

The article below was written by columnist George Will and appeared in the editorial section of the Post Dispatch on September 25, 2002. The date is important, since no one has really an idea of what might transpire between this date the date when you read the article It is a crucial moment in history because President Bush is seriously considering the option of sending troops to Iraq and “take out” Saddam Hussein. England is America’s staunchest ally in this policy, but the many countries in the United Nations are not in agreement and most prefer arms inspection in Iraq by qualified UN weapons inspectors.

George Will is an articulate, conservative journalist. Read carefully his arguments for going to war. For our study of the Holocaust, take special note of his reference to Hitler’s Nazi troops march into the Rhineland On March 7, 1936, an area demilitarized under the Versailles Treaty and occupied by French troops. The French were continuously fearful that Germany would cross the Rhine river in the future and attack their country. There was no resistance from Britain and France: Britain felt he was not expanding Germany's border and France wouldn't attack alone

Note how George Will makes a comparison between what happened then and what could happen now, if we continue to do nothing about Saddam’s apparent arms build-up of weapons of mass destruction.

Before reading the article, find out more about what happened in Germany on March 7, 1936:

Go to the Web Site: <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch19.htm>

And read the section **Hitler Marches his Military to the Rhine**

Many historians strongly believe that Hitler could have been easily conquered and permanently demoralized. His army was indeed not ready for a large scale confrontations with military powers such as France and Great Britain. Hitler was worried too as the quote included in Will’s article indicates: the 48 hours after entering the Rhineland were considered by Hitler “the most nerve-wracking” of his life.

Hitler now had proof that Europe’s leading nations would not stand in his way. Do you know what other countries he took over before World War 11 broke out on September 1, 1939? Check you notes from other readings or check out another web site.

NOW READ THE ARTICLE *DISASTER HAPPENS WHEN ACTION COMES TOO LATE.*

Disasters Happen When Action Comes Too Late

by George Will

Sen. John Kerry, the Massachusetts Democrat who aspires to be the 44th president, accuses the 43rd of “hasty war talk.” The adjective “hasty” suggests impetuosity. But in New Hampshire on Dec. 2, 1999, he said: “If I found in any way, shape or form that (Saddam Hussein) was developing weapons of mass destruction, I’d take ‘em out.” Although he spoke of disarming Iraq, not “regime change,” surely after more than a decade of U.N. impotence regarding disarmament of Iraq, the burden of proof is on those who say disarmament can be achieved without regime change.

In 1999, Bush said the trigger for pre-emptive action against Iraq should be not just Iraq’s acquisition of such weapons, but Iraqi progress in “developing” them. Hence the importance of evidence that Iraq, which has endured sanctions costing it upward of \$200 billion rather than permit weapons inspections, has been buying hardware needed to develop nuclear weapons.

Those who are most skeptical about the justification for military action to depose Saddam pass over his possession of chemical and biological weapons, and ask: Is his acquisition of nuclear weapons “imminent?” But skeptics must answer this question: Suppose U.S. forces topple Saddam and discover that instead of having been one year away from acquiring such weapons, he had been, say, four years away. For what, exactly, would America have to apologize?

France and Britain chose not to enforce Germany’s obligations on March 7, 1936, when Hitler held his breath and remilitarized the Rhineland, in violation of the treaties of Versailles and Locarno. Calling the 48 hours after his three battalions entered the Rhineland “the most nerve-wracking” of his life, Hitler said: “If the French had marched into the Rhineland we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs.” France and Britain shrank from supporting Czechoslovakia during the 1938 crisis over the Sudetenland. Hitler finally met military resistance in September 1939. The following five years confirmed Douglas MacArthur’s axiom that all military disasters are explained by two words: “Too late.” Too late in discerning threats, too late in countering them.

It took terrorist attacks to galvanize the Bush administration. But even without the attacks, it would have been justified in preparing, as Tuesday’s *Los Angeles Times* reported, to implement the policy Bush foreshadowed as a candidate.

The Times says the military buildup around Iraq included weaponry and supplies for the 30,000 troops already in the region, and that 150,000 fully equipped troops “could be routed to the region well before Christmas.” In addition to signing “big contracts for commercial air and sea cargo space,” the military has “bought and built more, faster and better ships and aircraft – enough to cut by more than two-thirds the time it should take to deploy a large military force to Iraq.” Such measures are a prudent response to MacArthur’s axiom.

There is an interesting twist to this. Germany recently (September, 2002) re-elected Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on a platform which strongly promised that Germany would not ally itself in a war against Iraq, led by the United States. Germany, one of our very strongest allies over the years after World War II, has rarely not sided with the US

in important international issues. Germany, for example, bombed Belgrade during the war over Kosovo. Why the change?

Germany is becoming more confident as it moves father and father away in time and memory from the Holocaust. Whole generations have since lived without having a direct connection to the Nazi past, albeit as part of a history course in high school. We all too often here young people say: "I did not live at that horrific time, why blame me." Thus many young Germans are pacifist who abhor war. A justice minister recently made the inappropriate analogy of comparing American policy in Iraq to Hitler's rape of humanity. This would not have been possible 20 or even 10 years ago. To be sure the analogy was very tactless, but the minister wanted to make a point about the new Germany. What do you think the objective of this statement was?

Here is one answer: American-style democracy is so imbedded in German society today and it is a unified country (thanks to US support for unification) that, having successfully taught the Germans not to follow any other *Fuehrer* blindly, they are also not willing to follow another leader—even American President George W. Bush—blindly.