and three others for the deaths of 140 Iraqis in Du j ail, the site of an attempt on his life in 1982 . National Public Radio & # 82 17 ; s story about the announcement was a masterpiece of understatement .;/ p ξ ; p ¿ NPR reporter Tom Bull ock allowed as how it might seem strange that Saddam was being tried for a relatively minor crime compared to gas attacks on Iraqi Kurds or the brutal repression of Iraq & # 82 17; s Shiite majority after the first Gulf War, actions that killed thousands of Iraqis . But he explained that Iraqi investigators & # 82 20 ; are clear & # 8 221; that they have chosen this particular incident as the cause for prosecution because it is a & # 82 20 ; straight forward case involving strong enough evidence to convict Saddam Hussein and the others charged . & # 8 221 ; So , according to Tom , that explains it . It & # 82 17; s just a technical thing, a matter of good jur is prudence, you see ?;/p; ; p; On the other hand, any number of observers have pointed out that a trial of Saddam Hussein would likely be a mine field for the Bush Administration . In a trial , Saddam would have the opportunity to take the stand and explain in excruciating detail where he got his weapons of mass destruction, and how when he used them against Kurds in Hal ab ja , the U . S . didn & # 82 17 ; t seem upset at all, and when he used chemical weapons against Iran the U.S. didn & # 82 17; t withdraw their support & # 173; indeed, they continued to provide assistance in the form of intelligence and weapons. He could talk about Donald R ums feld & # 82 17 ; s friendly visit to Baghdad as all of this was trans piring . He could point out that the U . S . had nothing but good things to say about him until he moved into Kuwait And speaking from the podium of the witness stand , he could not be censored , and his voice would reach to every corner of the world .;/ p ; p ¿ In that light , is it surprising that the basis of the trial will be a relatively contained incident that did not involve chemical weapons? A trial in which , if Saddam or his lawyers try to raise issues of U . S and western complicity in his dirty deeds in the past, the judge can simply rule such testimony irrelevant? And is it surprising that this is a death - pen alty case? All they have to do is convict him on this one then execute him, and he disappears as a potential embarrassment.;/ ; p ¿ And would it have been too much to expect Tom Bull ock and NPR to point any of this out? ;/ p; ¡р¿GRE G WE I HER is a political scientist and freelance writer living in Houston , Texas . He can be reached at ; a href =" mail to : g wei her @ uh | edu " type =" ; р ¿ & amp ; # 160 ; external "¿ g wei her @ uh . edu ¡/ a ¿ .¡/ p ¿ ; р ¿ & amp ; # 160 ; ;/ р ¿ i p i ; p ; & amp ; # 160 ; ;/ p ; ; p ¿ & amp : & amp; # 160; ¡/ p; ; р ¿ & amp ; # 160 ; ¡/ р ¿ ; р ¿ & amp ; # 160 ; ;pad; ;padį ;pad; ;padį ;pad; jpadį įpadį ;pad; jpadį įpadį ;pad; ipadį ;pad; ;pad;