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by STCLAIR

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Trump Spokesperson Commemorates Invading Iraq by Claiming U.S. Doesn't Dictate to Other Countries; State Dept. Defends Invasion

Trump campaigned on his alleged opposition to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Now his State Department is defending it.

Exactly 15 years after the U.S. invaded Iraq, White House spokesperson [Sarah Sanders](#) on Tuesday, in response to a question about President Trump calling President Putin of Russia “We don’t get to dictate how other countries operate.”

That prompted a back and forth at the beginning of the State Department briefing, which I followed up on toward the end of the Q and A there:

HUSSEINI: Earlier in your discussion with Matt [Lee of the AP] about the U.S. doesn’t dictate to other countries. It’s the 15th anniversary of the Iraq war, and of course, the —

MS NAUERT: I don’t think that I said – I don’t think that I said to Matt that we don’t dictate to other countries.

HUSSEINI: It might have been him. I wasn’t sure.

MS NAUERT: I think Matt said that.

HUSSEINI: Sometimes it’s hard to tell.

LEE: I was quoting the —

MS NAUERT: Yeah, yeah, he —

LEE: — the White House spokeswoman.

MS NAUERT: Yeah.

HUSSEINI: Should the U.S. apologize for regime change operations from meddling in elections in multiple countries through many means over the years?

MS NAUERT: That is a big question. You're asking me about the entire history of the United States — should we apologize? That's the question?

QUESTION: Well, let's start with the Iraq War.

MS NAUERT: Should we apologize for our government all around the world?

HUSSEINI: No, no.

MS NAUERT: I think that the United States Government does far more good —

HUSSEINI: Are you asking me to clarify?

MS NAUERT: — than we ever do bad. And certain people in the United States and in other countries have a look or have the perspective that America does more harm than good. I'm the kind of American that looks at it from the other way around. We do far more good.

HUSSEINI: Most Americans are opposed to the Iraq War. Should the U.S. Government apologize for things that were put out by that podium, people who are in this administration who fabricated information to start the Iraq War?

MS NAUERT: Look —

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS NAUERT: — I get what you're getting at. You want to be snarky and take a look back.

HUSSEINI: No, I don't want to be snarky. I want to get real.

MS NAUERT: No, hold on, and take a look — okay, and take a look back —

HUSSEINI: I want to get real.

MS NAUERT: — at the past 15 years. And Iraq is certainly a country that has been through a lot.

HUSSEINI: Yes.

MS NAUERT: I've been to Iraq; many of you have been to Iraq in covering what has taken place there, okay.

HUSSEINI: I'm being anything but snarky.

MS NAUERT: Let me finish, okay. They've faced a lot of challenges. Right now the most significant challenge there is ISIS, and the United States remains there at the invitation of the Iraqi Government to fight and take on ISIS. I want to commend the Iraqi Government for something — that is, for the past 15 years, that they have had a history of free and fair elections over 15 years. That is remarkable given where they were under the regime of

Saddam Hussein. I recall having met Iraqis at that time – and this dates back to 2004, 2005 – and certainly everyone that I had talked to, an Iraqi citizen had had a family member that was killed in some sort of horrific fashion or disappeared and was never heard from again. I mean, that is something that as an American, when you start talking to citizens, and that is their experience, that is something that's very difficult for the average American to understand, because that is simply the way of life there.

The United States has a strong relationship with the Government of Iraq. I'm going to look forward from this podium in this room. We have a good relationship with the Government of Iraq; I'm not going to look back at this point, okay?