



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

While few right-minded people, today, would condemn the good intentions of the US Government in its fight against international terrorism, at the same time, few right-minded people, today, would want to ponder the question of the legality of many of the actions of the US Government, especially in its determination to launch a military attack on Iraq on March 19, 2003. It would not be good politics so to do, would it? At 9:34 p. m., Eastern Standard Time (5:34 a.m. Baghdad time, on March 20), United States and United Kingdom military forces, consisting of 40 cruise missiles and strikes, led by 2 F-117s from the 8th Fighter Squadron (supported by Navy EA-6B Prowlers) and other aircraft, began conducting military operations against the sovereign State of Iraq. Those military operations were designed to disarm Iraq of its alleged weapons of mass destruction and to remove the then Iraqi Regime from power. Confucius put such actions in the following manner: 'Doing ignoble deeds with an outwardly noble heart (好心做壞事)'. The fact that many countries determined to support the US Administration, only after it had successfully crushed the former brutal dictatorship of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq in the manner of a hot knife, slicing through soft butter, means very little, actually, because the deed had been done and, for political reasons, it was to the advantage of supporting countries of the Bush Administration to appear, outwardly, to be a friend of the world's only superpower. After all, what goodies might flow from an alliance with the most-powerful nation of the world? Also, as President George W. Bush had stated, on many occasions, leading up to the military invasion of Iraq: You are either a friend of the United States or you are an enemy of the United States. No sitting on a fence, peering at both sides, as far as the most-powerful man in the world is concerned. Questions are still being raised as to whether or not the US Government acted illegally in that it did not have the sanction of the United Nations, or even its tacit approval, to allow its course of action to be condoned by this world body, whose mandate is to achieve world peace. Even the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, has gone on record, stating that the US Government's act of attacking Iraq was illegal. The United Nations is supposed to be an international organisation of nation-states, based on the sovereign equality of its members. Members are pledged to settle international disputes by peaceful means, to refrain from the threat or use of force, to assist the United Nations in actions, ordered under the Charter; to refrain from assisting any country against which such United Nations action is being taken, and to act in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations is noble, to be sure, but, it seems, a little too onerous for the Bush Administration to accept ... in full, at least. With God at its side and brandishing the sword of truth and righteousness, the United States has, for some time, been making unilateral determinations on an international scale in the manner of the Crusades of the 11th Century to the 13th Century when the rallying call went out to recapture the Holy Lands from the Muslims. With Papal sanction, tens of thousands of non-Christians were slaughtered by Christian knights, all the deaths said to be in the name of righteousness and with a Christian purity of heart. But dead is dead, regardless of the flowery incantations sung as the death blow is struck. The Crusades, of course, also financially and politically bolstered popes, who sought to extend their power. The Crusades, also, offered opportunities for land-hungry knights and noblemen, and provided rich commercial incentives to merchants. His Holiness Pope Urban II started the Crusades ball rolling – and it did not stop until nearly three hundred years later. In the case of the attack on Iraq

in March 2003, as is, now, history, the US Government, along with its close ally, the United Kingdom, attacked oil-rich Iraq on the grounds that President Saddam Hussein had a stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. There were none ever found so that it could be said, generously, that the US rightfully attacked Iraq for the wrong reasons. Had President George W. Bush waited for a United Nations Security Council vote on the matter of a military incursion into Iraq, it might have resulted in a United Nations force, being sent into in, with, probably, the same result as was accomplished by the overwhelming might of the United States military expedition. As the world's self-proclaimed 'umpire' of what is right and fitting, internationally, it would not be unfair to state that the United States is not following the law or the rules of engagement, such law and rules, which the US Government is sworn to uphold. Because of the internationalisation of the world in which we, all, live, it is no longer correct to state that might is right, as the Greek philosopher, Gorgias, had proclaimed in the Fourth Century B.C. Such a concept is obsolete and, in the fullness of time, the US Government will come to learn this lesson, too.

One wonders when the United States will turn its attentions to Brunei and/or The Republic of Maldives. Both of these sovereign states are dictatorships of the best kind, too. Brunei, which used to be a British protectorate, but which has been fully independent since 1984, has been ruled by one man since the British left the three hundred thousand, mainly Malay population, to be ruled by the Sultan, who is reputed, today, to be the richest man on earth: Sultan Muda Hassanal Bolkiah. The Sultan of Brunei collects all of the country's oil wealth for himself even though it should, by international law, be considered the property of the country. The Sultan of Brunei travels round the world, making investments for himself and reaping the benefits of these investments for himself. Meanwhile, there is abject poverty in the country. The Sultan of Brunei has refused, outright, even to consider the adoption of democratic principles for his fiefdom. As for The Maldives, it, too, was a British protectorate, which was given full independence in 1965. It has a population, which is slightly less than three hundred thousand people, all of whom are said to be devout Muslims. The Maldives used to be a Sultanate, but reverted to a Republic in 1968. It has been ruled by the present President, Maumoon Abd al-Gayoom, who has been in power for the past thirty seven years. For what reason has not the international 'umpire' considered applying pressure on the Sultanate of Brunei and/or The Republic of Maldives? In both states, if foreign commercial interests are desirous of establishing business ties, it is a requirement that the governments, or members of the governments, become silent partners of the prospective enterprises, more by crook than by hook. The US Government could, if it so desired, find ample reason to invade these two sovereign states, both of which have little in the way of defences: It would be a walkover for the military might of the United States. What, then, withholds the Bush Administration from bringing up this matter in the United Nations in order to bring about the liberation the peoples of these two countries in the same way that President George W. Bush claimed that he liberated the people of Iraq? If righteousness and the spread of democratic principles are among the ultimate goals of the United States, as President George W. Bush continuously maintains, here, then, are two countries, which are both in need of a good dose of these virtues.

The United States has, from time to time, issued Executive Orders. These Executive Orders permit the legalisation of all manner of acts, whether or not there is a legal basis for the execution of such acts. An Executive Order can, with the stroke of a pen, make an otherwise illegal act become, immediately, legal. Executive Order Number 13315, for instance, was used in the recent impounding of assets of the Syrian-based company, SES International Corporation. In an official, US Government announcement, issued just last week, the US Department of The Treasury said that it had determined that SES International Corporation and two senior officials of this organisation had 'acted on behalf of Saddam Hussein's fallen regime. SES International Corp., based in Damascus, General Zuhayr Shalish and Asif Shalish were designated today pursuant to Executive Order 13315, which is aimed at blocking property of the former Iraqi regime, its senior officials and their family members and those who act for or on their behalf.' Mr Stuart Levey, Under Secretary of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, said, about this matter: 'Zuhayr and Asif used SES as a vehicle to put military goods into the hands of Saddam Hussein and his regime, all while evading UN sanctions.' SES is said to be owned by General Zuhayr Shalish and managed by Asif Shalish. SES acted as a false end-user for the Saddam Hussein Regime of Iraq, 'helping to procure defense-related goods for the Iraqi military', the US Government's announcement alleged. The announcement went on to state: 'As a Syrian company, SES was able to provide exporters in multiple countries with end-user certificates indicating Syria, rather than Iraq, as the final destination for the exported goods. SES would then arrange for the items to be transshipped to Iraq, which

allowed the Iraqi regime to obtain military goods in contravention of UN sanctions.' The announcement goes on to state the names of the individuals which SES, allegedly, assisted, including the late son of Saddam Hussein, Uday Saddam Hussein, and the former Iraqi Presidential Secretary, Mr Abid Hamid Mahmud al-Tikriti. 'According to information available to the US Government, Zuhayr was involved in efforts to help Abid Hamid Mahmud al-Tikriti flee Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. There is reason to believe he offered to help Hussein's younger son, Qusay Saddam Hussein, leave Iraq ...'. The information, contained in the US Government announcement of June 9, 2005, has been passed to the United Nations. Whether or not the US Government is correct in respect of the above is one matter, but I note that, in this case, the presumption of guilt is made, prior to the accused, being able to face his accuser in order to try to defend himself. If the latest action is based on intelligence of the kind, which caused President George W. Bush to push that red button, which launched Operation Iraqi Freedom, then, the US Government has caused unnecessary and unwarranted hardships on the accused and some sixteen members of the respective families of the accused. The US Government, by its determination, contained in its announcement of June 9, 2005, has stated, in fact: 'You are guilty! Now, prove your innocence!' This is a little different from the concept of English Common Law where an accused is presumed innocent until proved guilty. It is another example of the international umpire, calling the shots, and, then, asking the United Nations to legalise its unilateral act against a corporate entity, domiciled in the sovereign state of Syria, and against one of that country's senior generals. This is arse backwards, isn't it? Should not the United States gather the evidence, first, and, then, present it to the Security Council of the United Nations, and, then, ask the members of the Security Council to make a determination as to the best course of action that should be taken? Is not the United Nations the world's umpire, not the United States?

*Well, I must go, now.
Talk to you next week.*

Chief Lady

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