

Letter to the editor of National Geographic magazine, NGM

By Solomon Passy, August 31st, 2011

Dear Editor:

Re: Your article "Baghdad After the Storm" in NGM, July 2011

This article reminded me of two different moments of our recent history, respectively one and two decades ago.

The first one was in 1990-1991, when I was a young Member of the Bulgarian Parliament and Saddam Hussein occupied Kuwait. A few MPs including myself drafted and managed to pass the Bill for Bulgaria's participation in the International Coalition, led by the United States to liberate Kuwait. This was a difficult Bill to pass in 1990, since Bulgaria was still a member of the Warsaw Pact and Ally of the Soviet Union. After the operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm the satisfaction with the job done by our Coalition, however, was mixed with the disappointment of the unfinished job left -- to free Iraq from its dictator.

Therefore, a decade later, as a Foreign Minister of Bulgaria I felt the duty to support the liberation of the Iraqi people from Saddam's tyranny, before leaving their destiny in their own hands.

Bulgaria was very instrumental and pro-active, both as a UN Security Council member (2002-2003) and a member of the Coalition of the Willing (40 nations, again led by the United States) which liberated Iraq. As many other Allies, Bulgaria gave priceless human losses on the battlefield. And the heavy political split on Iraq, inside the European Union, made many of us pay political price at home for acting so decisively abroad.

Today, when France was the leader of the coalition liberating Libya from Col. Qaddafi's regime, we could be even more satisfied by the growing unity within Europe and the world against the dictatorships around the globe. The waves of democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe, followed by South Africa, and by the Arab spring today indicate that the maturity of mankind will soon to evolve so that to prevent all dictators worldwide from enslaving their own peoples.

Your article also proves that our 9/11 political generation did the right thing and the political price was worth paying.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Solomon Passy

President & Founder of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria www.atlantic-club.org

Bulgarian Foreign Minister (2001-2005)

Chairman of the UN Security Council (September 2002, December 2003)

Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (2004)

Chairman of Parliamentary Defence / Foreign Affairs Committees (2001/2005-2009)