America has to work to weaken Assad, the other part of the Shiite crescent of Iranian power in the region. We can't reinvade Iraq and reinstall the Sunnis, now can we, Tom? So second best, now we've got to take Syria down a peg. Now we're supporting al-Qaeda in Iraq in their war against the Shiite Ba'athists in Syria, and on and on it goes. And Maliki tortures people to death all day, every day, just like the Americans did when they ruled Iraq and just like Saddam did when he ruled Iraq before then. And by the way, everybody knows the Republicans were the ones who brought Saddam Hussein back from leaning pro-Soviet toward leaning towards America so that they could back him in his war that killed a million people against Iran in the 1980s to contain the blowback from the evil, fascist, sock-puppet dictatorship our government had installed there.

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WOODS: Why did they do it? This is the fundamental question. I can understand the involvement in Ukraine. I know what their strategy with so-called new Europe is. We're going to take advantage of good will toward the U.S. that exists in the former Soviet bloc. In Poland, for example, they love the U.S. They even love the U.S. government, unfortunately, in Poland. So I understand what their strategy is. And you explained it very well. But in the Iraq situation, obviously they know there's no 9/11 connection, but they were very happy to insinuate that and have all the doofuses believe it. I get that. But what are they really after? Because knocking out Iraq obviously builds up Iran, which supposedly they're also concerned about. So what's the real motivation? Is it really just oil? Is it that mundane or is there something else here?

HORTON: I think oil was part of it but not much of it. It was a confluence of interests. I would say, if I had to sum it up, the answer mostly is Israel. The president didn't want to take the risk of being a one-term president with Saddam Hussein still in power like his father. It's a family disgrace there. So that was his motive more than anything, the president's. Then Cheney had a bunch of Halliburton contracts and welfare contracts to sign up his former company for, because he'd driven them into the red and had to make good on that.

What really got it done—because I don't think it really was the consensus of the whole American establishment that did it; it was really the neoconservative movement that did it—what they're most

concerned about are the interests of Israel and from the perspective of the Likud Party of Ariel Sharon. If you read David Wurmser's pieces "Coping with Crumbling States" and "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm" from 1996, that's representative. It's signed by Perle and Feith. That's representative of their point of view. What they say is, if we expedite the chaotic collapse—that's the case of Syria, but same thing—then we'll be in a better position to build the new future there. Then they go on to fantasize about how they would have a Hashemite king like in Jordan who would be compliant and rule Iraq for them.

Then that would, for whatever reason, I'm not sure they really explain why that should weaken Syria and Iran. By the time of the invasion their plan was to use Ahmed Chalabi, and he was going to be their sock puppet ruler of Iraq. Turns out he was basically working for Iran all along, lying them into war, because the Iranians knew but the neocons didn't that they were really going to be the prime beneficiaries of the invasion. So like you said, the war in Iraq was in Iran's interest but not deliberately, only because the neocons are a bunch of nincompoops and have no idea what they're doing.

So one year into the war, the Ayatollah Sistani said that all good Shia go outside and demand one man one vote. So Bush would have either had to start the war over again at that point or go along. And so he had to go along. And then that ended up leading to the fighting of the war for six, seven years there to cleanse all the Sunnis out of Baghdad and hand it to the Shiites, which again is why they're working so hard to undermine the Shiite government in Syria right now. Can't reinvade Iraq, so go ahead and try to take Syria down a peg, since all they've done is empower Iran with their terrible policy.

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