

## Analysis

### American Violence in Iraq: Necrophilia or savagery?

Part 2 of a 5-part series: Is supporting the troops, patriotism, dementia, or moral dissolution?

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August 19, 2005—To frame in concrete terms the issue of the American violence in Iraq since the invasion and through the ongoing occupation, one needs to know first its basic traits. For instance, it is elementary that attacking anyone who is not attacking you is, *per se*, a pure act of violence.

In a global setting, violence begins when an imperialist power such as the United States attacks a defenseless, smaller country with the specific purpose to conquer it. In a practical setting, violence with all its macabre manifestations divides into many protagonists acting collectively on the stage of death: bombs raining down on cities; rubble concealing the “irrelevancy” of murder; hospitals that are prevented from saving life; all while the desolate face of despair and destruction becomes the unforgettable gift of “liberators.”

Keep in mind, that if the idea of invading Iraq was not to conquer it, then why has the United States been trying to dismantle Iraq, partition it, write a constitution for it, ignite a sectarian war, and force it to adapt to the needs of its global colonialist imperium under the direction of US imperialists and Zionists?

Violence in Iraq is not abstraction. It is daily death and scattered body parts. It is the destruction of established civilian and economic infrastructures. It is the collapse of family and social relations. It is the brutalization of the Iraqi personality. It is the American concept of Iraqification where Iraqis kills Iraqis so the occupier can rule undisturbed. And finally, yet importantly, it is the defilement of Iraqi women and girls including the rape and torture of children. [1] Violence in Iraq is Abu Ghraib spread all over the country, but people never read about it in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, or the *Washington Post*. Violence in Iraq is the very conservatively estimated 11,000 Iraqis that a fascist US detains in its Iraqi gulags. Violence in Iraq is the over 100,000 people (excluding the 45,000 Iraqi military killed during the initial phase of the invasion) that mainly US troops have killed so far.

If this description is only a minute part of the true face of American violence in Iraq, then how do the American people understand it, and why do the majority of them support it? Before answering these questions, an examination of what American NGO (non-governmental organization) Human Rights Watch (HRW) thinks is in order. [2] The following are just a few points:

1. HRW held that the US military is culpable for the atrocities committed by its people in Iraq. Being in a war zone, contended HRW, “does not absolve the military from its obligations to use force in a restrained, proportionate and discriminate manner, and only when strictly necessary.”

Comment: In essence, HRW does not disapprove of the violence and takeover of Iraq on the condition that said violence is “restrained, proportionate, and discriminate.” What are HRW’s definitions of these parameters and based on what principle is it that the Iraqis must continue to die because a Zionist-controlled HRW gives its guidelines on how US forces must conduct their violence, so that it or the American people can accept it?

2. HRW noted Baghdadis' complaints of "aggressive and reckless behavior, physical abuse, and theft by US troops." HRW also found the US used "overwhelming force" and "operate[d] with virtual impunity in Iraq" displaying an attitude that suggested, "*civilian casualties are not a paramount concern.*" [italics added]

Comment: HRW now becomes just a watcher and commentator! If the above mentioned violence does not require the convening of special tribunals, American or foreign, then what is the purpose of looking at the spectacle of murder without taking steps to stop it? Would HRW expect US Defense [sic] Secretary Donald Rumsfeld or soon-retiring Under Secretary of Defense [sic] for Policy Douglas Feith to feel embarrassed and order the troops to withdraw from a land they willingly devastated?

3. HRW then concluded by stating that there was "a pattern of alleged illegal deaths that merit investigation."

Comment: HRW now enters in the boundless territory of imperialist arrogance and toning down the crimes of the United States. What is "a pattern of alleged illegal deaths that merit investigation" supposed to mean? Is HRW trying to say that the mass killing in Fallujah, Samarra, Kerbala, Najaf, Mosul, Baquuba, Kut, Ramadi, Qaim, Najaf, Mosul, Takrit and other Iraq cities does not merit investigation because it was a deliberate act of killing while the killing of Iraqis on individual bases merits a self-righteous, imperialist investigation?

Although HRW immersed its language in abstract and superficially critical language, it avoided any reference to the United States as the military occupier of Iraq—which is a violation of the Iraqi people's right to self-determination. The point here is that even a biased NGO such as HRW, at the service of mitigating "assumed excesses" of the United States, felt somewhat obliged to report on American atrocities—albeit in oblique and in miniature.

Meanwhile, as Bush keeps braying on about Iraq's "liberation," as Rumsfeld keeps barking on about Iraq's "terrorists," as US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice keeps howling on about Iraq's "democracy," and as countless lawmakers keep jabbering on about Iraqi issues of which they are morally ignorant, the Iraqis continue to die at the hand of killers wearing US military uniforms. Having stated that and in order to discuss the notion of "supporting the troops," what are the basic elements that have characterized US aggression on Iraq?

- The armed forces of the US, UK, and dependent vassal states invaded and occupied Iraq based on fabrication of a hypothetical danger posed by Iraq and its involvement in activities deemed contrary to US government interests. [3] Prior to and since then, the government of the US and other collaborationist governments have wreaked all kinds of military, environmental, and economic havoc on the inhabitants of Iraq to the extent that some Iraqis, to survive, sell their own blood or body parts. [4]
- Controlling the country with what many experts consider the second largest oil resources in the world has been one among many other reasons for attacking Iraq. [5] This does not mean that other geostrategic considerations were insignificant factors. [6] Meanwhile, a strategic beneficiary of the occupation of Iraq is a scofflaw state that is in contradiction of the very pretext under which Iraq was supposedly aggressed. [7] To top it off, multinational corporations are profiteering at the expense of war-ravaged Iraqis. [8]
- The US scrapped international law and left it either to wither or to abide by the whims of the hyper-power. [9] Violations of the Geneva Conventions such as torture, rape, and even killing of prisoners are widespread. Yet, at one point, Rumsfeld had the temerity to fulminate about a breach of the Geneva Conventions, *correctly* stating that it was illegal for a country attacked by the United States to parade American prisoners of war as that would humiliate and violate their human rights. [10] Rumsfeld utterly contradicted himself when he tried to justify showing pictures of trophy prisoner Saddam Hussein undergoing medical checks. "If lives can be saved by

physical proof that that man is off the street, out of commission, never to return, then we opt for saving lives,” proffered Rumsfeld. [11] The Abu Ghraib scandal would later abjectly juxtapose a blatant US contempt and hypocrisy for the Geneva Conventions.

- The invasion and occupation are an arrant humiliation of the Arab world. The *New York Times* was even so forthright as to declare that the unstated “real reason” for the aggression “was that after 9–11 America needed to hit someone in the Arab-Muslim world.” In other words, the invasion was the instinctive reaction of a bully lashing out. Furthermore, it insinuated that any Arab-Muslim target would be okay: “Smashing Saudi Arabia or Syria would have been fine. But we hit Saddam for one simple reason: because we could, and because he deserved it and because he was right in the heart of that world.” [12] The op-ed deceptively presented the invasion as confined to toppling Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, whereas, while Hussein is still alive, US troops have criminally slaughtered tens of thousands Iraqis.
- The hyper-power and its minions set about recording the abasement of Iraqis: parading Iraqis about naked, [13] releasing photos of the former dictator in undress, [14] and there are those infamous photos of Abu Ghraib detainees that so far have managed to reach the public domain. [15] Investigative journalist Seymour Hersch, in a speech to the American Civil Liberties Union, said, “And I can tell you it was much worse, and the government knows it’s much worse, than they’ve even told you. There are worse photos, worse videotapes, worse events.” [16]
- Some of the happenings are still largely unknown, but, according to Hersch, eventually it will all come out. Said Hersch:

“Some of the worst things that happened that you don’t know about. OK? Videos. There are women there. Some of you may have read that they were passing letters out, communications out to their men. This is at [Abu Ghraib], which is about 30 miles from Baghdad—30 kilometers, maybe, just 20 miles, I’m not sure whether it’s—anyway. The women were passing messages out saying please come and kill me because of what’s happened. And basically what happened is that those women who were arrested with young boys, children, in cases that have been [video] recorded, the boys were sodomized, with the cameras rolling, and the worst above all of them is the soundtrack of the boys shrieking. That your government has, and they’re in total terror it’s going to come out.”
- The US desecration and destruction of the 6,000-year old history and cultural heritage of the Cradle of Civilization, [17] and the fascist disregard for Iraqi lives, family ties, customs, private property, public property, institutions, public health, and religion. [18]

Yet, despite this Iraqi holocaust, and despite declining support for the wars of the Bush regime, the media and the public are still offering unwavering support for the troops. Indeed, a large segment of the US public contends the troops deserve unconditional support in times of war—even though this undeclared war contravenes the US Constitution in that the Congress did not declare it. To make matters worse, even some progressive thinkers participate in this cacophonous refrain of “support the troops,” despite full awareness of the atrocities committed by these same troops.

What is the matter? Are the serpentine tentacles of sick patriotism penetrating the American mind at large? While acknowledging that there is a substantial dissenting bloc within the US, one wonders whether people are witnessing a collective megalomaniacal dementia where the average American thinks he is the ultimate authority on matters of life and death in other nations! Or could it be that neocons, Zionists, imperialists, and clasher-of-civilizations have indeed succeeded in dissolving what remained of the simplest norms of morality?

There are two underlying assumptions of this phenomenon: (1) “our” soldiers just follow orders; therefore, they bear no responsibility for their actions, and (2) they are inherently good. That is, “our” men and women do what they do as only as result of the abomination of war, blithely disregarding the fact that the

abomination was US-initiated. This is a convenient but baleful diffusion of collective responsibility at all levels. A readily apparent flaw in such thinking is that, if there is any validity at all to the notion of “*all* men being created equal,” it must equally apply to the *state-designated* enemies.

The savage and immoral actions of a rogue hyper-power are only possible insofar as its trained killers willingly comply in the unleashing of violence against state-designated enemies.

While the US military is a “volunteer” force, it is also true that those enlisted tend to come predominantly from the lower socio-economic strata of American society or from foreign nationals hoping for a better economic future as citizens of the United States. Poverty or aspiration for a better life, however, is not an alibi for killing and committing war crimes.

As for the excuse of “just following orders,” this is not an acceptable alibi and cannot serve as vindication of one’s innocence. In fact, the Nuremberg Tribunal thoroughly discredited such a plea. [19] This does not matter to the United States, even though it was sitting on one of the benches during the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. It is curious to note that in matters of international tribunals such as at Nuremberg, big powers busy themselves in writing moral edicts for others but never for themselves. One such hypocritical edict reads:

Individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience. Therefore [individuals] have the duty to violate domestic laws to prevent crimes against peace and humanity from occurring.

When instigated immorality abounds, it is not surprising that even behavior revered among military types would revert to its antithesis. Soldiers who would take part in the killing of vastly out-gunned fighters—as well as unarmed civilians—must have their bravery called into question. [20] The murder of civilian women, children, elders, and others is emblematic of a rattled military—a military that is diffident of its regard in the eyes of those it claims to protect.

This is manifest in the case of treatment of people arrested during war. Prisoners personify humans in a most vulnerable, defenseless condition. Because of that, maltreatment of prisoners symbolizes a most dastardly and base act on the part of the incarcerators. Yet systematic maltreatment is a euphemism for the actions of an extant and not isolated segment of the “coalition” forces. [21] Among those having been imprisoned, are many women, children, and old men—ranging from a 6-year-old boy to a 99-year-old man. [22] It is neither moralizing nor preaching morality to aggressors, but to humiliate, torture, rape, and murder people in captivity is sheer cowardice; and, as in the homeland of the US, in the case of Iraq, this wholesale imprisonment, definitely, epitomizes racism.

To wit, if, on an international scale, the hyper-power can derive imperialistic satisfaction for being capable of waging war without retaliation, then its soldiers can derive self-satisfaction from inflicting suffering on the people their government aggresses and occupies. For example, at the Bagram military detention center in Afghanistan, US soldiers arrested a young taxi driver, identified as Dilawar, where the guards “pummeled him” for days on end until his legs were rendered inflexible. When Specialist Corey E. Jones struck the knees of the Dilawar, he cried out painfully to Allah (God). Jones said, “Everybody heard him cry out and thought it was funny.” Hundreds of blows later, Dilawar died in custody. [23]

The disdain for outside-the-group humans is undeniable from the comments of US soldiers bombarding Iraq. Lt. Stan Wilson confessed, “We know we’re killing people. We don’t talk about it, don’t worry about it.” Cmdr. Jeff Penfield of the Super Hornet squadron said, “I don’t think about it as human life. I aim at hard things, and if there are people around, I don’t think about it.” [24]

Such accounts are myriad, so whether in Afghanistan or Iraq, the preceding is not exceptional. The accounts of US crimes are too extensive to categorize. This must be very gratifying for a hypocritical commander-in-chief who, some time ago, reveled in goading on the Iraqi resistance.

In Part 3, two aspects of US troops' violence in Iraq and in Afghanistan will be discussed: (1) Are US soldiers the "heroes" of empire, or undiscerning paid killers? And (2), is America's war, especially in Iraq, the dirtiest and the most aberrant act of necrophilia in history?

## ENDNOTES

- [1] Neil McKay, "[Iraq's Child Prisoners](#)," *Sunday Herald Online*, 1 August 2004. Over 100 children are reported to held in Iraqi jails where the rape of a "little kid" was witnessed, as well as "two boys naked . . . cuffed together face to face and [a US soldier] was beating them and a group of guards were watching and taking pictures and there was three female soldiers laughing at the prisoners," and where a crying 12-year-old girl was beaten, undressed, and poured cold water over. Iraqi Resistance Report, "[Religious leaders order parents, guardians not to let children out unsupervised for fear of American molestation or abuse as human shields](#)." [www.albasrah.net/](http://www.albasrah.net/), 30 July 2005.
- [2] Report, "[Hearts and Minds: Post-war Civilian Deaths In Baghdad Caused By U.S. Forces](#)," *Human Rights Watch*
- [3] [The Downing Street Memos](#). James Bamford, *A Pretext For War* (Doubleday, 2004)
- [4] IRIN News, "[IRAQ: Iraqis sell their blood to survive](#)," *Reuters*, 12 Jul 2005
- [5] Linda McQuaig, *It's the Crude, Dude: War, Big Oil and the Fight for the Planet* (Doubleday Canada, 2004). Tom Burgis, "[Iraq: The carve-up begins](#)," *The London Line*, 23 June 2005. Burgis reports on a secret meeting to be held in England by British and US oil executives to decide how to divvy up the looming profits among occupation collaborationists from the Iraqi oil booty.
- [6] Stephen Zunes, "[The US Invasion of Iraq: The Military Side of Globalization?](#)" *Common Dreams*, 20 October 2004
- [7] "[Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East: Israel](#)," *Monterey Institute of International Studies*. Emad Mekay, "[Iraq was invaded 'to protect Israel' - US official](#)," *Asia Times*, 31 March 2004. Ahmed Amr, "[AIPAC Can Place You by the Elbow of the President](#)," *Dissident Voice*, 23 June 2005. The state of Israel that MIT professor Noam Chomsky characterizes as "completely dependent on the United States" and functioning as a US "mercenary state" [see *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky* (New Press, 2002), 126] has infiltrated the intelligence and political levers of the US. The US corporate media has downplayed the affair.
- [8] Naomi Klein, "[Why is war-torn Iraq giving \\$190,000 to Toys R Us?](#)" *The Guardian*, 16 October 2004
- [9] Marjorie Cohn, "[Criminalization of the State: Bush & Co. Fear Prosecution in the International Criminal Court](#)," *Globalresearch.ca*, 25 September 2003. Oliver Burkeman and Julian Borger, "[War critics astonished as US hawk admits invasion was illegal](#)," *The Guardian*, 20 November 2003. The US will alone decide when international law applies and when it does not. Quipped neoconservative Richard Pearle, "I think in this [invasion of Iraq] case, international law stood in the way of doing the right thing."
- [10] Marian Wilkinson, "[POWs vanish amid the war on nasty images](#)," *smh.com*, 25 March 2003
- [11] "[Bush calls for Saddam execution](#)," *BBC News*, 17 December 2003. Rumsfeld contended that Saddam Hussein's rights under the Geneva Conventions were being upheld. Bush's respect for the American legal notion of "innocent until proven guilty" was waived aside when he prejudged Hussein as a "disgusting tyrant who deserves justice, the ultimate justice."
- [12] Thomas L. Friedman, "[Because We Could](#)," *New York Times*, 4 June 2003

[13] Line Fransson, "[«Vi tok klærne og brente dem før vi dyttet dem ut med 'tjuv' skrevet på brystet.»](#)" *Dagbladet.no*, 25 April 2003

[14] "[Saddam underwear photo angers US](#)," *BBC News*, 20 May 2005

[15] "[Photos of Iraqis Being Abused by US Personnel](#)," *The Memory Hole*, 21 May 2004

[16] "[Seymour Hersh's ACLU Keynote Speech Transcribed](#)," *Past Peak*, 15 July 2004

[17] Robert Fisk, "[Vandalization of Iraq's History](#)," *Counter Currents*, 13 April 2003. According to Fisk, American "liberation" unleashed the ignorance and fury of Iraqis to thrash and loot their own history. Felicity Arbuthnot, "[Mesopotamia - Now an Endangered Species—Official](#)," *GlobalResearch.ca*, 1 July 2005

[18] Firas Al-Atraqchi, "[Is a New War Shaping up in Iraq?](#)" *Scoop*, 12 May 2003. Fears were expressed that Christian groups entered Iraq as charitable organizations to proselytize. Caryle Murphy, "[Evangelicals Gain in Iraq](#)," *The Washington Post*, 2 July 2005. This current account suggests that the earlier proselytization fears rang true. It was written of a "newly energized Christian evangelical activism [in Iraq], supported by Western and other foreign evangelicals." "[Russian Held at Guantanamo Alleges Koran Desecration](#)," *PolitInfo.com*, 28 June 2005. Why is it that employees of the state are credibly believed to have tortured and killed humans and yet incredulity arises that these employees could defile a book? Dahr Jamail, "[As U.S. Forces Raided a Mosque](#)," *Hard News*, 19 October 2004. Dahr Jamail, "[World Tribunal for Iraq, Culminating Session Testimony—Istanbul, Turkey](#)," *Hard News*, 25 June 2005. US interrogators "desecrated Islam as part of their humiliation." Captives broke the fast of Ramadan by enforced fasting during the first day of Eid, which is *haram* (forbidden) under Islam. Soldiers were also described as kicking, trying to piss on and wipe shit on the Koran. David Walsh, "[US media applauds destruction of Fallujah](#)," *World Socialist Web Site*, 17 November 2004. US soldiers leveled Fallujah, the "City of Mosques."

[19] Principle IV of the tribunal held, "The fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him."

[20] The automaticity of the notion of the bravery of troops is rejected in an earlier article. "[An Act of Cowardice that Must Surely be Unrivalled in History: Challenging the Assumption of Valour](#)," *Dissident Voice*, 29 July 2003

[21] Dahr Jamail, "[World Tribunal for Iraq, Culminating Session Testimony—Istanbul, Turkey](#)," *Hard News*, 25 June 2005. Jamail told the sordid tale of Ali Abbas who went the nearby US base to find out why whose neighbors were detained and wound up himself at infamous Abu Ghraib for over three months without charges before his release. He described detainees as being strip naked, "beaten on their genitals, . . . denied water and food for extended periods of time, . . . forced to watch as their food was thrown in the trash," and deprived of sleep. "They shit on us, used dogs against us, used electricity and starved us." Peter Beaumont, "[Revealed: grim world of new Iraqi torture camps](#)," *The Observer*, 3 July 2005. The horror of torture continues under the aegis of the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi government with US-UK knowledge.

[22] Simon Assaf, "[The six year old held hostage by the US](#)," *Socialist Worker*, 2 October 2004

[23] Tim Golden, "[In U.S. Report, Brutal Details of 2 Afghan Inmates' Deaths](#)," *New York Times*, 20 May 2005

[24] Lyndsey Layton, "[Causing Death and Destruction, but Never Seeing It](#)," *Washington Post*, 3 April 2003. Benyam Mohammed, "[One of them made cuts in my penis. I was in agony](#)," *The Guardian*, 2 August 2005. That US troops viewed the enemy as less than human made it possible to homo-erotically mutilate the enemy.

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