

NO END IN SIGHT

The Iraqi resistance to our occupation is intensifying, we are losing control of the cities and supply lines, more soldiers are dying every day, and our allies are abandoning us. What happened?

On April 1, 2004, the front page of my daily newspaper carried a large color photograph of a jubilant mob of Iraqis in the city of Falluja dancing around and upon the smoldering wrecks of two automobiles following the ambush and killing of four U.S. civilian security guards.

That evening, television news showed the partial remains of one of them thrown over a telephone line, another was dragged down the street tied to a car, and the burned corpses of the other two were hung from a nearby bridge. Although there are a number of police stations and a military base of more than 4,000 marines nearby, the desecration and demonstration continued for hours as the crowd chanted, "Viva Mujahideen!" (Long live the resistance!)

Al Qaeda did not kill these brave Americans; Iraqis who consider us to be invaders of their country killed them. Bush uses the euphemism "insurgents" and labels them as "cowards," but no matter what you and I may think about their motives, the truth is that these cheering Iraqis are celebrating a victory in their resistance to our occupation.⁸⁷⁴

What happened? Just days before President Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq a year ago, Vice President Cheney was asked if Americans were prepared for a "long, costly and bloody battle?" He replied, "The read we get on the people of Iraq is there is no question but what they want is to get rid of Saddam Hussein and they will welcome as liberators the United States when we come to do that." Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz stated, "Like the people of France in the 1940s, they view us as their hoped-for liberator."

A year ago, on April 30, 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told the U.S. troops in Iraq, "You came not to conquer,

not to occupy, but to liberate, and the Iraqi people know this." Only a few days before Rumsfeld spoke, American troops had shot down 13 Iraqi civilians during a pro-Saddam march in Falluja. Rumsfeld promised that he would be able to reduce the number of troops in Iraq to 30,000 by September.⁸⁷⁵

What happened? Either Bush and his gang of zealots really think we are stupid and that they can get away with lying to us, or, they are really stupid and they believed their own lies.

In the week before April 1st, recently deployed American marines conducting roadblocks and armed searches in Falluja fought a street battle resulting in the deaths of a marine, 18 members of the resistance and other innocent bystanders, including an 11-year-old boy and an ABC cameraman.

A local teacher said, "They are always provoking the people, blocking the streets, detaining the civilians, under the pretext of searching for weaponry and insurgents. If they continue to behave like this, the response of the people will be more tough." City walls in Falluja are covered with graffiti that say it is "halal" (clean) to kill Americans.⁸⁷⁶

The sad truth is that the American people want to believe we are liberators, and we are spending a billion dollars and the lives of a dozen soldiers every week to prove it, but to the Iraqi people, we are just the latest conquerors to occupy their homeland.

The carnage in Falluja was no April Fool's joke, yet Osama bin Laden surely laughed. Bush and his flock of Chicken Hawks have swallowed bin Laden's bait, and they have dragged the rest of us into the trap. Al Qaeda is stronger than ever.

Throughout the Middle East, thousands of young men and women are proudly lining up to surrender their lives in suicide attacks to expel the modern infidel crusaders. Richard Clarke wrote in *Against All Enemies*, "It was as if Usama bin Laden, hidden in some high mountain redoubt, were engaging in long-range mind control of George Bush, chanting "invade Iraq, you must invade Iraq."⁸⁷⁷

Whether it is bin Laden, Cheney, Karl Rove or the other neocon zealots who control Bush's mind, it is up to us to end this

tragedy. It is all but certain that al Qaeda will launch another terrorist attack on America, and the next time Bush and his zealots are likely to suspend the Constitution.⁸⁷⁸

Then it will be too late. The torch of freedom will be extinguished, and the voice of democracy will be silenced.

It has proven difficult to end this book. Every day there's more death and destruction, and the entire nature of Bush's War changed during the month of April. Most obviously, it is clear that a year after Bush announced "Mission Accomplished," his war is far from over. The mission has again shifted. It is no longer the "insurgents" or terrorists who are threatening U.S. troops; it is simply the Iraqis who must be defeated.

The Iraqi resistance repelled an assault by American marines to regain control of Falluja. Not only did the Iraqi security forces we have trained to take over policing in Iraq refuse to assist the marines, many joined with the resistance. Now, we have made a deal with one of Saddam's former generals to raise an army and take over the task of pacifying the city as the marines withdraw from their siege of the city.

The Shiite "Mahdi Army" has denied American troops entry into the holy city of Najaf and has established occupation-free zones in Kufa and Karbala. There are increasingly violent attacks in the usually peaceful areas in southern Iraq, including Basra.

Spain has withdrawn its troops, and Honduras is posed to follow "in the shortest time possible." The Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Kazakhstan are withdrawing their forces, and it appears that El Salvador, Norway, the Netherlands and Thailand will be next. New Zealand is withdrawing its engineers, and South Korea and Bulgaria have pulled their troops back to their bases.⁸⁷⁹

The resistance has begun to take and hold hostages, and a strange videotape of the beheading of an American visitor has shocked the world. The main highways through Iraq are no longer under the control of American forces. Money budgeted to rebuild Iraq is being diverted to pay for private security forces, which operate outside the control of American

commanders. Two major contractors, General Electric and Siemens have suspended operations with the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity and the Coalition Provisional Authority.⁸⁸⁰

Finally, the world has been outraged in the last month by the publication of dozens of photographs depicting widespread torture and sexual abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers. Although the Pentagon attempted to suppress its own report on the outrage, it was quickly revealed that the International Red Cross had notified American authorities of the prisoner abuse months before the photographs were taken. We also learned that Paul Bremer repeatedly raised the issue of prison conditions with Rumsfeld and other top officials last year, yet nothing was done.

More troubling was the revelation that Major General Geoffrey Miller, the commander of the Guantanamo Bay prison, visited Iraq last year and advised Iraqi military jailers to follow his Guantanamo model. Specifically, military guards should soften up prisoners to improve the conditions for interrogations by intelligence officers.

It was no surprise that Bush defended Rumsfeld and the top military commanders or that he blamed the torture and abuse on a few bad apples at the bottom of the barrel; however, he demonstrated his absolute arrogance and total lack of remorse by reassigning General Miller to take over and run the Iraqi prisons.

In spite of all of this, Bush says, "We will stay the course in Iraq. We're not going to be intimidated by thugs or assassins. We're not going to cut and run from the people who long for freedom. Because, you know what? We understand a free Iraq is an historic opportunity to help change the world to be more peaceful."⁸⁸¹ In announcing that he was delaying bringing home as many as 25,000 troops as scheduled, Rumsfeld said, "We're facing a test of will, and we will meet that test."⁸⁸²

The widespread Iraqi uprising caused April to be the bloodiest month since the war began, including the initial invasion. 140 American soldiers were killed and 1,073 were wounded. Since the war started, 777 American soldiers have lost

their lives, and 4,327 have been wounded in action. 109 soldiers from other countries have been killed, for a total of 886, an average of almost three a day.⁸⁸³ They each have a name and a family. They each had a future. Has it been worth the price? What happened?

This must end...

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