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INTERVENTIONISM PRODUCED THE 9/11 ATTACKS

by *Jacob G. Hornberger*
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One thing is certain about the U.S. mainstream media’s memorialization of the 9/11 attacks. They are not about to mention, much less emphasize, that the attacks were among the rotten fruits of U.S. interventionism, the foreign-policy philosophy that continues to hold the United States in its grip. Given the ongoing debacles of death, destruction, tyranny, torture, ISIS, and refugee crises arising from U.S interventionism in Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Afghanistan, the last thing interventionists want Americans to focus on is that interventionism gave us 9/11 as well.

The 9/11 attacks were not the first time the World Trade Center came under a terrorist attack. The first attack came 8 years before, in 1993. When one of the terrorists, Ramzi Yousef, was brought before a federal judge for sentencing (because terrorism is a federal criminal offense, not an act of war), he angrily told the judge something to the effect of: Go ahead and call me a terrorist if you will. But the truth is that you all are “butchers.”

What he was referring to was the U.S. government’s intentional use of sanctions to kill thousands of children in Iraq prior to the 1993 terrorist attack on the WTC. In fact, it was the intentional killing of those children that partly motivated Yousef to attack the WTC in 1993. That’s why he called U.S. officials “butchers” prior to his sentencing — because they were

intentionally killing children — lots of children, not one of whom had ever initiated any violence against the United States.

After Yousef was sentenced, U.S. officials continued their sanctions on Iraq knowing that there were killing even more children and knowing full well that Yousef had been motivated to attack the WTC by such killings.

Three years after Yousef's sentencing — in 1996 — Madeleine Albright, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, was asked if the deaths of half-a-million Iraqi children from the U.S. sanctions were worth it. Albright said that it was not an easy call but that, yes, the deaths were “worth it.” Not one single U.S. official, as far as I know, issued any condemnation or even mild criticism of Albright's statement. That's undoubtedly because they agreed with her.

By “it” Albright meant regime change in Iraq. During the 1980s, U.S. officials had helped Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to kill Iranians in his war on Iran. By 1990, however, the U.S. government had turned against its former partner and ally because his army had invaded Kuwait as a result of an oil-drilling dispute between Iraq and Kuwait. U.S. officials decided that they wanted Saddam ousted from power and replaced with a pro-U.S. regime.

That's what the deadly sanctions that killed all those Iraqi children were intended to do — bring regime change, which has long been a core element in U.S. interventionism. The idea was that as Iraqi parents saw their children dying from infectious illnesses and malnutrition (the Pentagon had intentionally destroyed Iraq's water and sewage treatment plants with that purpose in mind), they would overthrow Saddam and install a pro-U.S. regime. Alternatively, U.S. officials figured that Saddam might abdicate rather than watch all those Iraqi children die.

It didn't work. By the time of the 9/11 attacks, the sanctions were still in place, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children were dead and more were still dying, and Saddam Hussein was still in power.

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, there were those who said: Stop the sanctions and stop killing those children because if you don't, you're going to have terrorist retaliation, just like the 1993 terrorist attack on the WTC. FFF was among them. Before the 9/11 attacks, we published op-eds and commentaries saying that if U.S. interventionism in the Middle East continued, there was the likelihood of terrorist retaliation on American soil. The noted scholar Chalmers Johnson said the same thing, especially in his excellent pre-9/11 book *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*.

U.S. officials ignored the warnings, just as they scoffed when high UN officials resigned in protest against what they called the genocide that U.S. sanctions were committing against innocent children. Not surprisingly, Osama bin Laden cited the U.S. government's massive killing of Iraqi children in his pre-9/11 declaration of war against the United States.

Once many Americans bought into the “they hate us for our freedom and values” line after the 9/11 attacks, it became easy for U.S. officials to use the 9/11 attacks to justify their invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The invasion of Iraq was intended to accomplish what the 11 years of

sanctions had failed to accomplish — regime change in Iraq. The war on Afghanistan was initiated because the Taliban regime refused to comply with President Bush’s unconditional extradition demand for Osama bin Laden, notwithstanding the fact that there was no extradition treaty between Afghanistan and the United States.

In the process, by using the 9/11 attacks to double down with more U.S. interventionism, America ended up with a perpetual threat of terrorist blowback and the never-ending “war on terrorism,” not to mention ever-increasing budgets and totalitarian-like powers for the Pentagon, the CIA, and the NSA.

That’s how it that we now live in a society of forever wars, out-of-control federal spending and debt, assassination, kidnappings, regime change, coups, alliances with dictatorial regimes, and foreign aid for dictators.

Obviously this was not the type of system envisioned by the Framers when they called the federal government into existence. Our American ancestors would never have ratified the Constitution if they had known that it was going to bring a federal government into existence that wielded totalitarian-like powers, intentionally killed children, and engaged in foreign interventionism.

Unfortunately, later generations of Americans decided to abandon our nation’s founding principles of non-interventionism and a constitutional, limited-government republic. Americans who would prefer a society based on peace, prosperity, harmony, morality, and freedom would be wise to reflect on that decision today, the anniversary date of the 9/11 attacks, and beyond.