

MSNBC'S Tucker Carlson on show cites "Saddam's Secrets" oped by Robert Weiner and Alexis Leventhal as One of Country's Three Best, and First Up -- June 30, 2005 -- "The Situation", MSNBC, host Tucker Carlson:

MSNBC

'The Situation with Tucker Carlson' for June 30

Read the transcript to the Thursday show:

Updated: 1:32 p.m. ET July 1, 2005

Guest: Mark Hatfield, Jay Severin, Rachel Maddow, Max Kellerman

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

TUCKER CARLSON, HOST (voice-over):

CARLSON: Welcome back. Time for "Op Ed Op Ed."

We spent the day reading just about every op-ed in this country. And we've picked three we think are the best. We're going to read them and offer our 20-second retorts to each.

Ready?

First up, in "The Boston Globe," [Robert Weiner and Alexis Leventhal](#) say that the trial of Saddam Hussein could actually prove disastrous for America. All sorts of secrets are going to spill out during the trial, they say—quote—"Saddam's trial may not be great news for the United States. In fact, it may allow the former Iraqi dictator to publicize some obscure but extremely sordid aspects of the U.S. relationship with him."

In other words, the CIA supported him at various times in his life, going back to they say the 1950s. This is not that obscure. A lot of people know it. The point is, we supported Saddam when he was helping us when he was opposed to Iran, which we thought was a big threat, and the Soviet Union, which we thought was a big threat. And we opposed him when we thought he was a threat to us. And in fact, we overthrew him because we thought he was a threat to us. That sounds like sensible foreign policy to me. There's nothing to be ashamed of.

(CROSSTALK)

SEVERIN: Exactly right.

Look, we did what was right at the time. We all have embarrassments. Granted, old girlfriends are not quite as embarrassing, doesn't rise to this level, almost.

(LAUGHTER)

CARLSON: Well, it depends who you dated.

SEVERIN: I'm kind of—I'm kind of disappointed they didn't save us the expense of a trial when they found him in the spider hole.

But, yes, this is the cost of having a democracy and legal system. There will be embarrassing revelations, maybe. But that's not a defense and it's not even mitigating circumstance. This guy is a genocidal maniac. And so good. Put him on trial. Let's go.

MADDOW: I think that the United States needed to characterize Saddam as a demon in order to convince the United States to go to war against him. We didn't have real reasons, so we needed to make him out to be some sort of Hitler character. And so we did that.

CARLSON: Why would we do that?

MADDOW: That's what we do, right.

CARLSON: I know, but...

MADDOW: But that means that, (as stated in the op-ed) at the trial, what is going to happen is that we're going to have pictures of shaking hands with Rumsfeld, the CIA pay stubs. We're going to have the arms deals during the war with Iran. And we're going to have to come up with the fact, we're going to have come face to face with the fact that he used to be just another dictator to us on the payroll.

SEVERIN: I assume...

MADDOW: ... and that he—we only had to make him into a demon to gin up reasons to—going to war.

(CROSSTALK)

SEVERIN: I assume we'll also see entered into evidence the films of mothers clutching their babies dead, 400,000 of them mass-murdered by Saddam Hussein.

MADDOW: But so many of the things that we think are so awful about Saddam happened before the first Gulf War. So, to justify why we went to war against him the second time is going to be a little awkward.

CARLSON: No, but that's...

(CROSSTALK)

CARLSON: I mean, that's a fair point. There are a lot of genocidal maniacs in this world who we don't topple and replace.

MADDOW: That's right. Yes.

CARLSON: *Right?*

But you still haven't answered the question which I've challenged you on I think every day, which is, what was the reason we overthrew him (as also asked in the op-ed's listing of contradictions)?

MADDOW: What was the reason that we went to war?

CARLSON: Yes. This is a much longer conversation.

MADDOW: You're asking me?

CARLSON: No, I know. You're...

(LAUGHTER)

MADDOW: I have a guy who lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue we ought to ask that question, because we still don't have a straight answer.

CARLSON: I think we went because we really thought he was a threat and we were wrong.

MADDOW: We were absolutely wrong. I'm with you on that.

CARLSON: All right.

(*** *FULL OP-ED* see: <http://www.weinerpublic.com/20050630.doc>)