

## Re: OT: why USA is a regime

**Source:** <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.vms/2004-10/1606.html>

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**From:** Bill Todd (*billtodd\_at\_metrocast.net*)

**Date:** 10/21/04

Date: Thu, 21 Oct 2004 15:07:51 -0400

"JF Mezei" <jfmezei.spamnot@teksavvy.com> wrote in message  
news:4177E72E.AE824A46@teksavvy.com...

> *Bill Todd wrote:*

> > *Indeed, and Kerry's vote and subsequent attempts to weasel around it are*

> > *major reasons why I won't consider voting for him*

>

> <*man, this is tough to resist answering*>

Well, you just could have tried harder.

But no matter: I just happen to have a response at hand, this being an area  
that I've followed rather closely for the past couple of years.

>

> *In fairness to that vote, at the time, the "official" purpose, as outlined*  
by

> *the Bush regime, was to put pressure on Hussein to fully comply with the*  
UN

> *resolutions.*

That may have been the official line BushCo. was stringing out, but Kerry  
was well aware at the time of the lie it was, yet found it convenient to  
play along regardless of the consequences for the country. As I said, I've  
already got a response handy, and here it is:

The assertion that Kerry voted merely to give Bush a bigger stick to use to  
threaten Saddam with might have at least a bit of credibilty (even though it  
would still have been a monumentally stupid move on his part) if a) others  
at the time had not pointed out the grave problems with the Iraq War  
Resolution as drafted and b) Kerry's subsequent actions were consistent with  
that explanation.

Let's look at the record:

Back in September, 2002, Kerry supported the Biden-Lugar amendment to the  
IWR (as did Dean), which would have gone a considerable distance toward  
limiting Dubya's freedom to invade Iraq and toward holding him accountable

after the fact for any chicanery on his part. Without wishing to go down too deep a rat-hole, the distinctions between the IWR and the Biden-Lugar variant have been so widely misrepresented that a quick review seems appropriate (see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A31884-2002Oct2&notFound=true> and <http://www.tnr.com/primary/index.mhtml?pid=1009> for additional comments; the update to the latter fails to take into account the explicit Biden-Lugar phrasing in subsection (a) noted below).

Biden-Lugar

[quote](b) Requirement for determination that use of force is necessary. – Before exercising the authority granted by subsection (a), the President shall make available to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate his determination that –

(1) the United States has attempted to seek, through the United Nations Security Council, adoption of a resolution after September 12, 2002 under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter authorizing the action described in subsection (a)(1), and such resolution has been adopted; or (2) that the threat to the United States or allied nations posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program and prohibited ballistic missile program is so grave that the use of force is necessary pursuant to subsection (a)(2), notwithstanding the failure of the Security Council to approve a resolution described in paragraph (1).[/quote]

(The complete text appears at <http://www.iraqwatch.org/government/US/Legislation/bidenlugar-resolution-093002.htm> .)

Note that since no such U.N. authorization for use of force was ever obtained, Biden-Lugar would have forced Bush, before starting the war, to provide Congress with his determination "that the threat to the United States or allied nations posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program and prohibited ballistic missile program is so grave that the use of force is necessary" – a very specific assertion of need (clarified in subsection (a) as "the exercise of individual or collective self-defense") for which he could later be held accountable and if appropriate impeached. In fact, in the absence of such U.N. approval the Biden-Lugar version arguably gave Bush absolutely no authority that he did not already hold by virtue of the recognized right of self-defense.

The Iraq War Resolution

[quote]In connection with the exercise of the authority granted in subsection (a) to use force the President shall, prior to such exercise or as soon there after as may be feasible, but no later than 48 hours after exercising such authority, make available to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate his determination that

(1) reliance by the United States on further diplomatic or other peaceful

means alone either (A) will not adequately protect the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq or (B) is not likely to lead to enforcement of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq, and

(2) acting pursuant to this resolution is consistent with the United States and other countries continuing to take the necessary actions against international terrorists and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations or persons who planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorists attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.[/quote]

(The complete text appears at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/03/politics/03HTEX.html?ex=1082520000&en=fb23828cadaaffb&ei=5070> ; the first 1.5 pages are standard Congressional meaningless "Whereas..." embroidery.)

This resolution merely required Bush to assert that war was necessary to protect our 'national security' – itself a rather poorly–bounded concept – [b]or[/b] to enforce "all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions", a sufficiently vague grab–bag to make later accountability comfortably nebulous. Furthermore, it conveniently ignored the fact that absent U.N. approval, the U.S. had no right under international law (nor under U.S. law, by virtue of the fact that we have ratified the U.N. charter as a treaty) to attack Iraq for any reason save self–defense against an imminent threat (a point that was not lost on Paul Wellstone at the time – see [http://www.usembassy.it/file2002\\_10/alia/a2100413.htm](http://www.usembassy.it/file2002_10/alia/a2100413.htm) , right at the end – and which has recently, though regrettably belatedly, been stated explicitly by Kofi Annan).

Bush himself rejected the Biden–Lugar variant because he claimed it would 'tie his hands'

[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200210/02/eng20021002\\_104296.shtml](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200210/02/eng20021002_104296.shtml) ).

The ACLU held that view as well

<http://archive.aclu.org/news/2002/n100202a.html> ). Unfortunately, Gepky forged an arrangement with the White House in support of the unamended IWR (why, I have no idea), and this placed Kerry in a bind: now he would either have to stand up against something unconscionable that well might pass anyway (and thus risk being portrayed as soft on terrorism), or cave in and support the unamended resolution even though viability of the Biden/Lugar amendment hung by only 2 votes (and thus might well have prevailed had he the courage to stand up for it – see

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040216fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040216fa_fact1) ).

While 22 of his fellow Democratic senators plus one independent (along with 140 or so House Democrats, IIRC) had the courage to oppose the IWR when the actual vote came up, for someone like Kerry this was a no–brainer: he dropped his support for Biden–Lugar like the hot political potato that he felt it was and voted for the unamended IWR, but made a stirring Senate floor speech about how he would be "the first to speak out" if Bush failed to abide by the understanding that an invasion would take place only if an effective inspection regime could not be reinstated and there was an actual threat to us:

[quote]Let me be clear: I am voting to give this authority to the President for one reason and one reason only: to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction if we cannot accomplish that objective through new tough weapons inspections. In giving the President this authority, I expect him to fulfill the commitments he has made to the American people in recent days – to work with the United Nations Security Council to adopt a new resolution setting out 'tough, immediate' inspections requirements and to 'act with our allies at our side' if we have to disarm Saddam Hussein by force.

If he fails to do so, I will be the first to speak out.[/quote]

( [http://www.johnkerry.com/pressroom/speeches/spc\\_2002\\_1009.html](http://www.johnkerry.com/pressroom/speeches/spc_2002_1009.html) )

So the question is, why didn't Kerry speak out, as he had so clearly promised to, after Bush's 'failure to do so' had become obvious to most of the world (and even to the majority of Americans, who polls showed supported a war only with U.N. approval) well before the war began? He was reportedly deluged with requests to stand up and be counted from both his Massachusetts constituents and others around the country, because to anyone even half-paying attention it was clear that

- 1) Iraq posed no imminent threat to us,
- 2) Iraq did not appear to be connected with our 'war on terror',
- 3) invading Iraq might well worsen the terrorist threat (by energizing their supporters, and according to the CIA creating the possibility that the purported Iraqi WMD would be given to terrorists where no such danger existed before),
- 4) even the presence of WMD in Iraq was far from clear,
- 5) the Bush administration had been systematically misrepresenting intelligence in an attempt to build up support for an unnecessary war (Nigerian yellowcake, aluminum tubes, Iraq/Al Qaeda connections, the likelihood of an Iraqi nuclear weapon in a year or two rather than by decade's end at the earliest – those are just the things that spring immediately to mind, without actually going back to look, which were known to be spurious in February, 2003),
- 6) the U.N. clearly opposed an invasion,
- 7) the invasion was thus illegal under both international and (by virtue of our ratification of the U.N. charter) U.S. law,
- 8) we had been utterly unable to create a credible coalition outside the U.N., and, perhaps most importantly,
- 9) the inspectors were back in, on the ground, and working effectively – precisely the objective that he had claimed his vote in favor of the IWR was aimed at achieving so as to [b]avoid[/b] any need for military action.

Here was Kerry's moment to be, if not the [b]first[/b] to speak out (as he had promised), at least a strong voice in support of those who had already been doing so largely without help from the rest of their party (Dennis Kucinich, Robert Byrd, John Conyers, Howard Dean, and a very few others with whom I should be more familiar than I am). And yet the best that he could come up with was a plaintive request to hold off for another month to try to build up the kind of international coalition that might help lend superficial legitimacy to our invasion (as indicated in this form email response I received on March 26, 2003):

[quote]Thank you for contacting me to share your thoughts about the war in Iraq. I appreciate knowing your views at this difficult time.

I was deeply disappointed that the Bush Administration made the decision to abandon diplomatic efforts rather than giving diplomacy the time and commitment necessary for a real chance of success. In my estimation, giving the world thirty additional days for real multilateral coalition building would have been prudent and no impediment to our military situation – an assessment with which our top military brass apparently agree. The costs of this failure will be borne out in the coming months and years as we labor to disarm and rebuild Iraq and to reclaim the trust of the international community.

However, I voted last fall to authorize the use of force in Iraq because I believed then, as I believe now, that Saddam Hussein's development and possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) pose a threat to our country and to his neighbors that must be confronted. Now that our country is engaged in war, it is incumbent upon all of us to support our troops in Iraq and to support President Bush as our Commander in Chief.

As the fighting continues, my thoughts and prayers are with the brave and capable men and women of our armed forces and those of our allies. I am confident they will successfully remove Saddam Hussein from power and bring an end to his regime's WMD programs. We must focus on achieving these goals quickly and with a minimum loss of life on both sides, so that we may soon get on with the process of rebuilding Iraq.

Thank you once again for taking the time to share your views with me.

Sincerely,

John F. Kerry  
United States Senator[/quote]

Kerry has not even come to grips with the war's illegitimacy given 18 months for additional reflection. His book parrots the PPI's (and DLC's) mantra that the main problem was [b]how[/b] the war was conducted, not [b]that[/b] the war was conducted. He – in a fashion which many would call characteristic – has continued to shift with the prevailing winds:

By the summer of 2003, Iraq, while nowhere nearly as bad as it has become since, was at least starting to look like less of a 'liberation' than an unwanted occupation of a country that we had had no justification for invading in the first place. And this was not lost on much of the Democratic party, even those less-than-astute non-activists who had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with their Commander-in-Chief earlier. Howard Dean (and of course others) spoke to these Democrats, and they began to listen in significant numbers.

This, naturally, got Kerry's attention in a serious way. While as recently as the first presidential debate on May 4th he had stood staunchly by Bush's decision to invade [http://www.vote-smart.org/speech\\_detail.php?speech\\_id=M000012593](http://www.vote-smart.org/speech_detail.php?speech_id=M000012593)), he now moved to address this new problem – not by joining the anti-war contingent, but by trying to give the impression of doing so while actually confining his criticism to the way Bush had [b]conducted[/b] the invasion and its aftermath.

Still, he failed to gain any traction. So by the time the official announcement of his candidacy rolled around on September 2nd, he decided to ignore his refusal to stand up to Bush in February/March (voters have really short memories, after all) and return to the unfulfilled fiction of his Senate speech: "I voted to threaten the use of force to make Saddam Hussein comply with the resolutions of the United Nations." And he carefully insinuated that he had been seriously misled by Dubya while attempting to avoid the stigma of having been 'brainwashed' that older readers may recall from George Romney's candidacy in 1968 (and those who apologize for Kerry today seem more than willing to overlook the fact that such a large majority of the world managed to see through Dubya even though Honest John could not).

But somehow the party faithful still just didn't warm to Kerry, and he had to be rescued by the party's Republican wing, regrettably aided and abetted by a lot of other people who really should have known better. This aid began to appear in serious proportions just after Gore and a couple of very significant labor unions endorsed Dean, and then a plum fell into Kerry's undeserving lap: Saddam Hussein was captured, and Kerry the Hawk suddenly reemerged in full battle regalia in a December speech at Drake University, questioning Howard's fitness to be president because of his rather sensible observation that capturing an old man huddled in a spider hole hardly made us any safer.

Nonetheless, it [b]was[/b] still primary season, and the Democrats were somewhat less excited by Hussein's capture than the general electorate seemed to be, so Kerry characteristically tried to have it both ways in a January 6th Hardball interview. Chris Matthews: "Are you one of the anti-war candidates?" JFK: "I am. Yes, in the sense that I don't believe the president took us to war as he should have, yes, absolutely."

Right, John. ABBsolutely.

Of course, since effectively capturing the Democratic nomination 7 months ago, Kerry has moved hard to the pro-war side, recently maintaining that he would have supported the IWR – and even 'might' have taken us to war himself, had that been his decision to make – [b]despite knowing everything that we know today[/b] (actually, his national security advisor went farther and stated that Kerry [b]probably[/b] would have invaded Iraq, but then hastily back-pedaled in a classic non-denial denial which simply said that he had not been speaking for Kerry rather than that Kerry actually disagreed with what he had said).

It's safe now, you see: there's no more competition for the Democratic nomination, and he can count on nearly all of even the most disgusted Democrats to support him, given the alternative. So there's nothing left to do but scoop up all the pro-war votes that he can get: the only way he'll be inclined to change his image yet again on the war issue is if a third-party anti-war candidate suddenly develops serious support, and the ABB contingent just isn't going to allow that to happen if there's any way to prevent it, despite the salutary effect it would have on their oh-so-regretfully-supported nominee.

All this from the man who stood up in the Senate 30 years ago and questioned how they could ask anyone to be the last man to die for a mistake. Whatever moral compass Kerry had then seems to have been thoroughly demagnetized in the interim.

(End of handy response)

...

the way it looks from outside the USA, half the USA population is so  
> *brainwashed into voting republican, that it doesn't matter who they put as the*  
the  
> *president, as long as he is republican.*

Unfortunately, most of the other half of our voting population (a total voting population which, of course, is well under 40% of the total U.S. population: the majority here recognize just how lousy the choices they've been given are, and are reacting accordingly) is so brainwashed into thinking that replacing Bush (even with someone with remarkably similar policies) will fix the situation that they've paid little or no attention to just how much like a neocon Kerry has become since locking up the Democratic nomination back in March.

Sounds as if you might have the same problem. The brainlessness behind the 'anybody but Bush' mantra is that it examines only half of the equation before reaching its conclusion. Would Satan be better than Bush? Would Hitler? Would Cheney?

Once one is prepared to ask, "*\*Would\* Kerry be better than Bush?*", one is at least on the path toward a rational decision. But not yet at that path's end, because while Kerry *\*would\** almost certainly be *\*somewhat\** better than

Bush, electing him would solidify the grip of the neocons controlling the Democratic party to the point where the likelihood of any further improvement over the little that Kerry offers would be virtually nil (if the more progressive elements of the party could get completely stifled \*this\* year, when the party could have fielded \*any\* decent centrist or even fairly liberal candidate and won in a landslide against the imbecile currently in charge, and after a decade of abysmal failure of the Democratic Leadership Council's 'strategy' of moving ever-farther to the right, just how much chance will the progressive wing have if the DLC can boast of an actual win?).

So the question becomes, "Is Kerry \*sufficiently\* better than Bush to make it worth trading away most chance of actually substantial improvement in the future?" When people reach that level of understanding, then, and only then, is a rational, informed decision possible.

– bill