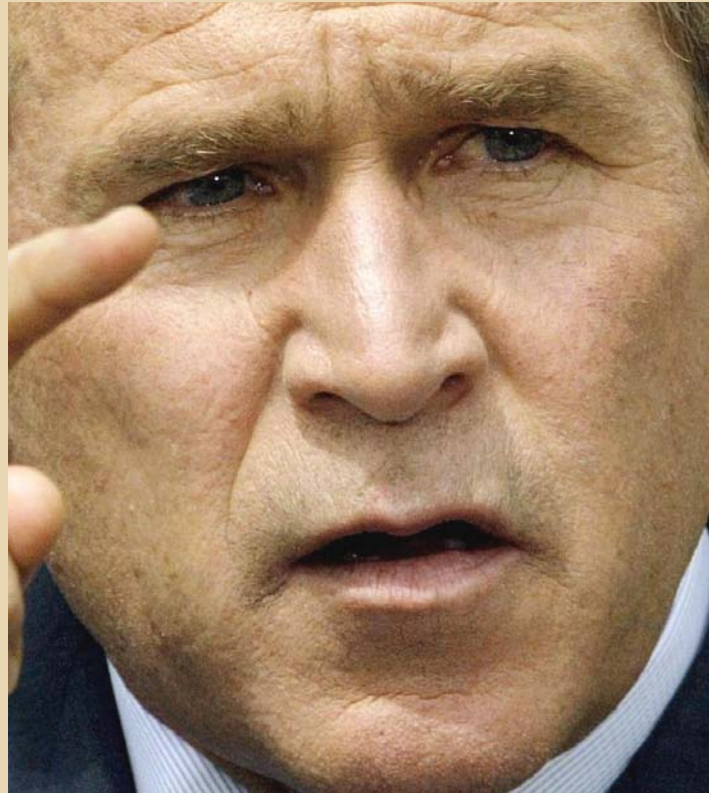


*“When  
the  
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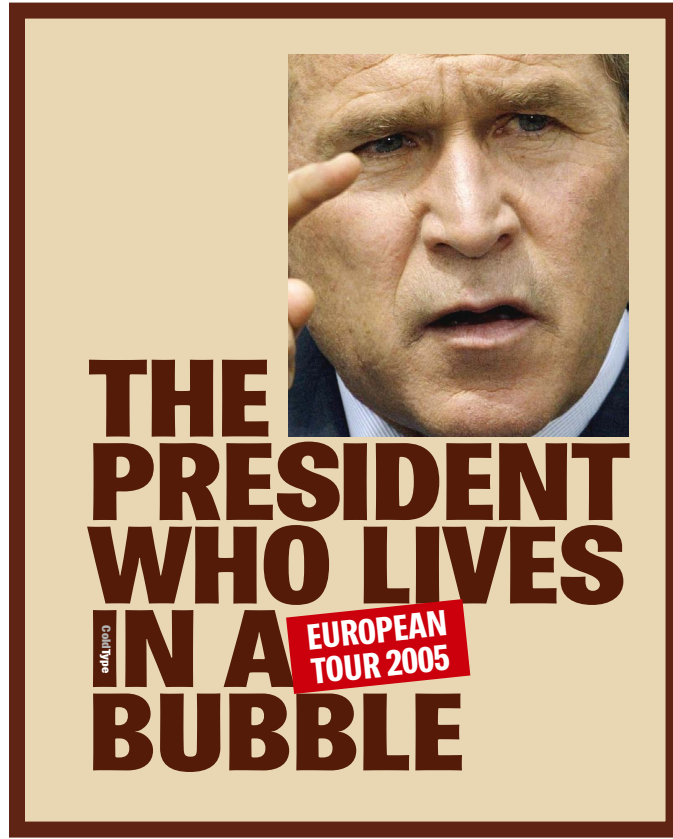


**THE  
PRESIDENT  
WHO LIVES  
IN A  
BUBBLE**

GoldType

**EUROPEAN  
TOUR 2005**

**TOM ENGELHARDT**



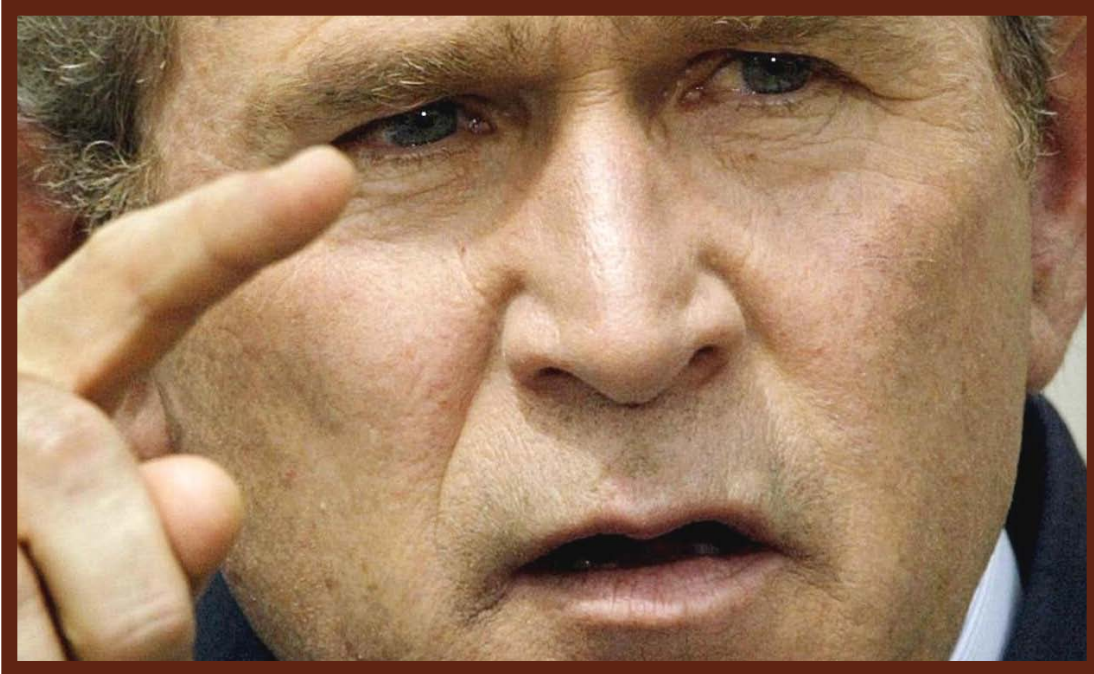
**T O M   E N G E L H A R D T**

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## “The great motorcade,”

wrote Canadian correspondent Don Murray, “swept through the streets of the city... The crowds ... but there were no crowds. George W. Bush’s imperial procession through Europe took place in a hermetically sealed environment. In Brussels it was, at times, eerie. The procession containing the great, armour-plated limousine (flown in from Washington) rolled through streets denuded of human beings except for riot police. Whole areas of the Belgian capital were sealed off before the American president passed.”

Murray doesn’t mention the 19 American escort vehicles in that procession with the President’s car (known to insiders as “the beast”), or the 200 secret service agents, or the 15 sniffer dogs, or the Blackhawk helicopter, or the 5 cooks, or the 50 White House aides, all of which added up to only part of the President’s vast traveling entourage. Nor does he mention the huge press contingent tailing along inside the president’s security “bubble,” many of them evidently with their passports not in their own possession but in the hands of White House officials, or the more than 10,000 policemen and the various frogmen the Germans mustered for the President’s brief visit to the depopulated German town of Mainz to shake hands with Prime Minister Gerhard Schroeder.

This image of cities emptied of normal life (like those atomically depopulated

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ones of 1950s sci-fi films) is not exactly something Americans would have carried away from last week's enthusiastic TV news reports about the bonhomie between European and American leaders, as our President went on his four-day "charm offensive" to repair first-term damage to the transatlantic alliance. But two letters came into the Tomdispatch e-mailbox – one from a young chemist in Germany, the other from a middle-aged engineer in Baghdad – that reminded me of how differently many in the rest of the world view the offshore bubbles we continually set up, whether in Belgium, Germany, or the Green Zone in Baghdad. (Both letters are reproduced at the end of this dispatch.)

Here's one of the strangest things about our President: He travels often enough, but in some sense he never goes anywhere. As I wrote back in November 2003, as George and party were preparing to descend on London (central areas of which were being closed down for the "visit"):

"American presidential trips abroad increasingly remind me of the vast, completely ritualized dynastic processions by which ancient emperors and potentates once crossed their domains and those of their satraps. Our President's processions are enormous moving bubbles (even when he visits alien places closer to home like the Big Apple) that shut cities, close down institutions, turn off life itself. Essentially, when the President moves abroad, like some vast turtle, he carries his shell with him."

Back then, I was less aware that, for Bush & Co., all life is lived inside a bubble carefully wiped clean of any traces of recalcitrant, unpredictable, roiling humanity, of anything that might throw their dream world into question. On the electoral campaign trail in 2004, George probably never attended an event in which his audience wasn't carefully vetted for, and often quite literally pledged to, eternal friendliness, not to say utter adoration. (Anyone who somehow managed to slip by with, say, a Kerry T-shirt on, was summarily ejected or even arrested.)

In a sense, our President's world has increasingly been filled with nothing but James Guckert clones. Guckert is, of course, the "journalist" who, using the alias Jeff Gannon, regularly attended presidential news conferences and lobbed softball questions George's way. The Gannon case, or "Gannongate," has – are you surprised? – hardly been touched on by most of the mainstream media despite its lurid trail leading to internet porn sites and a seamy underside of gay culture – issues that normally would glue eyes to TV sets and sell gazillions of papers (and that in the Clinton era would have rocked the administration). On the other hand, it did cause an uproar in the world of the political Internet, where, if we

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were to be honest – and stop claiming to be shocked, shocked – we would quickly admit that almost all of George’s world has essentially filled up with Gannons (though not necessarily with the porn connections).

After all, even the President’s Crawford “ranch” is really a Gannon-style set. And in Germany and France, George and Condi, his new Secretary of State, managed to have town-hall style meetings only with audiences of European Gannons; audiences so carefully combed over that, on a continent whose public is largely in opposition to almost any Bush policy you might mention, not a single challenging question seems to have been asked. That certainly represents remarkable advanced planning. It’s no easy thing, after all, constantly to rush ahead of a President and his key advisors and create a Potemkin world for them from which reality has been banished and in which no rough edges will ever be experienced.

This urge to shut down a pulsing planet rather than deal with it is but the other side of a no-less-powerful administration urge – to free the President as Commander-in-Chief (and so the Pentagon as well) of all the fetters of our political system, of all those checks and balances so dear to high school civics classes throughout the land, and to encase his acts in a shroud of secrecy as well as non-accountability. More news about this appears practically every day. Just last week, Ann Scott Tyson and Dana Priest of the Washington Post reported that the Pentagon “is promoting a global counterterrorism plan that would allow Special Operations forces to enter a foreign country to conduct military operations without explicit concurrence from the U.S. ambassador there.” The only authority for this would evidently be an “execute order” from the President.

So the President passes through the empty cities of the world and, even when in filled auditoriums, through a world emptied of all reality but his. As I wrote in that 2003 dispatch, this impulse to shut down and shut out

“combines many urges at once. Certainly, there’s the urge to stamp an imperial imprint of power on the world, and allied to it, the urge to control. The desire to cut off information, to rule in silence and secrecy, must undoubtedly have allures all its own. And then there’s also simple fear (a feeling not much written about since our President and his administration quite literally took flight on September 11, 2001).”

As the Iraqi letter-writer below makes clear, when you live in this way, only listening to your own voice or to those who don’t dare to or care to challenge

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you, you don't always get the best advice. And while for a time you may be able to maintain your fantasies relatively intact, you're likely to have a tin ear for how you sound to others. If, for instance, this was the President's charm offensive, consider the "charm."

His "conciliatory" speeches and press conferences, his pledges to "listen" to the Europeans and "think over" their proposals (though not, of course, to do anything about them) were filled with nearly his normal quotient of imperial "musts," issued like so many diktats to the world at large. These pass largely unheard by American journalists, few of whom seemed to wonder how they sounded, along with the President's typically hectoring/lecturing style, to European leaders or publics:

"The European project is important to our country. We want it to succeed. And in order for Europe to be a strong, viable partner, Germany *must* be strong and viable, as well... Syria *must* withdraw not only the troops, but its secret services from Lebanon... Iran *must* not have a nuclear weapon... Today, a new generation [of Slovaks and other Eastern Europeans] that never experienced oppression is coming of age. It is important to pass on to them the lessons of that period. They *must* learn that freedom is precious, and cannot be taken for granted; that evil is real, and must be confronted..."

One congenial crowd on the President's tour was filled with American troops, many from Iraq, gathered at Wiesbaden Army Airfield in Germany to "hoo-ah" him. As Elisabeth Bumiller of the New York Times wrote, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice "served as a warm-up speaker. Ms. Rice was raucously greeted with shouts of 'We love you!' In a pep talk delivered without notes, Ms. Rice asked the crowd of 3,000: 'Do you know why America has the greatest military in the history of the world? Because it has the greatest soldiers, airmen and seamen in the history of the world.'"

On the one hand, that diktat tone traveled to Europe inside the Bush bubble; while on the other, those grandiose fantasies of American power made it as well (even if just barely). Since most U.S. media organizations exist more or less inside that bubble too, the "charm offensive" largely carried the day – at least in the United States, where vivid descriptions of a Bush-depopulated Europe were scarce and analysis of transatlantic handshakes, forced smiles, and body language (as if these were substantive policy) was plentiful indeed.

Of course, just about nobody in our mainstream media thinks – or writes any-

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way – that George’s musts and Condi’s grandiosity are even passingly odd, but the Europeans, evidence tells us, generally think otherwise. As Alain Duhamel of the French paper *Libération* reminds us, over the last two years our President has had a striking unifying effect on Europe. At the crucial moment when he and his advisors, marching toward the war they so desperately wanted, did seem successful in splitting Europe’s governments:

“France, Germany, and Belgium stood firm against him, and, miraculously, a massively refractory European public opinion emerged. What the European Council of Heads of Government never was able to do, George W. Bush succeeded in achieving: the citizens of all of continental Europe and a good number of Britons, whether their governments were left or right, whether their Prime Ministers had committed themselves in the American wake or had refused, all these citizens purely and simply rejected their choices and American methods. George W. Bush was midwife to the birth of a European public opinion.”

So yes, last week European leaders stepped inside the presidential bubble, smiled, supped, shook hands, and said the right things to signal amity-restored; but they also understood that the very presence of the President in Europe and his visible unpopularity outside that bubble were indications of just how humbled the American “hyperpower” had been. And then they went their own ways.

So much for the good old days when there was to be an “old Europe” and a “new Europe” – and National Security Advisor Condi Rice could claim our policy vis-à-vis Europe was to “forgive Russia, ignore Germany, and punish France”? Well, how the mighty have... if not fallen exactly, then slipped badly. (And neo-cons lurking in think-tanks all over bubbled Washington are fretting about exactly that.)

Nor, last week, could Europe’s leaders have missed the way, as a New York Times editorial put it, “a seemingly innocuous remark from the central bank of South Korea” about “diversifying” the dollar into other currencies, made “the dollar tank” and markets briefly plummet. Call it a little taste of another kind of “shock and awe.” The greatest superpower with the greatest military and the greatest muscle and the greatest threat potential and the greatest power-projection ability and the greatest .... (well you get the idea) turns out to have economic feet of clay.

Thanks to this administration, our military has been overstretched and humbled by the rebellion of a ragtag bunch of comparatively under-armed rebels and

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fanatics in Iraq. Administration officials have managed, in a fashion that must be stunning to some of the officers who rebuilt the armed forces in the 1980s, to recreate a Vietnam-like catastrophe, a tunnel with no light whatsoever at the end – so much for the “lessons” of that war – and are now clearly considering furthering the Vietnam analogy by hitting out at the present-day equivalent of “sanctuary areas” in neighboring states (Syria and Iran).

No wonder the Europeans mouthed the right words, offered to train a feeble 1,500 Iraqi police recruits a year (not even in Iraq but in Qatar) – the French donated a single “equipment officer” to the project, about as close to a smirk as you can get – and then went about their Iran-negotiating-China-embargo-dropping-post-Kyoto-Treaty business. From American mainstream reporting, you generally would have had only the most modest idea that this was the case, though there were a few honorable exceptions, just as you could find rare accounts (usually on the inside pages of newspapers) of those emptied streets of Europe. Probably the single canniest exception I saw came from Tony Karon of Time magazine, who began a piece with the pungent title, *Why Europe Ignores Bush*, this way:

“Machiavelli’s advice to political leaders was that it’s more important to be feared than to be loved. That’s no help for President Bush on his European tour; in spite of the warm words he’s exchanging with European leaders, the reality is that the Bush administration is neither loved nor feared in growing sectors of the international community – increasingly, it is simply being ignored.”

And he ended the piece with a reminder that the rest of the world is not simply waiting for the last global superpower to do its thing. It’s reorganizing itself and going about its business just beyond our bubbled line of sight:

“All over the world, new bonds of trade and strategic cooperation are being forged around the U.S. China has not only begun to displace the U.S. as the dominant player in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation organization (APEC), it is fast emerging as the major trading partner to some of Latin America’s largest economies... French foreign policy think tanks have long promoted the goal of ‘multipolarity’ in a post-Cold War world, i.e. the preference for many different, competing power centers rather than the ‘unipolarity’ of the U.S. as a single hyper-power. Multipolarity is no longer simply a strategic goal. It is an emerging reality.”



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With that, let me turn to those two letters from outside the bubble. Oliver Hass, a 28 year-old chemist and graduate student from Oldenberg, Germany, wrote me recently about what the President's trip looked like to him. In introducing himself, Hass commented on "how necessary it can be for a chemist to forget about molecules and think about real problems." America as a country, he added, "is still largely admired here in Germany and was also a likely place for me to work and live in. Since my teenage years, I've had complaints about American foreign relations, but the core American freedoms – freedom of speech, tolerance, pursuit of happiness and the will to do better – shined bright and dissolved the shadows. These days the shadows get ever darker and, like a black hole, they eat up my confidence in our deepest ally and friend (at least in my lifetime)." He then wrote me the following under the title:

### **GREEN-ZONING GERMANY**

I want to describe to you some of the circumstances of President Bush's recent visit to Germany, because it's a beautiful example of the divergence of intentions and impact. Reading the headlines in the American newspapers, I see that this visit is being treated as a great opening for the healing process in the transatlantic alliance and your public opinion seems optimistic that your President's journey will improve our relationship, despite the continuing great divide on major subjects of international policy.

But let me describe to you this visit/experience through the eyes of the average German citizen:

This last week, after all, Mainz, a little town in Germany, was turned into a Potemkin village. General Potemkin first arrived a few weeks ago in the person of Condoleezza Rice, who informed Germans, that the president forgave us, that we were right, and therefore that our disputes are over and our relationship is excellent.

To underline the new era of friendship, the President was to pay a visit to us, a stop-over on his European charm offensive. But to make sure that the President wasn't appalled by reality, so much was done to create a bubble at Mainz in the heart of Germany. And here's where the Green Zone comes into play. As in Baghdad, so Mainz too was turned into a maximum-security zone and the citizens of Mainz and the surrounding area learned what exporting democracy really meant.

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First and most obvious was the great disproportion between the President's freedom to travel and the average citizen's right to move in public places. Last Wednesday for his arrival, all Autobahnen (highways) around Mainz were closed for several hours. A helicopter flight from the airport to the city might have seemed like a more practical way to transport the President than cutting the veins of the most frequented Autobahn-segment in Germany – and that was just the beginning of our voyage into the absurd.

Many citizens of Mainz weren't even able to drive their cars. They were forced to park kilometres away from their homes, simply because they lived near one of the maybe-routes the President's convoy might conceivably have taken. Using the railway system might have seemed a solution, but unfortunately over 100 trains were also cancelled (and a similar number of flights at the airport in Frankfurt during the time that Air Force One arrived).

One could imagine George Bush sitting in a car, but in a train? If you smiled at that, you'll laugh when I mention the Rhine River. The route of the President crossed the Rhine and so the whole river was closed to shipping. (Estimated losses in profits only for this: 500,000 euros.)

Anyway, most people in Mainz didn't really have a reason to leave home that day. For example, Opel decided to close its factory on Wednesday, because workers and suppliers wouldn't make it to work in time. 750 cars weren't built and the production loss has to be compensated for by the workers on the next two Saturdays. Linde Vacuum asked their employees to take one day off. In addition, most small businesses in Mainz were closed and the inner city had all the charm of a ghost town – the streets were totally empty.

In Germany you are free to write a letter to your representative, but unfortunately if you wanted to, you would have had to wait a few days, because all letter boxes were taken away too. The costs of this extravaganza can't yet be tallied. 15,000 additional security forces were out on the streets and the one thing we know is that we, the taxpayers, will be left with the final price tag.

The most disturbing aspects of this visit/nightmare haven't even been mentioned yet. People were told to stay away from their windows and

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they were forbidden to step out on their balconies! And the Secret Service that protects your President even had plans to shut down the mobile phone communication system. They didn't actually go so far, but the public expression of that idea alone tells a story about the direction of Secret-Service thoughts. And I don't think the intention on this subject was to disrupt "mobile-ignited" explosives, but to further complicate the situation for Germans who wanted to protest the visit. It was hard enough to organize a demonstration in a ghost city, where you couldn't even get lunch at a café. With the communication systems off, the protestors would have been further marginalized and easily scattered.

To complete the Potemkin masquerade, I should just mention the planned meeting between some ordinary citizens of Mainz and your President, like the town-hall meetings in America. But don't think the assembly actually consisted of ordinary citizens. After the German delegation emphasized that they would not collect the questions beforehand and fake the conversation (as had happened at the meeting Rice had with students in France), the American delegation cancelled that meeting. An emperor shouldn't be annoyed by tough questions. Instead 20 so-called young leaders were chosen by the [conservative] Aspen Institute and the German Marshall Fund, and so a few hand-picked Germans were talking with the President instead of upset citizens.

The overall feeling that remains is that we got trampled upon by the President's baggage – like those beds of roses at Buckingham palace, if you remember that "the-queen-is-not-amused" episode. Mainz was not blessed by this visit, it was doomed. Liberty of action was interrupted and the burden of costs for the visit remains in Germany. Diplomats are trained to accentuate symbolic gestures and the return to a dialogue, but average citizens have been stunned by how much less our freedoms were worth than George Bush's. The media worked fine for the President's propaganda and you won't hear too much about this, especially not outside of Germany. The latest Potemkin village was planned all too well and, as you know, the people have no role in this scenery. Welcome to the world of delusion.

Kind regards,

**Oliver Haas**

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At about the same time as Oliver Hass wrote in, I received a note from Ghazwan Al-Mukhtar who said: "I read with interest your 'Engelhardt and Hiro on Iraqi and American fault lines.' Attached is a letter I wrote as an Iraqi living in 'liberated' Iraq, giving Mr. Bush a few points of concern of ordinary Iraqis. I thought you might want to read it." Indeed, I did; and, in further correspondence, I learned that Ghazwan Al-Mukhtar was a 60 year-old engineer, a 1967 graduate of Marquette University, living in Baghdad, who had criticized Saddam Hussein in his time as a "ruthless dictator" and had no intention of holding his tongue now. He had previously been interviewed from Baghdad by Amy Goodman's Democracy Now! and wrote to tell me that "I am independent person and never joined any political party and I will never join a party." And when asked about whether he wanted his name used or withheld, he added: "If, after everything we have gone through over the last 22 months makes me scared, then I have news for them, NOW NO ONE CAN STOP ME FROM TALKING. I AM FREE." His letter to George Bush from outside the American bubble follows:

### **To The Honorable Mr. George W. Bush, The President of the United States of America:**

Dear Mr. Bush,

It was regrettable that you were not allowed to see and talk to ordinary Iraqi citizens, during your sneak visit to Baghdad on Thanksgiving Day of 2003. Those Iraqis whom you met during that visit were part of the American-installed client state that came on the back of the American tanks. Naturally they told you what they thought you wanted to hear. Moreover, Mr. President, they lived, like your other advisors in Iraq, in their isolated bubbles in the secured "Green Zone" with very little contact with ordinary Iraqis.

I am sure that, had you talked to ordinary Iraqis, you would have gotten different opinions than those being passed to you by your American or Iraqi advisors. As an ordinary Iraqi citizen, I would like to share my thoughts on the Iraqi dilemma that America has found itself in.

More than a year ago you promised the Iraqi people that "the torture chambers and the secret police are gone forever." Mr. President, I honestly wanted to believe you then. I discovered later that your American soldiers

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had been torturing the Iraqi people since May 2003. I discovered also that your army generals knew about it and wrote reports to their higher authorities about such abuses of human rights. I will give you, Mr. President, the benefit of the doubt and say that your advisors did not tell you the facts.

Having known the facts, you did not apologize for the victims of the American torture, but went ahead putting the blame on only the “seven bad apples”. That did not STOP the torture or the human rights violations committed by your troops in Iraq. Reports are still coming in to date confirming that torture is being committed against the Iraqis in the American detention camps. I am sure that your advisors will tell you that this is necessary to protect the security of America, several thousands of miles away from Iraq.

Your partners in the “coalition of willing” are not doing any better! The British and Danish armies are both torturing Iraqi detainees. Now we discover through human rights reports that the “new Iraqi army,” created and trained by your government, is also torturing Iraqis. It is clear to me, Mr. President, that while we were tortured before the “liberation” by one force of evil, now we are being tortured by at least four evil forces after the “liberation.” It looks to me, Mr. President, as if, contrary to your announcement, the “torture chambers” may truly be here forever.

Allow me, Mr. President, to suggest that your blaming of “only seven apples” did set the legal precedent for every dictator in the world to escape the responsibility for torture and human rights violations. Like you, every dictator will pin the blame and the responsibility on the seven, ten, or twenty bad apples in his forces. I am sure that decent American legal scholars would tell you this excuse is very dangerous and would not stand in a proper and impartial court of law.

Actions are judged by the results and not rhetoric. Ordinary Iraqis, like your American soldiers, are faced with threats against their lives. The general lawlessness that still exists, as a result of your occupation of Iraq, makes the life of ordinary Iraqis miserable. We Iraqis are afraid to go out for fear of being kidnapped by criminal gangs roaming the country with an ineffective police force. We are also afraid of going out for fear that we

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might be killed by a bomb directed at your troops, or killed, or shot at by trigger-happy and nervous American troops.

The innocent Iraqi population is not using armored personal carriers, nor do they use armored cars to help them protect themselves. More innocent Iraqi civilians are killed by your troops shooting at them than those killed by the criminal gangs. You probably know, Mr. President, that your trigger-happy and nervous troops enjoy freedom from prosecution for these unlawful killings. From what I have witnessed those killers do not even stop to say “sorry” for their actions.

Allow me respectfully to remind you, Mr. President, that now more than 60% of the Iraqi work force in your “liberated” Iraq is unemployed as compared to 30% before your liberation. It looks like your action has doubled the number of Iraqis “liberated” from earning a decent pay or a decent work.

The U.S. Congress issued a report on Iraq at the end of June 2004. In that report they say that, in May 2003 (just after the invasion), 7 out of the 18 governorates had more than 16 hours of electricity per day. It also says that this number was reduced to one governorate in May 2004, one year after the invasion. Now, we are very lucky if we get 6 hours of electricity per day in Baghdad, a city of 5 million people.

Health services have continued to deteriorate during the past 22 months of occupation. Hospitals still lack even the simplest things. Drugs are not available. Fewer patients seek medical treatments or examination because of the security situation and the closed streets. Doctors are not safe at hospitals. They have been physically attacked by relatives of patients blaming, or venting their frustration on the poor helpless doctors.

Due to lack of security and poor police force, criminal gangs have kidnapped for ransom a few hundred doctors. Some were threatened. As a result, hundreds of highly qualified doctors have fled the country and it has resulted in a further deterioration of health services. These highly qualified doctors did not run away from the tyranny of the dictator, Mr. President, but because of the chaos and lawlessness in your “liberated Iraq.”

Records show, Mr. President, that the Iraqi government smuggled up to

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a hundred thousand barrels a day of refined diesel fuel through Turkey, with your government's knowledge. These figures indicate that the Iraqi refineries had an excess refining capacity allowing the country to export refined oil products.

During the "liberation" of Iraq, refineries were not targeted as they had been in 1991, so one assumes that the damage was minimal. I wonder why refineries are not fixed yet after 22 months of "liberation." I still cannot understand why Iraq continues to import refined oil products from Turkey, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia – and to my amazement from Israel. We Iraqis need to know why our money is being spent, unwisely, to import gasoline now, when we were an exporting nation. I might understand that Halliburton and KBR needed to import gasoline for a few months, but not after 22 months of "liberation."

In 1991, our refineries were severely damaged by the bombing. We the Iraqi people were able, despite the sanctions and without help from the Halliburtons, to fix the refineries in only a few months. We kept them working and going for 13 years and we were exporting products. Similarly the Iraqi people were able to restore the electricity in a few months. The Iraqi people reconstructed every building damaged by the war of 1991 in less than a year. Seeing the lack of any reconstruction efforts after 22 months of "liberation" makes me sad.

Mr. President, in 1991 America promised that Iraq will be returned to the "pre-industrial" age and they nearly did that by bombing and destroying everything. The Iraqi people surprised the world by reconstructing what was bombed. On top of that, new projects were implemented despite the sanctions. As an Iraqi this makes me extremely proud of our achievement in 1991. We the Iraqis set the standards of reconstruction. After 22 months of "liberation" and the lack of honest and visible reconstruction work I feel that America miserably failed to meet that standard.

For 13 years, Iraqis were living on food rations given by the government. We were told that our government was robbing us and providing us with only 2200 Kcal per day. The "liberated" government of Iraq after the liberation is still providing us with about 2200 Kcal per day of food rations.

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The government of Iraq used to spend about \$150 million a month to import and distribute the food rations. According to your CPA Inspector General, \$8.8 billion dollars were unaccounted for in one year. Mr. President, these \$8.8 billion are enough to feed all the people of Iraq for nearly 60 months. This fiscal irresponsibility and the lack of transparency in spending our money make me wonder about the aim of the “liberation” of Iraq. I’m sorry to say that the Iraqi people are being robbed blind. We are also being “liberated” from our wealth.

I am sure, Mr. President, that our traumatized kids will never forget what was done to their future by your “liberation.” I am sure that your kids will have to deal in the future with our traumatized kids. I am also sure that your kids will have to repay for all the damages and the stolen money. I can see that the price will be very high.

I do not want to be like the rest of your advisors giving you the rosy picture. They have told you about the WMD, the Al-Qaeda link, the 9/11 link, the Iraqis welcoming your troops as “liberators”... and it is proved that they were not telling you the truth. It is about time that you listen to other people.

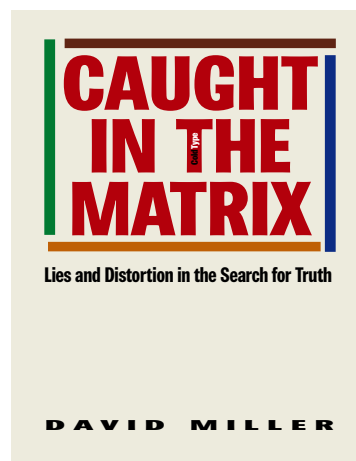
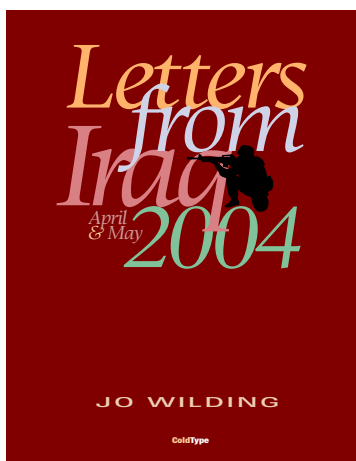
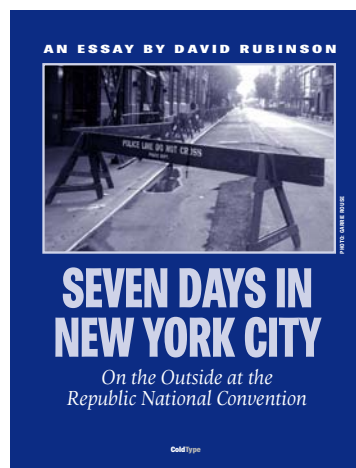
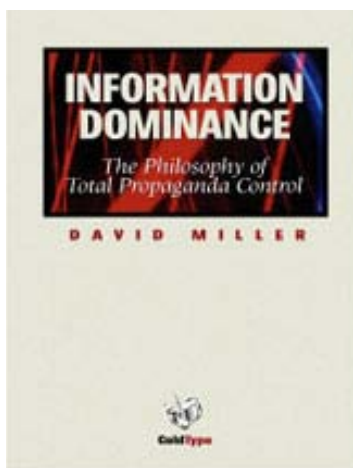
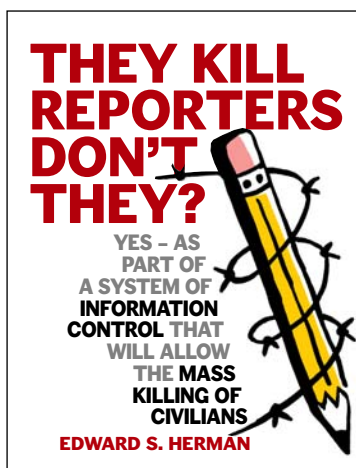
We do not hate America for its “freedom or democracy.” We don’t hate America. We hate the crimes, the destruction, and the devastation committed by America against the innocent people in our country.

Respectfully,

**Ghazwan Al-Mukhtar Baghdad, Occupied Iraq**



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