

An Open Letter to Saddam Hussein

Dear Saddam,

I want peace, and I want the U.S. to stay out of war with Iraq, and I have thought of a foolproof plan for you and I to achieve this objective. Variants of this plan have been floated in the press (for example, *Newsweek*), but they have had one fatal flaw: they require George Bush to negotiate with you, and Bush, in the grip of war mania, refuses to negotiate. The "beauty part" of my plan is that you can achieve the goal of ending U.S. intervention *unilaterally*, without having to negotiate with anyone. This plan has several parts:

1) You have already announced that Kuwait has returned to its historic role as part of the Basra district of Iraq. Now you make another announcement: because of your magnanimity, and your solidarity with all Arab peoples, you have decided to give the Kuwaiti masses the right to decide their fate: to remain as District 19 of Iraq, to become an autonomous region of Iraq, or to be an independent state.

They will decide this at absolutely free elections, and you pledge to abide by their decision. To guarantee that these elections will be free and unhampered, you hereby extend an invitation to the United Nations to supervise the elections. Furthermore, you invite to head up that team the World's Foremost and Most Beloved Election Certifier, ex-President Jimmy Carter (thereby extending a sly poke in the gut to your former enemies the Iranians as well as to those megalomaniacal war hawks, the American neo-conservatives).

You will, of course, make clear to the Kuwaitis and to the world at large that these will be the first truly free elections Kuwait will have ever had. In all previous Kuwaiti elections, voting has been restricted to the "first-class citizens," to that privileged 12% of the male population whose ancestors arrived in Kuwait before the start of the 20th century. You will impose no such anti-democratic restrictions.

How will the U.N., or Jimmy Carter, be able to refuse? And how can the Bush administration, which loves to prate about "free elections," scoff at this action on your part, especially since the revered United Nations will be asked to run them?

2) Simultaneously with this announcement, you pull all of your troops out of Kuwait, leaving only, as befits District 19, administrators, police, and limited armed forces to fend off the Sabah-led guerrillas.

Even if he wanted to, Bush would not be able to start bombing or invading Kuwait or Iraq in the teeth of your pullback. It would be political suicide.

3) At some point in these proceedings, you apply to the United Nations Security Council for removal of the U.N. embargo and all attendant sanctions. You will, after all, have complied with the U.N. resolutions: you will have pulled out of Kuwait, and you will have given the Kuwaitis, for the first time in history, the right to decide their fate.

Thus, acting unilaterally and without begging Bush or Gorbachev to negotiate, you will have presented them and the rest of the world with a *fait accompli*. You know the Kuwaiti masses better than I do, but my hunch is that you will achieve a majority in the elections. But even if not, you will certainly have gained a strong showing. And in any case, you will have left Bush, Gorbachev, and the war hawks with egg on their faces. And sand in their egg.

That's OK, Saddam. No thanks are necessary.

Allah al-Akbar,

Murray N. Rothbard