



# AFTERMATH: THE FIRST GULF WAR

By Samuel Helfont and Ron Granieri March 8, 2021

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**Ron Granieri:** Welcome to A Better Peace, the War Room podcast. I'm **Ron Granieri**, Professor of History at the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College and Podcast Editor of the War Room. It is a pleasure to have you with us. 30 years ago, U.S. and coalition forces celebrated the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in what Americans continued to refer to as the Gulf War. The rapid and apparently overwhelming victory made possible by the decision to limit coalition objectives to driving the Iraqi Army back to Iraq, inspired both spasms of American patriotism and geopolitical optimism about what President George H.W. Bush called a “new world order.” It didn't take long, however, for optimism to fade. The survival of Saddam Hussein's regime, a decade of interminable wrangling over sanctions, mounting evidence of humanitarian catastrophe, and the collapse of the International Coalition in the aftermath of 9/11, finally led to the 2003 Iraq War, which marked both the end of American geopolitical optimism and the beginning of a new era of overstretch, frustration and decline. In the face of that sad story, the Gulf War itself has remained a good war, a success in contrast with later failures. Even the Army War College uses it as the case study for its Introduction to Strategic Studies. And yet, how can we call the Gulf War a success when so many failures followed it? What decisions made during and in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War contributed to subsequent disasters, and how does the whole thing look from the distance of 30 years? To address these questions, we're joined today on A Better Peace by **Dr. Samuel Helfont** whose article “The Gulf Wars: Afterlife, Dilemmas, Missed Opportunities, and the post-Cold War Order Undone” appears in the spring 2021 issue of the Texas National Security Review. Dr. Helfont, an Iraq war veteran, is an assistant professor of strategy and policy in the Naval War College's program at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. He is the author of “Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgency in Iraq,” from Oxford University Press and his current book project, “Iraq against the World,” examines Iraq's international strategies from 1990 to 2003 and their impact on the post-Cold War order. He holds a PhD in Near Eastern studies from Princeton University, and we are delighted to have him with us today. Welcome to A Better Peace, Dr. Helfont.

**Dr. Samuel Helfont:** Thanks Ron, thanks for having me.

**RG:** It's great to have you here, Sam. So how has the legacy of the Gulf War changed over the past 30 years?

**SH:** Well, I think you hit the nail on the head with your introduction. At first it was a glaring success. Everybody looked at it as a model. There's been actually a lot of studies, not just at the Army War College which you mentioned, but elsewhere looking at the Gulf War as a model for what the U.S. could do. The critiques early on of the Gulf War were actually that it was too successful and that the United States had over-learned the lessons of the Gulf War which made us not prepared for things like insurgency because we just wanted to keep on fighting the Gulf War because we did that so well. Over the years, I think, especially in the last 20 years, a little bit less than that, since 2003, people have begun to rethink the Gulf War. As you have the title of your podcast here, A Better Peace, which of course, comes from the famous strategist. But if the idea of war is to create a better peace, then we have to think about what the Gulf War actually did. What did it leave us with? Sure, there were some successes. We got out of Kuwait. We got the Iraqis out of Kuwait, which was one of the major goals of the war, but it left us in a quagmire which we haven't really been able to escape for now more than three decades. And if we're judging war by the type of peace that we created, then the Gulf War doesn't look as good in retrospect. Right away, as you mentioned, we fell into this problem of Saddam still being there and doing all these things that we didn't want him doing and we struggled to figure out a way to deal with that. It's almost as if we're looking at the legacy over the past 30 years, it started very high and it's been a slow descent ever since.

**RG:** In your piece, you talk about decisions that were made during the war and also decisions that were made in the immediate aftermath. I want to talk about this idea of, what do you think the United States did right, if this is an appropriate term, in the aftermath of the war, and what did we do wrong?

**SH:** There are number of things that the U.S. did right especially in the lead up to the war and during the war. Everything went through the United Nations. This was diplomacy done very well. The Bush administration pulled together the largest coalition since World War II and they had a fairly clear operational—and even up to the strategic level—purpose, military strategy at least: removing the Iraqis from Kuwait. And then of course at the tactical and operational level this was absolutely a brilliant war. Everything went so much better than even the most optimistic observers had predicted prior to the war. It turned out that American and Western more generally, tactics and equipment performed far beyond the way that anyone had expected. So that was really great. During the war and in the lead up to the war, there were some errors. There were some things that weren't as clear as they probably could have been. Even if we look at the objectives, we look at policy and strategy objectives, the now-declassified planning documents that came out—The National Security Directives—there was one in August for the Gulf crisis, that was National Security Directive 45 and then there was one right before the war in January,

which was National Security Directive 54. They layout four objectives and they're generally to remove Saddam's forces from Kuwait, establish peace and stability, the normal types of things. Now Bush made a speech on September 11<sup>th</sup> in 1990 where he laid out what he called a fifth objective, and this was "the new world order." And this became the sort of backbone of American diplomacy. Hey, we're fighting this war, but it's not just to fight a war against Saddam, it's not just over Kuwait because there were some questions from both the United States and internationally, well, is this really worth it? Is Kuwait worth it? They sold us a lot of oil that was great. But hey, Iraq will sell us oil now. There were some quips by senior administration officials that leaked out to the press and were later shown to be accurate descriptions where they said, you know, Kuwait is just a gas station. So we have Exxon Mobil, now we have Total. What's the difference? We can buy our gas from a different place. And so the value of sending all these troops and spending all these resources and possibly losing a lot of lives was that going to be worth it for liberating Kuwait? Well it became worth it when you have a new world order at stake. The entire post-Cold War system gets bound up in this war. It's not just a war over Kuwait. This is the fifth objective that Bush talks about, this new world order. The Cold War is coming to an end, what sort of world do we want after the Cold War is over? Do we want a world where we have the rule of law? We have a rules-based system, we have the Security Council finally functioning in the way it was supposed to function with binding resolutions which are enforced by the international community. And Iraq became the test case for all those. The problem is, none of those objectives, that fifth objective that Bush made, none of that made it into the military planning documents. He only left four objectives. So he creates four objectives in August. He announces this fifth objective very publicly and talks about it with everyone who's rallying this coalition, and then he comes out with his planning document, NSD 54, in January, which leaves off the 5th objective. And everything is down to military efficiency. What can we do militarily to remove the Iraqis from Kuwait? What that does is it doesn't get military planners thinking along the lines of what happens next? What's the war termination plan? How does the world look and how are we going to set up a new world order? A few things didn't happen. One is the war termination plan, but also some of the operational planning, especially by the Air Force, did a lot of damage in Iraq which was probably unnecessary and wasn't compatible with building this new world order because you left a humanitarian crisis in the country afterwards.

**RG:** Well and that gets to an interesting question. Would have it been possible to build a new world order—if say Bush had wanted to include that in the objectives—would have it been possible to do that and leave Saddam Hussein in power?

**SH:** That is a big question. And here the Bush administration had a huge dilemma on its hands. First of all, it didn't have the authority to remove Saddam Hussein. That couldn't have been a military objective because the UN didn't authorize that. And if this was going to be a war based on the new world order and rule of law and all that sort of thing, the UN hadn't authorized regime change. Also, a lot of American allies weren't so excited about removing Saddam

Hussein. As bad as he was for the Saudis and some of the other Gulf coalition members, they understood that Iraq was a majority Shia country and that Iran was just next door. Everything that we've seen post-2003 and they weren't so interested in seeing a regime change to that extent. That doesn't mean that Bush didn't try. They did try. During the war the idea was, hey, we can decapitate the regime, just take Saddam out in a missile strike or bombing raid and they tried from day one to do that. They also thought if they weaken the regime enough, that Saddam will fall to some sort of internal forces. So there seemed to be some idea, it was never stated bluntly, but there seems to be an idea that Bush administration wanted regime change. They thought regime change would occur somehow, and they didn't really plan for Saddam to be around for very much longer after the war. Clearly, the ideal situation for Bush if they were going to have a new world order would have been for a general or somebody else to step in, remove Saddam in some sort of internal bloodless palace coup and take over, but then cooperate with the world. That would have been the most optimistic thing.

**RG:** That would have been ideal, right? An assassination or a bloodless coup in the middle of a bloody war would have been very convenient.

**SH:** Whether or not they could have ever had a new world order or something that was helping build towards a new world order with Saddam in place is open for debate. There were some decisions made very soon after the war was over in the spring and summer of 1991 that the U.S. was going to press forward with policies that were designed to basically remove Saddam from power. The sanctions and the way the sanctions were built removed any sort of role for the Iraqi regime in governing the country. So they had a strict embargo and there were plans from the summer of 1991 on to supply the population with food and medicine, but they cut Saddam out of that out of that deal, and he wasn't willing to abide by that game that the Bush administration was playing because it was clear that they were simply trying to eliminate him. There is an open question: once it became clear that Saddam wasn't leaving, if the Bush administration had adjusted in the summer of 1991, there were some options put forward from the UN and other members of the Security Council to figure out a way to bring Saddam back into the fold. And whether that would have worked, we don't know. As historians we can't look back and say, hey, this would definitely have worked or this wouldn't have worked, but there were some options there that weren't tried, to give up on this idea of regime change and then work towards a different policy.

**RG:** And that's actually the thing about historians. I can't tell you what's the right thing to do now, but I can tell you 10 years from now why what you decided was inevitable. And I can also tell you that you did it wrong. But I am fascinated. In your article, which of course we recommend to all of our listeners, you talk about the UN's proposal for humanitarian assistance to Iraq and how that became the Oil-for-Food Programme that the United States was willing to

accept. Can you briefly explain what the difference was between what the UN had proposed initially and what eventually ended up happening?

**SH:** Sure. So the secretary general designated a man named Sadruddin Aga Khan, who was a kind of senior UN statesman to go to Iraq in the summer, in July of 1991, and figure something out, figure out some sort of sustainable future for Iraq. What's going to happen? So he goes to Iraq and he sees what happened there during the war. There was a strategic bombing campaign that occurred during the war. The Air Force felt that they could win the war just by attacking strategic targets, not necessarily the Iraqi military, but infrastructure and means of revenue and other things like power plants, which sort of have the Iraqi regime implode during the war. And this way you don't have to worry about the military because the whole regime has already imploded. Well what that did is it left just a landscape of disaster in Iraq. People struggled to find clean water. There were disease outbreaks and sanctions were making this worse. And then when Sadruddin Aga Khan comes back to the UN, he says this is the situation: we don't have enough money to rebuild Iraq, to handle this humanitarian situation. There's no way that outside donors are going to be able to meet the needs of the Iraqis. The only way to do this is to use Iraq's own resources, its own oil, to finance Iraqi rebuilding. And he created a scheme with the Iraqis where everything would be monitored through banks in the United States but basically Iraq would be able to sell its oil and this was actually allowed under the relevant UN resolutions, because Iraq was allowed to meet its humanitarian needs, even if it was to sell its resources (that was allowed on the embargo). It just had to be approved by the sanctions committee. So he comes back and says, hey, we can do this. We have monitoring mechanisms. Iraq and sell its oil through these mechanisms. They'll get humanitarian supplies. We'll be able to see what they're buying with this, so they can't buy weapons or anything like that and they can start rebuilding their country, at least supplying humanitarian needs, immediate humanitarian use for the people. The U.S. didn't like this because the U.S. was still under the mindset of, no, we can't re-empower Saddam. If we give him this money back and we give him the ability to do distribute resources and whatever else inside Iraq, then this is going to allow him to sort of re-entrench his regime, and we don't want that. So we came up with an Oil-for-Food scheme, which was in August, so the month after. The U.S. blocked that proposal by Sadruddin and came up with its own proposal, which was basically the same thing except the UN would distribute the food and humanitarian resources. So the UN would sell Iraq's oil, the UN would then take that money, buy whatever supplies were needed for rebuilding the country, and the UN would distribute those supplies and goods within Iraq. So this all sounded much better to the Bush administration. They were the ones who came up with this and it passes at the UN, everyone sort of goes along with it even though there were some members on the Security Council who preferred Sadruddin's proposal, but they go along with it and they run straight into a brick wall where the regime says, we're not doing that. If you're cutting us out, we're not cooperating, and the Americans are kind of looking around and say, hey, listen, people are starving in your country and Saddam goes, I don't care

and this is a violation of our sovereignty. It's humiliation and we're not going to do it. So the U.S. and its allies, including the French and the Russians at this point all blame Saddam. They don't put any blame on the United States or the sanctions. They say if Saddam wants to feed his people, he can. We have this Oil-for-Food Programme. So it seemed that the U.S. was winning diplomatically. But over the long term for a country like Iraq with a regime that simply doesn't care about the welfare of its own people, they're going to win. What I say in the article is you end up with the United States playing a game of chicken with the population of the Iraqi people against Saddam's regime. The difference is that the United States cares at least more so than Saddam does about the fate of the Iraqi people, so the U.S. is not going to win that game and over the long term, it doesn't.

**RG:** Well, and here I think this is a one of the problems when we talk about sanctions as an alternative to kinetic hard power solutions to problems is on the one hand the argument for sanctions is, it's a way to coerce a regime without having to blow things up, and that's very appealing and it is appealing on humanitarian grounds. However, sanctions have direct humanitarian impacts, and if you're dealing with a regime that is more than happy to use its people suffering as a way to sort of counter coerce. As you mentioned in your article and in your other research, Saddam realized he could use the "weapons of the weak." He could make the United States do things or not do things by mobilizing public opinion about the damage being done to the Iraqi people, even if he himself doesn't really care about the Iraqi people. None of this should have been a surprise to the people in Washington, but how do we explain the unwillingness of decision makers in Washington, either in the Bush administration or later on in the Clinton administration, to their unwillingness to just say, there's a limit to what we can coerce the Iraqi regime to do because we know we don't want to fight another war. Instead of emphasizing sanctions, even perhaps we should just be shifting towards some form of normalization.

**SH:** So there's a few things going on here that help to answer this question in my humble opinion. First is that this is all new. Sanctions had been designed... Actually, it's sort of depressing to look at the evolution of international opinion on sanctions really coming from out of this experience with Iraq in the 1990s. Sanctions had been designed, these international sanctions the type that were applied to Iraq in 1990, were really developed by peace activists and anti-war activists over the late 19th and through the 20th century as an alternative to war. And when the UN was developed, they had this sanctions regime built into it. The problem was that as soon as the UN comes into being, the Cold War sets in and no one can agree to apply this type of sanctions. There are a few cases when the UN tried to enforce its Security Council resolutions. One was the fluke case of Korea when the Soviets were boycotting temporarily and then there was the case of Rhodesia, which everyone agreed that this was just appalling, but it was too small to really be an example. So you get to 1990 and now all the sudden, the Soviets and the Americans are on the same side and say, hey, we can do this. So this is not really just about Iraq.

This is about a tool that was developed over a century to be an alternative to war. And they weren't really sure how it was going to work. No one would have known that it was going to work because they hadn't really used it yet. It was very blunt. Now we have developed smart sanctions which are more targeted, using a scalpel dressed as a sledgehammer. I think that Obama used to say that, but they didn't have any of that back then. They just had sanctions, blanket sanctions across the entire country. Or a blanket embargo, a kind of World War I type scenario. So on one hand you have to cut the Bush Administration and Clinton administration some slack—they simply didn't know. This is a new tool and they weren't sure how it was going to work. The second way I would explain this is—it's very similar, very closely related to what I just said—that this wasn't necessarily just about Iraq. This was about this new tool and this new way of organizing the world. Iraq was the internationalist with Bush and then Clinton, they really planted their flag. Especially the George W. Bush administration, they said, this is what the world is going to look like and we're going to show you by what we're going to do in Iraq. We're going to show you that international sanctions can work. We're going to show you that the Security Council resolutions can be enforced in a way that upholds international law. So what you end up with is a situation where you can't really back down off that because you're not just giving up your policy on Iraq, now all of a sudden you're giving up claims you've made about world order itself, about a much broader set of policies and goals which go far beyond whether Saddam Hussein stays or goes, whether he lets inspectors in or doesn't, it has to do really with what kind of world do you want to see in this post-Cold War period, which is what makes Iraq different than somewhere like Somalia where no one ever said, hey, Somalia is going to be the center of the new world order and when Somalia went bad, the U.S. just left and just said, that's it, we're done. But they couldn't do that in Iraq because they had tied Iraq to all these broader, grand strategic ideas about world order.

**RG:** So is it fair then to say, based on what you just said, that the Bush administration basically set a trap for itself by over hyping the advantages of the war in Iraq or can we say that they misunderstood the amount of work that would go into actually making this vision for a new world order centered on the transformation of Iraq to work?

**SH:** I think both of those can be true. They didn't understand what this was going to take. They didn't understand how resilient Saddam was going to be and because of that, they set a trap for themselves and they set it up for themselves in a number of ways. This new world order that Bush talked about, it wasn't just about the rule of law and the UN, it was also supposed to be a kinder, gentler world, a more humane world. You see these discussions by UN officials and Security Council, and even the Secretary General says, this is not really war as we know it. Even if we have to use military force, this is not going to be like other wars because we're doing this in the name of international law and enforcement and this is going to reduce, undo suffering by people of the world. So in some ways, Bush allowed these expectations to be set very high, really unrealistically high I think. And Bush had no intention of carrying out a war which was

going to reduce suffering in the way that was being discussed. And also tying it to these broader, bigger ideas, it was a double-edged sword. One, it let him sell the war in a way that he wouldn't have been able to sell it before. This was something that was actually hotly debated in the United States. It barely passed the Authorization for the Use of Force in Congress. And you can argue that had he not tied it to these broader ideas, it probably wouldn't have passed. People would say what are we doing there in Kuwait? Why do we care about Kuwait? But if it's about what the post-Cold War looks like, about cooperation with Gorbachev and the Soviets and building this kind of idealistic new world order, then all of a sudden it makes sense. Now the value of the objective is much higher for us, and we're willing to expend our resources on a project like that. But they didn't understand what the follow-through was going to entail.

**RG:** I have a couple of big questions and then one really big question in the last 7-8 minutes we have here. So the first really big question is, often distinctions have been drawn between the sober realism of the H.W. Bush administration with regard to the Gulf War and the irresponsible policies of the W. Bush administration with regard to Iraq. But when I hear you describe the way the H.W. Bush administration, especially in the summer of 1991 after the war was "over," how they dealt with it, I'm not sure that I see a strong distinction with an attachment to realities or an awareness of the limitations of American power. It sounds like the H.W. Bush administration perhaps suffered from many of the same faults that would plague the subsequent administration. Do you think that's true?

**SH:** I think that it's true to an extent. I think certainly this idea of looking at Bush as a cold, hard-nosed realist has been actually... historians that are working on the Bush administration...now I'm a Middle East right historian, but there have been a few books that have come out recently, which have sort of reevaluated Bush, and I've seen more of an idealistic streak in Bush's ideas, in his speeches and his policies. And even going back to his inaugural address in 1989, he's talking about democracy and liberalism as being the sort of pinnacle of human politics. Now he is very realist in the policy sense, not talking about academic neorealism, but he's very realistic in his dealings with the Soviets. He doesn't push in certain areas where he could have. Some people who are more idealistic are pushing him to move faster in Poland or in the Baltic States and he sort of holds back. But he does have this streak of idealism. If you read that speech that he made this on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990 to Congress, where he sells the war, you're not going to get much more idealistic than this.

**RG:** And I was going to say the irony of the date on which he gave the speech can't be lost on anybody.

**SH:** Easy to remember.



**RG:** With that in mind, I want to flip it around because it's been unfair, I've been asking all these questions about American policy when you are a Middle Eastern specialist and indeed the real power of your research in this article and in your book and in the forthcoming book is your work in Baathist archives and your work in Iraqi documents. Do you think we should reconsider our understandings of Saddam Hussein as a strategist in the way that he handled the war and the aftermath of the war?

**SH:** It depends on what your starting point is.

**RG:** Excellent, excellent point.

**SH:** You might have to reconsider. There are a few different understandings of Saddam. One is that he was a political genius. And the other is that he was basically incompetent and stumbled from... he's just a tinpot dictator. Either of those extremes I think, would have to be reassessed. I think what comes out of looking from Saddam's angle at the 1991 war, what he did throughout the 1990s and what he did leading up to 2003, is you see some things he does really well, strategically and some assumptions that he has that are really bad. He's almost the opposite of the United States in the way he looks at the world. The United States tends to look at the world through the lens of the military instrument of power. That's how we do it. That's part of the reason that got us into trouble in the Gulf War, right? We won on the battlefield so therefore the war is over and we've won. We can go home and have a ticker tape parade. Meanwhile, we've left an absolute mess of a country and which comes back to undermine our goals and our interests. Iraq, on the other hand, doesn't really look at these military victories or military strategy in the same way. Saddam is much more politically minded. Even the way he fights the war itself, he takes really two offensive actions in the war. One is he goes and takes over this Saudi town of Khafji and the other is that he launches missiles at Israel. He launches some at the Gulf too, but the big ones, the big move he made was to launch his missiles at Israel. Now in both of these instances, American strategists, military officers and others have looked at and said, why did he try to do this? And they've tried to figure out some way, in Khafji, oh, this must have made sense. He would go there and what was his next target? That's not what he thought at all. For Saddam this was just flag waving. It was creating a spectacle, a political spectacle so that people on the streets of Cairo would rise up and support him. Look the Iraqi flag is flying over this Saudi town. There's no operational plan there. The same with these missile attacks in Israel, they're symbolic. In fact, the Scud missiles, some of them had concrete warheads.

**RG:** Is that right?

**SH:** Yes, some of them had concrete warheads and some of the military strategists were thinking, what is he doing? Is he trying to penetrate? And they're trying to think of all these

military reasons for why he might have done that. After the war he told his interrogators what happened. He wanted them to be like the Palestinians who were throwing stones.

**RG:** I was just thinking about that is that he was throwing stones. He was throwing them a longer distance and maybe heavier stones.

**SH:** These are symbolic acts. He's not thinking in the way Clausewitz would see in logic where you start with a policy and you create a strategy from there, and from the strategy derives operations. None of that is going on. This is about politics and winning support, so it doesn't work very well in a war. But it does work very well after the war and Saddam is able to outmaneuver the United States politically. The U.S. basically doesn't know how to deal with this which is a problem we've had in other cases too. Influence operations that Saddam is carrying out are not that different from influence operations that other countries carry out against the United States today. And just as we struggle with these today, we struggled with them in the 90s when Saddam was doing it. And Saddam was actually able to achieve a lot of his goals in the 90s with this outlook. And it's very clear he starts off with the goal after 1991. He says, I'm going to divide the Security Council and make it so that they can't impose these sanctions on me. I'm going to open up my diplomatic connections, my economic connections, and return to normal without really fully cooperating with this international regime, which I think is a violation of our sovereignty. And he goes about and does exactly that. And the U.S. is basically caught flatfooted. They don't know how to deal with it. Saddam runs into trouble in 2003 because seeing the world politically, he says, look America, the largest protest in history took place against the Iraq war in 2003. The Security Council is divided and Saddam looks out into the world and says, see I'm winning. And in the post-War interrogations with not just him, but all of the senior officials, they thought there's no way under these political circumstances that the U.S. can actually invade and overthrow his regime. They'll be stopped somehow. They just don't have the political support to do it. That turns out to be a very bad assumption. So you can learn a lot about what you call influence operations, political warfare, different people have different names for it and its successes and the types of things that it can do by studying Saddam, but you also look at its limitations. If you have a president named Bush who has a big military and is willing to use it, then these types of influence operations and political operations just aren't going to be that successful.

**RG:** Well, so Sam in the last minute and a half, I've got to ask you this question and that is at the Army War College, when we teach the Introduction Strategic Studies case study of the Gulf War, for the past few years, the writing assignment at the end is to have students write a brief essay answering one question and that is: who won the Gulf War and why? If you were to write that essay, what would your thesis be?

**SH:** Just the fact that you have to think about that tells you something. I guess I would still say that the United States won the Gulf War because there probably were some ways for it to handle the peace differently which would have led to different outcomes. That being said, the way that the U.S. did fight the war did not help in a lot of ways to achieve that peace. So yes, the U.S. wins the war I guess as I think through this, but it certainly shouldn't be held up as a model for how to win a war. There are things that the U.S. did during the war which weren't very good for the post-War period and then in the war termination phase, and there was no war termination. They didn't even think about it. Or some people were thinking about it, but they never got a chance to actually come up with a plan, coordinate it with operations and implement. There was no war termination strategy that was implemented during the war which is never a good thing.

**RG:** Generally not a good thing. Well, that's a thought for us to end on. Obviously, this is a complicated subject. I encourage our listeners to read Dr. Helfont's essay in the Texas National Security Review and while you're at it, you should read his first book on religion and politics in Iraq and the roots of insurgency and we look forward to your forthcoming book. But for today, thanks so much Dr. Sam Helfont for joining us on A Better Peace.

**SH:** Thank you, Ron.

**RG:** Well, you bet, Sam. And thanks to all of you for listening in. Please send us your comments on this program and all the programs and send us your suggestions for future programs. We are always interested in hearing from you. If you have not yet subscribed to A Better Peace, we implore you to do so, and after you have subscribed, because of course you want to subscribe, please rate and review this podcast on your podcatcher of choice, which helps others to find us so that we can broaden the audience for these conversations. This conversation is over for today, but we will be back, and we hope that you will join us. Until next time, from the War Room, I'm Ron Granieri.