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John Keegan on Saddam — Judgment at Nuremberg

Monday, October 24, 2005

John Keegan is one of the world's greatest living military historians. That's what makes his take on the trial of Saddam Hussein so interesting [[see article](#)]. Keegan argues that Saddam should meet the same fate as the Nazi war criminals.

In his words: There has been no head of state like Saddam in the world since the death of Hitler; in his combination of tyranny of his own people, aggression against his neighbours and defiance of international order.

In that respect, he is a second Hitler and deserves the fate the Allies of 1945 had prepared for the Nazi dictator but were cheated of carrying out by his taking his own life. Academic international lawyers have always had their doubts about the strict legality of the Nuremberg process. Fortunately, it has always been accepted in popular opinion - the judgment of the man in the street - that Hitler's minions got what they deserved. The important thing now is to ensure that today's street returns the same verdict on Saddam.

Keegan's judgment cannot be dismissed lightly. He writes with the seasoned experience of a world-respected historian. When others make comparisons to the Nazis, they are often criticized for trading on the wrong historical example. That criticism won't stick when it comes to John Keegan.

His further analysis: Whatever legal quibbles are raised about the legality of this trial, and they will be many and loud, Saddam is unarguably a criminal. He achieved power by force and deceit. He maintained it by the same methods and he used the power he achieved to wage two wars of aggression against his neighbours - the war against Iran to realign the joint frontier by force and the 1990 invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

Both wars resulted in many deaths, particularly the Iran war, in which hundreds of thousands of young Iranians were killed. Both wars also led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqis.

SEE: John Keegan, "[Saddam Deserves the Fate of the Nazis](#)," *The Telegraph* [London], October 20, 2005.

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