

The Political Forum

*A review of social and political trends and events
impacting the world's financial markets*

Mark L. Melcher
Publisher
melcher@thepoliticalforum.com

Stephen R. Soukup
Senior Editor
soukup@thepoliticalforum.com

Friday, March 14, 2003

A REPRINT FROM A PIECE PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 10, 1997

HOMO HOMINI LUPUS

Mark L. Melcher
Stephen R. Soukup

It will be two years in January that I wrote a piece entitled "Apocalypse Soon?," in which I discussed the views on terrorism of a friend of mine named Peter Probst, a former senior CIA employee, who now works in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as one of the nation's leading experts on the subject.

I see Peter quite often. First, because we are good friends. Second, because I am fascinated by the insights he offers into the vulnerability of Wall Street to the characters that populate the murky world with which he deals. And finally, because I have tried (unsuccessfully, I might add) to help raise funds for "The Institute for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence" that he and an impressive group of other internationally recognized experts on counter-terrorism have recently established.

You don't have to spend a lot of time with Peter, or with Buck Revell, the President of the Institute, to get a sense that such an enterprise is badly needed to act as an international clearinghouse for counter-terrorist activities and to facilitate information flow among the various groups, both private and public, that have been established around the world to respond to the growing terrorist threat to free societies everywhere.

Closer to home, Peter and Buck make a strong case that the infrastructure that supports the nation's financial markets is a likely target for terrorists, given the symbolic importance of Wall Street to capitalism and the real importance of Wall Street's function to the economy. Both men note that the financial industry is vulnerable also because of its dependence on computers and because the headquarters of so many of its leaders are grouped so closely together in Manhattan.

Buck, by the way, was an FBI agent for 30 years. For six of these, he was Associate Deputy Director (number three man in the Bureau), where he was in charge of, among other things, the agency's counter-terrorism program. The Institute also includes among its top officers, R. Gene

Subscriptions to The Political Forum are available by contacting:
The Political Forum

8563 Senedo Rd., Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842
Tel 540-477-9762, Fax 540-477-3359, Email melcher@thepoliticalforum.com,
or visit us at www.thepoliticalforum.com

Gately, a highly distinguished, retired CIA officer and diplomat. Among other things, Gene is now a senior fellow in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he advises on policy issues pertaining to special operations and low intensity conflict.

If this sounds like a commercial for the Institute, it is. The organization needs corporate sponsors, and if anyone knows any who might be interested in helping, please give me a call.

Anyway, I got to thinking about Peter's work and the Institute last Friday morning, while reading a *Washington Post* article on Saddam Hussein's amazing arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. Among other things, the *Post* said the following.

- ✍ Iraq has acknowledged making 2,265 gallons of anthrax, enough to kill billions.
- ✍ Iraq has produced 90 gallons of chlostridium perfringens, which cause gas gangrene, a potentially fatal series of lesions.
- ✍ Iraq initially denied that its work with ricin (a deadly toxin derived from castor beans) was related to any military effort, then claimed it was solely defensive in nature, and finally admitted packing the toxin into 155 mm artillery shells.
- ✍ Of the 182 munitions that Iraq admits having filled with germs and toxins, three have been recovered virtually intact and parts have been found for at least 23 more. The remainder have not been adequately accounted for, according to U.S. officials.

Now the Institute is primarily concerned with the use of such agents by terrorists rather than by governments. But when it comes to Saddam, this is probably a distinction without a difference. He is capable of either ordering his army to use these weapons in military assaults on such targets as American troops or Israel, or giving them to any one of a number of radical groups headquartered in the Middle East for use in conventional terrorist attacks anywhere in the world.

I don't often quote lengthy sections of former articles. But I think it might be worthwhile this week, in light of the situation in Iraq, to present some thoughts from a couple of old articles of mine. I'll begin with some quotes from Peter that appeared in that aforementioned piece two years ago.

Yet, the greater terrorist threat, in my view, is from biological agents. They are easy to obtain and virtually impossible to detect, intercept or counteract. They can be incredibly lethal. Only a few grams of pulmonary anthrax, which has something in the order of a 95 percent lethality rate, could take out a major government office complex.

The terrorist weapon of the future could, at first glance, appear to be an ordinary light bulb which, in actuality, is a preferred covert delivery method for biological agents.

Terrorists could take several such devices filled with pulmonary anthrax, and toss them onto the tracks of the Washington Metro. The bulbs would shatter and lethal spores would be carried throughout the system by the convection currents of the passing trains. They would cling to the clothing and shoes of the subway commuters who would track

it into their homes and offices. Thousands would aspirate the deadly spores. Thousands would die

An interesting point of fact: A Department of Defense contractor as an experiment recently posted an announcement on an Internet bulletin board that provided the formula for making Sarin The formula was genuine, except for some subtle omissions that would render the result harmless. In less than an hour, some 30 different messages were posted giving the correct formulation and pointing out the errors in the consultant's work

Through the manipulation or disruption of vital computer services, the communications infrastructure of virtually any highly industrialized country may be compromised. The results can be massive failure of the electric grid, the gas pipeline system, or vital transport. It is not difficult to imagine a city without electric power and the rapid slide into chaos that would follow if services could not be restored within two or three days. A well planned attack could leave a city without power for weeks or even longer.

The international banking and monetary systems are particularly vulnerable. Computer driven attacks could cause major disruptions of electronic fund transfers and the alternation or destruction of vital financial account information. Stock quotes could be altered. Buy and sell orders manipulated. Monies could be deposited to the wrong accounts, or in the wrong amounts, or simply disappear. . . .

I recently attended a conference sponsored by the Public Health Service called to discuss potential terrorist use of biological agents. Virtually every expert spoke in terms of 'where, when and how.' It is no longer a question of 'if.'

The odd thing about this final prediction is that if it turns out to be wrong, it will be because of people like Peter, Buck, and Gene, who work around the clock to prevent it, often at considerable personal risk. Ironically, the more successful they are in their efforts to thwart terrorists, the more skeptical an already skeptical public becomes about their warnings.

Even when it is widely publicized that someone like Saddam possesses huge stocks of biological weapons, it is difficult for some people to believe that he might actually use them for the purpose for which they were made, that is to kill millions of people. It is easier and more comfortable for them to believe that he has assembled this stockpile solely to enhance his negotiating position.

For this reason, I thought I would provide this week a few thoughts from a book entitled *Death by Government*, as a sort of a wake up call for Pollyannas everywhere. This is frightening tome published last year by Transaction Publishers. Through 400 horror-filled pages, it demonstrates, in no uncertain terms, some difficult truths about the nature of mankind; truths that, I believe should never be far from the consciousness of every American as he or she considers Peter Probst's warnings, and watches in coming months the actions of Saddam Hussein and Bill's reactions to them. These truths are as follows.

☞ That the unthinkable is eminently thinkable.

✍ That that which Hannah Arendt described in her extraordinary book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as the “banality of evil” is quite common in this day and age.

✍ That C. P. Snow was correct in noting that “civilization is hideously fragile and there’s not much between us and the horrors beneath, just about a coat of varnish.”

✍ In short, that it would be folly to believe that Saddam “wouldn’t do a thing like that.”

The author of the aforementioned book is R. J. Rummel, a political science professor at the University of Hawaii. According to Rummel, the 40 million war casualties of the 20th century are small potatoes when compared to the “almost 170 million men, women, and children [that] have been shot, beaten, tortured, knifed, burned, starved, frozen, crushed, or worked to death; buried alive, drowned, hung, bombed, or killed in any other of the myriad ways governments have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners.”

Even more shocking is the author’s contention that his estimates for the total number murdered (170 million) are fairly conservative. He writes that others have placed the death toll considerably higher. “The dead could conceivably be nearly 360 million people,” he says.

Rummel asserts that seven individual “megamurderers” were directly responsible in the 20th century for killing over 120 million civilians. They were: Stalin (42.7 million), Mao Tse-Tung (37.8 million), Hitler (20.9 million), Chiang Kai-shek (10.2 million), Lenin and Tojo Hideki (4 million each) and Pol Pot (2.4 million). The book tells of these crimes in often graphic detail. I will present just a few quotes from each.

✍ **Stalin and Lenin.** Together, these two were responsible for the murder of nearly 50 million people, the great majority of them citizens of the Soviet Union. Lenin was responsible for “only” four million or so of these, most of whom were slaughtered in his attempt to seize and consolidate power during and after the Revolution. He pales in comparison to Stalin. To put this in perspective, realize that Lenin is the fifth most prolific mass murderer in the history of the planet, and Stalin was 10 times his better. Rummel says this about the victims.

Some were from the wrong class - bourgeoisie, landowners, aristocrats, kulaks. Some were from the wrong nation or race - Ukrainians, Black Sea Greeks, Kalmyks, Volga Germans. Some were from the wrong political faction - Trotskyites, Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries. Some were their sons and daughters, wives and husbands, or mothers and fathers . . . Then some were simply in the way of social progress . . . and some were eliminated because of their potential opposition, such as writers, teachers, churchmen; or the military high command . . . In fact, we have witnessed in the Soviet Union a true egalitarian social cleansing and flushing; no group of class escaped. . . .

✍ **Mao Tse-Tung:** Rummel begins his discussion of the Chinese communists by noting that “cruelty and mass killing are a way of life in China.” Indeed, he says, “no other people in this century except Soviet citizens have suffered so much mass killing in cold blood as have the Chinese.” Mao himself is responsible, Rummel says, for the deaths of 37.8 million, including those he killed during his guerrilla period. Rummel says the following:

Indeed, from October 1949 to 1987, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) probably killed more than 35.2 million of its own subjects. These were “landlords” and “rich” peasants, “counterrevolutionaries” and “bandits,” “leftists,” “rightists,” and “capitalist roaders,” “bourgeoisie,” scientists, intellectuals, and scholars, Kuomintang “agents” and Western “spies,” “wrong” and “bad” elements, and often loved ones, relatives, and friends. Even babies.

Perhaps a way of better comprehending this is in terms of the rough risk of a citizen’s being killed by the Communist Party of China. Since 1949, conservatively, 45 out of every thousand people have been killed, or almost one out of every 20 men, women and children.

Collectivization of the peasants and the “Great Leap Forward” were among the bloodiest of the pogroms carried out by Mao. These two completely decimated China’s agricultural system and led to the world’s greatest recorded famine, which, according to Rummel, caused another 27 million deaths (not counted in the above total of 37.8 intentionally butchered).

✍ **Hitler:** History books generally quote the standard line of six million individuals murdered by Hitler. But this figure is misleading. Hitler did indeed murder nearly 6 million Jews. But his total number of victims is far greater. Given time and population constraints, the Nazis proved to be more prolific murderers than either the Soviets or the Chinese. Here’s Rummel.

Overall, by genocide, the killing of hostages, reprisal raids, forced labor, “euthanasia,” starvation, exposure, medical experiments, terror bombing, and in the concentration and death camps, the Nazis murdered . . . most likely close to 21 million men, women, handicapped, aged, sick, prisoners of war, forced laborers, camp inmates, critics, homosexuals, Jews, Slavs, Serbs, Czechs, Italians, Poles, Frenchmen, Ukrainians, and so on. Among them, were 1 million children under eighteen years of age.

✍ **Chiang Kasi-shek:** Although Chiang Kai-shek and his nationalist government are generally thought of by Westerners as being the good guys who resisted Mao and communism and established a nationalist beachhead on Formosa (Taiwan), he was no angel. In fact, Chiang committed gross atrocities and murdered millions of people. Indeed, had the nationalists been able to defeat the communists and maintain control of the government, Rummel speculates that Chiang may very well have been able to move up in the all-time murder rankings from fourth to first or second. Here’s how Rummel describes it.

In sum, from the earliest years to their final defeat on the mainland, the nationalists likely killed from less than 6 million to more than 18.5 million helpless people, probably around 10.2 million . . . This democide [Rummel’s word] is even more impressive when it is realized that the nationalists never controlled all of China, perhaps 50% to 60% of the population at most . . . Some of it was ideological, as with the communists . . . But ideology only explains part . . . Sheer lust for power . . . greed, corruption, fear of retribution (as from peasants who had grievances), and simple wanton disregard for human life were all part of a thoroughly perverted political system that bred lethal power jockeying, deadly status conflict, money grubbing at the expense of human lives, corruption as hundreds of thousands died of hunger, and lethal

incompetence . . . This system fostered mass murder. Add an ideological overlay to it, such as the need to exterminate a dangerous domestic enemy, such as the communists, or the desire to survive against a foreign enemy, like the Japanese, and a truly incredible democide is the result – slightly over 10.2 million people, more than the total population of Greece, or Belgium, or Cambodia.

☞ **Tojo Hideki:** Most people have long since forgotten this fact, but the war trials at Nuremberg were not the only such inquiry to take place after World War II. The Tokyo War Crimes Trials also uncovered grizzly details of mass murder perpetrated by a conquering army. This army was ultimately commanded by Premier Tojo Hideki. Unlike the Soviets or Chinese communists, whose murders were committed primarily in pursuit of ideological motives, or the Germans whose murders were perpetrated in the name of ethnic cleansing, the Japanese armies inflicted mass destruction on conquered peoples, in part, to deter resistance and, in part, for no apparent reason. Rummel writes.

Japanese armies and secret police killed defenseless people seemingly as a matter of tactics, expedience, convenience, revenge, recreation, and an utterly amoral disregard for human life and suffering . . . people were killed as an example to others who might oppose Japanese occupation. They were killed to erase a population supporting anti-Japanese guerrillas, to eliminate witnesses or a distraction (like a crying baby) to a looting or rape in process, to punish enemy soldiers who had surrendered for their cowardice, to avenge forgetting to bow to a Japanese soldier, to squeeze out the maximum labor from Asian and POW laborers at the minimum costs, to liquidate forced laborers too sick or broken for further toil, to experiment with bacteriological and chemical weapons, to train soldiers in killing, to practice rifle marksmanship or the use of the bayonet, or to revenge an attack on a soldier . . . or they were killed just for the fun of it . . . Rape, pillage, and murder were the order of the day.

☞ **Pol Pot:** Despite the mass exterminations carried out by the governments cited above, nothing can compare to Cambodia under Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge. The German, Soviet, and Chinese mass murders took place in nations with sufficient enough populations that overall demographic trends were not significantly affected by the deaths. Not so in Cambodia.

In proportion to its population, Cambodia underwent a human catastrophe unparalleled in this century. Out of a 1970 population of probably nearly 7.1 million, Cambodia probably lost almost 4 million people to war, rebellion, manmade famine, genocide, politicide, and mass murder. From democide alone, almost all concentrated in the years 1970 to 1980, successive governments and guerrilla groups murdered almost 3.3 million men, women, and children (including 35,000 foreigners). Most of these, probably close to 2.4 million, were murdered by the communist Khmer Rouge.

Our English vocabulary, as rich as it is, simply has no word for the kind of state that was created by the Khmer Rouge . . . Nor do we political scientists have a concept or theory for it. The closest I can come to describing the conditions and suffering of the Cambodian people under the Khmer Rouge is “hell state.”

It would be easy to argue that these atrocities were aberrations related to ideologies that have since perished; or that they happened “a long time ago” and, because of the lessons they taught humankind, could never happen again. Personally, I think such an argument would be tommyrot. But just in case there is disagreement on this matter, I will close with a more recent tale, one that is possibly more pertinent to the topic at hand.

It comes originally from a comprehensive report on human rights in Iraq, published by Middle East Watch in early 1990, well before the commencement of the Gulf War. These passages first appeared in these pages in the April 25, 1990 issue in a piece entitled “One Thing Gorby Can Count On In Lithuania, Is A Sympathetic Bush.” My complaint at the time was that the Bush administration was openly coddling Saddam, despite widespread knowledge that he was a mass murderer. I thought that this might lead to trouble.

In September and October 1985, some 300 Kurdish children and teenagers were reportedly arrested in Suleimanieh. The bodies of three children were reportedly found afterward on the outskirts of the city, bloodstained and bearing the marks of torture. Some of these children were transferred to a security prison in Baghdad, according to the testimony of a detainee released at the end of 1985, who described in these terms what he saw:

“Each hour, security men opened the door and chose 3 to 5 of the prisoners--children or men--and removed them for torture. Later, their tortured bodies were thrown back into the cell. They were often bleeding and carried obvious signs of whipping and electric shocks’ In January 1987, it was reported that 29 of these children had been executed and their bodies returned to their families, some with eyes gouged out and other marks of torture.”

Relative to chemical warfare, Middle East Watch relates the following:

The testimony repeated itself with numbing regularity in over two hundred interviews conducted by U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffers Peter Galbraith and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., in September 1988, with Kurdish refugees dispersed in five separate camps in southeastern Turkey.

Bechet Naif from Berkule village related the following. “At 6:00 a.m. on August 25, eight planes flew over our village. All eight dropped weapons When they dropped the bombs, a big sound did not come out--just a yellowish color and a kind of garlic smell. The People woke up, and some of them fainted. Those who poured water on themselves lived: those who could not reach the water died. I went into the river. Almost 50 women died. Some died who went to help their families. Seventy-five people died. My brother died”

The son of Iskender Ahmad said this. “Animals and children died. Blood came from their mouths and a yellow liquid from their mouths and noses. The noise did not sound like regular bombs. They would just drop and make a weak sound and then this cloud. Always expanding: a yellow cloud. Those who escaped managed to go to the water.”

Ramazan Mohammed, 19, from Mangesh, near De hok, in northern Iraq said: “The first body I saw when I came down from the heights was completely black. I heard the cries of a few survivors which were incomprehensible . . . Most of the people there were sprawled around dead. There must have been many more than 3,000. They were all huddled together in family groups, and they had died like that . . . We spent the night in the mountains, and I didn’t know how it passed, I have never, never been so scared in all my life . . . [The next day] I had binoculars and saw thousands of soldiers with gas masks and gloves entering the gorge. From my hiding place, I saw them dragging bodies into piles and then setting fire to them. I saw over a hundred fires.”

According to Middle East Watch:

Many of the men were, by their own admission, Barzani Pesh Merga guerrillas. But the great majority of victims were unarmed civilians, including women, children and the elderly, because, according to the testimony of the refugees, Iraqi warplanes and helicopters for the most part did not drop their bombs on the Pesh Merga camps but on nearby villages.

THE POLITICAL FORUM

Copyright 2002. The Political Forum. 8563 Senedo Road, Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842, tel. 540-477-9762, fax 540-477-3359. All rights reserved. Information contained herein is based on data obtained from recognized services, issuer reports or communications, or other sources believed to be reliable. However, such information has not been verified by us, and we do not make any representations as to its accuracy or completeness, and we are not responsible for typographical errors. Any statements nonfactual in nature constitute only current opinions which are subject to change without notice.