

# I, WARMONGER

BY THOMAS W. HAZLETT

**T**he presumption is always against war. The moral absurdities, the incredible cost, and the unanticipated calamities jointly and severally render military attack the nth resort. And as resorts go, it's a Hotel Hell. But the occasion comes when it's time to check in. We wisely kept our reservations for January 16.

I have great sympathy for those who want to decommission our global military outreach and simply beef up the Border Patrol. I protested the Lebanon fiasco even before the 241 Marines were taken out by a fanatic named Abdul driving a '62 Ford pickup. I thought the Persian Gulf reflagging program was the devil's work. I understood that Ollie North screwed up the Nicaragua deal so perfectly as to meet the highest standards of federal government boondoggles. I even thought the Grenada invasion was d-u-mb. But today, call me a reluctant warmonger.

A large share of the 200 million people inhabiting the desert suburbs of Israel wake up in the morning dreaming about the death of every single Jew on the planet and go to bed chanting to Allah to make it real. They spend significant portions of their tiny capital stock making huge trouble for other people who are constrained by the moral parameters of conscience. Now a particularly virulent subset arises in Iraq's Husseinians: millions of people with bad attitudes, all pointed in the same direction.

Saddam's admirers claim to despise Zionism, but their real animosity is for capitalism, democracy, and liberty—indeed, every social advance past the pathetic 12th-century goat-herding feudalism they so cherish. They treat their women like cattle and ooze with contempt for the simplest human civilities. (Their attitudes are shaped largely by a religion that has little respect for liberal niceties. Example: When some bozo writes a book satirizing official doctrine,

true believers issue a death sentence for the author, whereas the worst we ever do in the West is ruin the movie version.)

Since 1972 the massed Jew-haters of the Middle East have had the globe by the short hairs. Unable to gain an inch of Israeli turf militarily, they turned to terrorism against innocents. This has constrained the world's every move. It's particularly effective as a means to jack around civilized societies, which do not respond in kind. Saddam Hussein has ultimately performed a gracious favor. Now we have a target.

**S**urely; unrequited abominations abound. Third World countries invade each other on sort of a round-robin basis, slaughtering large numbers of bystanders just as a prerequisite. And domestic violence: the Soviets boffing the Baltics, the Saudis' enslavement of women. But reality provides the binding constraint here; we can do little about these human outrages without putting the very moral values we (initially) seek to promote in far worse shape over time.

Iraq's kidnapping of Kuwait is different on this operational level: We can strike the Iraqi military; we can move the perpetrators out. Outrages that cross clearly defined borders tend to rage more outwardly; they directly threaten the world community in ways domestic oppression does not. Particularly when every oil consumer on earth will pay a hefty tax pursuant to the hostile takeover. The fact that the world has lined up, that the United States is in bed with the Soviet Union, and that the miracle of miracles—resolute U.N. action—has occurred dramatically improves the chances for decisive action against evildoers.

As does the depravity of the doers. Let's see the Saddam tote board, here: genocide, gas warfare, sponsorship of international terrorism, invasion of a neighboring country on the ground that it underpriced his exports (stand back from

Sears before Kmart responds to the new all-discount policy with Scuds of its own). I don't blame the world for being concerned. This guy gassed Kurds, and his men have had their way with every Kuwaiti woman of less than 500 pounds. Now he's got his hands on Kuwait's \$500-billion oil stockpile, with which he can play the international arms black market. (Imagine if Nixon had had this kind of a "dirty tricks" budget.)

**I**f there is a minimum civilized bound, you've got to say S. Hussein has trampled it. Here, the world has both abundant cause and abundant ability. If we look away here, we look away anywhere. The line surrounding acceptable conduct has been terribly stretched in this century. But now a line can be drawn anew: around Saddam Hussein.

If the world can't deal some justice out of this hand, there's no point in reshuffling. Just leave the table quietly. Failure to respond to this test case of incoming barbarity would send back a very clear signal to the world's crazies huddled in the Middle East: Anything goes—the world has no anti-insanity defenses in place. The Munich Olympics? Oh, that's just the starting gun you hear. *Achille Lauro*? Bon voyage. Pan Am Flight 103? Enjoy your in-flight movie. William Buckley? We hated "Firing Line." Kuwaiti invasion? You'll have a ball—those Arab chicks are screamers.

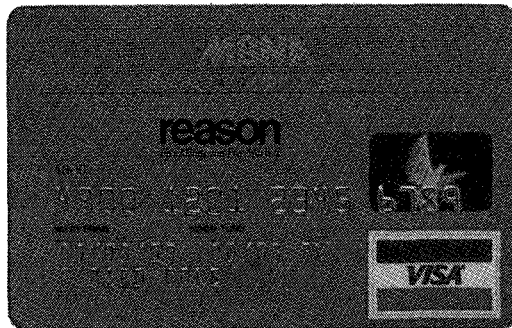
We finally have the opportunity to respond to the terrorisms of the Middle East. Making Iraqi dictators play by the rules of the house can cause quite a stir. But the world needs to play by the rules. Which is why, when we can, we hire a bouncer. Now, at long last, we can.

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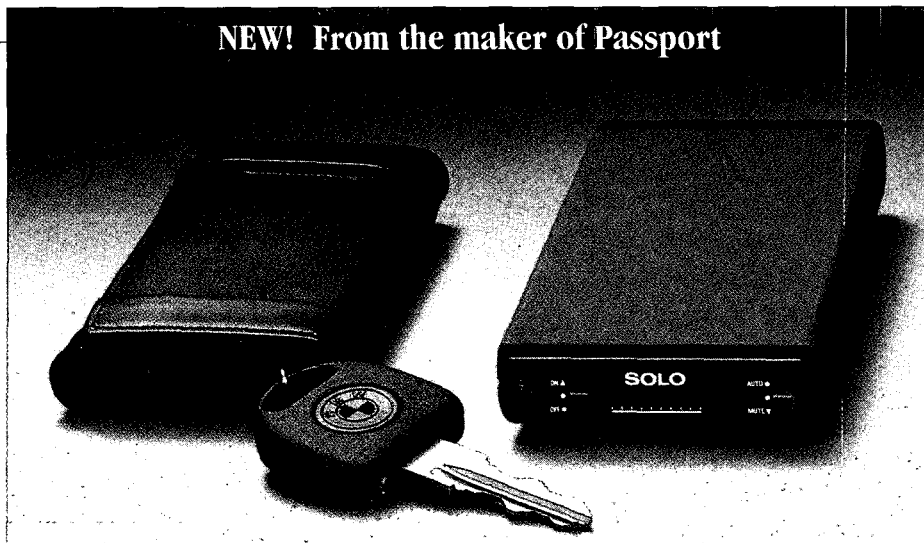
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