

Cognitive Dissonance in the White House Imperial Palace

By [Luciana Bohne](#)

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When the starving and exasperated people of Paris stormed the Bastille's prison fortress on 14 July 1789, King Louis XVI wrote in his diary the single word, "Rien"—for "nothing happened." Such imperious dismissal of the rage of 30,000,000 subjects, encapsulated in the attack on the Bastille, can only derive from privilege's "sense of perfect safety," as Edmund Burke wrote, lambasting not the king but his revolutionary successors (Burke's magnificent prose was wasted on his subject: the defense of monarchy). A few years later (1793), Louis XVI's clueless head rolled free from his royally-sorry body, parted by the razor-sharp steel of the people's guillotine. Out of the world's first ideologically social revolution, the modern, democratic age was finally born—in the shadow of the guillotine; in the memory of the abused people's rage; in the bloodlust of popular vengeance against tyranny—ever after plagued by the tyrants' real or threatened return.

The people and democracy have ever since been at best distant cousins in most of the world's liberal-styled democracies.

Flash forward to 15 February 2003. Fifteen million people march across the world protesting the impending Anglo-American attack against Iraq on the pretext that its alleged WMDs threaten world peace. The Bush dynastic dauphin calls this mass mobilization against his war a "focus group."

In fact, in the White House Imperial Palace today, the Bush dauphin continues to replay that Ancien-Regime history of arrogant cognitive dissonance as a sordid and criminal farce. David Kay, chief arms detective of the cretinous dauphin's appointed Iraqi Survey Group (300 million dollars spent on the elusive hunt for phantom WMDs; 600 million more to go), announced recently that he is tired of playing blind-man-buff in Iraq and quits. WMDs simply cannot be tagged. In fact, they do not seem to exist. And haven't seemed to exist significantly since the dauphin's father, George I, last bombed and crippled the essential infrastructure of Iraq, as an insurance bonus, among other beastlier reasons, against its military rising like a phoenix again from its former Third-World-US-client-dependent, US-financed and armed, oil-soaked, neo-colonial ashes. To the world's clamoring question, "Where are the WMDs," our Full-Spectrum-Dominance little Caesar replies, "I want to know the facts."

Unbelievable. He wants to know the facts. Now.

After he and his corporate courtiers and political caballers screamed all over the media for months, "Nuclear cloud about to hover over New York; Saddam must go!"

After the governing elites (!!!) of this putative democracy philippized the United Nations, its allies, and fifteen million global protesters with calls for “Verdict first, trial later,” like some psychotic queen in “Alice in Wonderland.”

After not listening to those who could tell him the facts before the full moon rose over Baghdad in mid-March of 2003 to light the targets for the wave of technological vampires of the Dracula-like flying force invading the night skies of Iraq; not waiting to listen to the United Nations’ inspectors, Blix, el Baradei, or former inspector Scott Ritter; to guffawing Israeli security folks who knew (and if they knew, the CIA knew, and certainly the Likudniks in Bush’s inner circle knew) and told Ritter in 1998 that Iraq was reduced to their number six threat, down from number one eight years before; to the British Defence Intelligence Staff, Britain’s best qualified analysts on WMDs, who all privately agreed that Blair’s Iraqi Dossier’s September 2002’s 45-minute claim of Hussein’s threat should have been “carefully caveated,” according to Brian Jones, leading expert on WMD in Britain’s Ministry of Defence, writing in UK’s Independent this past week.

After he, and his faith-based, oil-totemistic policy diviners, perhaps practising ancient prophecy by rummaging through chicken entrails left over from Republican fundraisers, decided to terrorize (“shock and awe”) a portion of humanity without regard to more prudent voices in the Pentagon, State Department, CIA, and Department of Defense, shamming and ridiculing, instead, their intelligence services’ reports. You can read about this all-deliberate haste, the sheer obsessive pathology that bulldozed the propaganda’s path to war in Robert Dreyfuss’s and Jason West’s article, “The Lie Factory,” in the Jan-Feb issue of “Mother Jones”.

Before the evidence was in—before the United Nations inspectors could finish their work and in spite of our European and other allies’ (notably excluding the Great British Poodle and the Howard war-walkabout in Australia, both of whom their people are now ready to electorally or otherwise string up) derided entreaties that the inspectors be allowed to complete the investigation—our ruling buffoon and former Lord High Executioner of Texas charged that Iraq had 30,000 warheads, 500 tons of chemical weapons, 25,000 liters of anthrax, 38,000 liters of botulism toxin, 1 million pounds of sarin, mustard, and VX nerve gas, and tons of yellowcake uranium. And on the basis of this list, later to be exposed as a fantasy of threats, our people went to war against the people of Iraq, a genocidally sanctioned and decimated population-war-ravaged from over twenty years of our meddling and wars, no-fly-zone daily bombings, hungry, oppressed by the very dictator we helped to sick on them, and unarmed at the time of our assault.

Now, the virtual criminal who led us into this illegal war is changing course. He is telling us he had an intelligence failure. Is he referring to his tiny brain or is he suffering from residual alcoholic blackout? Was there no Office of Special Planning (OSP), created to sidestep the CIA, because, as Richard Perle said, “The CIA is status quo oriented. They don’t want to take risks”? (Dreyfuss and West). Translation: who needs the CIA’s old, Cold-War style of covert operations when now we can be overt in our subversion of the world to our imperial whims and plans, without any interference from that sclerotic and annoying Soviet Union? The war was confected and manufactured by these new-world-order, neo-imperial fanatics and spinmasters who would “take a little bit of intelligence, cherry-pick it, make it sound more exciting, usually by taking it out of context, often by juxtaposition of two pieces that don’t belong together,” as retired Air Force Lt. Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, former analyst for the Pentagon’s Near East and South Asia unit, declared. What the OSP relied on to whip up war

fever among the people “wasn’t intelligence,- it was propaganda,” she said (Dreyfuss and West).

In other words: intelligence didn’t fail; it was invented, massaged, or abused. And plagiarised. From an old thesis by a US doctoral student. Cribbed from the internet. That was the level of contempt for the people’s trust and intellect that these appointed misleaders had. That was the quality of Colin Powell’s highest authority for his overdetermined case for war on February 5th, 2003, at the United Nations, freaking-out the people on junk military science and fake intelligence.

The dauphin and his court knew there were no WMDs in Iraq. He lied because the truth could not have moved the people of the United States to go to war. His father had the same problem. Remembering Gulf War I, Brent Scowcroft, quoted in the Los Angeles Times in 2003, put it this way: “The question of how we would initiate the use of force . . . remained. How could we act without it appearing as aggression on the part of the [US-led] coalition” (Larry Everest, “Oil, Power, and Empire”). It came down to pegging Hussein as a reincarnation of Hitler (a comparison for historical illiterates and political imbeciles), premature Kuwaiti babies by the hundreds thrown out of incubators by Iraqi troops (a lie), and a pending invasion by massive concentration of Iraqi troops on Saudi Arabia’s border (another lie). For the dauphin in 2003 it was Halabja (not a lie but a pret-a-porter resuscitated fact)-the annoying claim that Hussein gassed “his own people,” implying that it would have been all right had he gassed somebody else’s people-while never admitting that the massacre at Halabja in the 1980s was made possible by generous funds, weapons, intrigue, and poisonous brews, supplied by the US government and its allies.

Father and son lied because they could not say to the honest people of the United States that Iraqi oil was the prize for which young Americans might have to die. Bush I put it succinctly, however, in National Security Directive #54 of 15 January 1991: “Access to Persian Gulf oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to US national security . . .” (Larry Everest, “Oil, Power, and Empire”). He won the war and lost the election. The word “oil” became jinxed. His dauphin’s war planners never uttered the word “oil” in the presence of US people unless to say that they would hold Iraqi “oil” in trust (never happened) for the people of Iraq until they democratically grew up-which, if the US could help it, would be never, as the Iraqis now resisting the occupation have suspected since the invasion and have verified because the threatened appointocracy (Naomi Klein’s apt word), called the Iraqi “election,” will provide the Arab facade to a lasting US protectorate.

September 11 gave them another word-facade-“terror”-so that the next oil war, in Afghanistan as in Iraq, morphed into the “War on Terror.” No, it’s not just about owning the oil. It’s about controlling prices, controlling competing economies, controlling the world economy. Yes, as the oil goes so go the nations. “Saudi oil production” writes Larry Everest “can quickly increase or decrease daily production by as much as two to three million barrels. The Energy Information Administration calls this spare capacity . . . even more significant than Saudi reserves because it allows this US client to quickly ramp up oil production to head off shortages or price explosions.” The demise of the Soviet Union was hastened by a Saudi price war in the 1980’s that brought the price of oil per barrel down to under \$10, fatally reducing revenues for the ailing Soviet economy (“Oil, Power, and Empire”).

But at the White House Imperial Palace, they think we don’t understand these things, for if we did, wouldn’t we be among the 1% of the US population that owns between 40% and

50% of the wealth?

Perhaps, but here's a sobering tally of the moral and material cost of the war which the ruling rich supported (Bush's cabinet is the richest in history, at a personal average wealth of ten million dollars per member), while condemning our "unpatriotic" opposition and being unable to conceive our stupidity for refusing to build our "freedom [to exploit]" and our "democracy [for the deserving few]"—in other words, vast wealth—on the backs of the poor and the powerless, on the conquest of lands that don't belong to us, and on the eternal condemnation of future generations for once having blighted the world with the scourge of war:

"232, the number of combat deaths in Iraq between May 2003 and May 2004. 501, the number of American servicemen to die in Iraq so far. Zero number of American combat deaths in Germany after the Nazis surrendered . . . Zero, number of coffins of dead soldiers returning home from Iraq that the Bush administration has allowed to be photographed. Zero, numbers of funerals or memorials that President Bush has attended for soldiers killed in Iraq. 100, the number of fundraisers attended by Bush or Vice President Cheney in 2003. . . . 16,000 the approximate number of Iraqis killed since the start of the war. 10,000, the number of Iraqi civilians killed since the beginning of the conflict. 100 billion dollars, estimated cost of the war to American citizens in 2003. 36%, increase in the number of desertions from the US Army since 1999. 92% of Iraq's urban areas that had access to drinkable water a year ago. 60%, the percentage of of Iraq's urban areas that have access to drinkable water today" ("George W. Bush and the Real State of the Union," The Independent, UK).

The view from the White House Palace: "As democracy takes hold of Iraq, the enemies of freedom will do all in their power to spread violence and fear" (President George W. Bush, "State of the Union," 2004).

See? He thinks democracy sows violence and fear. In this unintentional slip of judgment, he may be entirely genuine: it's what oligarchs generally believe. And it's no use telling him, "It's the war, stupid, that spreads violence and fear—and inequality spreads hunger and unemployment."

For the likes of him, kings, dauphins, emperors, and ruling elites, the people's rage is inconsequential and irrelevant to their divine right to rule. Did he even hear that 100,000 Iraqis protested in the streets demanding free elections? Dan't matter: "Not one drop of [his] blood has [he] shed in the cause of the country he has ruined, . . . having squandered away the precious treasure of [his] crime" (Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the Revolutions in France," attacking the wrong people with words suited for despots).

"Rien."

Luciana Bohne co-founded Film Criticism and teaches at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She welcomes readers' comments: lbohne@edinboro.edu

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Articles by: [Luciana Bohne](#)

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