

Fallujah: What Sort of Criminal Monsters Bomb Hospitals?

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"A hospital has been razed to the ground in one of the heaviest US air raids in the Iraqi city of Falluja ," reports the BBC (<http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6879>).

"A nearby medical supplies storeroom and dozens of houses were damaged as US forces continued preparing the ground for an expected major assault."

"Wounded or sick civilians, civilian hospitals and staff, and hospital transport by land, sea or air must be specially respected," declares the fourth Geneva Convention

("Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War": http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/texts/doc_geneva_con.html).

Ari Fleischer said, in May 2003, that "American values" are consistent with the Geneva Convention

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030507-18.html>).

"The war on terrorism is a war not envisaged when the Geneva Convention was signed in 1949. In this war, global terrorists transcend national boundaries and internationally target the innocent. The President has maintained the United States ' commitment to the principles of the Geneva Convention, while recognizing that the Convention simply does not cover every situation..."

Ari was addressing prisoners at Camp Gitmo , but obviously the Bushcons also believe "the Convention simply does not cover" civilian hospitals.

The convention also regulates the treatment of civilians in occupied territories and forbids "grave breaches," including the "willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment" of civilians," but this is precisely what happened in Falluja last April. "All of the Middle East and indeed the whole world is now extremely suspicious that US Marine forces slaughtered civilians in Fallujah indiscriminately," Joseph Arrieta wrote at the time

(http://www.democraticunderground.com/articles/04/05/20_falluja.html).

"Not only that, it appears Marine snipers did a lot of killing. This is not some errant bomb or missile that created 'collateral damage,' it's the alleged deliberate, careful sighting of

civilian targets with spotters targeting men, women, children and ambulances,” all war crimes. “According to the relatively few media reports of what took place there, some 600 Iraqis were killed during these two weeks, among them some 450 elderly people, women and children,”

Orit Shohat reported for Haaretz on April 28th (<http://www.uruknet.info/?colonna=m&p=2261>).

The sight of decapitated children, the rows of dead women and the shocking pictures of the soccer stadium that was turned into a temporary grave for hundreds of the slain—all were broadcast to the world only by the Al Jazeera network. During the operation in Falluja, according to the organization Doctors Without Borders, U.S. Marines even occupied the hospitals and prevented hundreds of the wounded from receiving medical treatment. Snipers fired from the rooftops at anyone who tried to approach.

Rahul Mahajan, who serves on the Administrative Committee of United for Peace and Justice, the nation’s largest antiwar coalition, writing for Counterpunch on April 19, provides details of massive U.S. war crimes in regard to Iraqi hospitals and ambulances (<http://www.uruknet.info/?colonna=m&p=2024>):

“Although the first Western reports of U.S. snipers shooting at ambulances caused something of a furor, two days ago at a press conference the Iraqi Minister of Health, Khudair Abbas, confirmed that U.S. forces had shot at ambulances not just in Fallujah but also in Sadr City ... He condemned the acts and said he had asked for an explanation from his superiors, the Governing Council and Paul Bremer. ... There are also persistent claims that after an outbreak of hostilities American soldiers visit hospitals asking for information about the wounded, with the intent of removing potential resistance members and interrogating them. ... By any reasonable standard, these hospital closings (and, of course, the shooting at ambulances) are war crimes. ... In the case of Fallujah, it’s clear that one of the reasons the mujahideen were willing to talk about ceasefire was to get the hospital open again; in effect, the United States was holding civilians (indirectly) hostage for military ends.”

Now that Bush has received his “mandate” from the American people (or the 60% that bothered to vote), we can expect more war crimes. Bombing hospitals, more than likely with patients and staff, will now become routine as Bush “stays the course,” that is attempts to defeat the indigenous Iraqi resistance called “terrorists” by the Bush Ministry of Disinformation.

Americans should be ashamed of these war crimes. But the fact is most people are hardly even aware they occur. Of course, this is no excuse, for as Nuremberg Trials demonstrated the German people were responsible for allowing their leaders to engage in war crimes and crimes against humanity. As Telford Taylor said in the opening statement of the Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No.10 in 1946,

“I do not think the German people have as yet any conception of how deeply the criminal folly that was nazism bit into every phase of German life, or of how utterly ravaging the

consequences were. It will be our task to make these things clear.” (<http://www.humanitas-international.org/holocaust/drtrial1.htm>)

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, it will be the task of a likewise tribunal to make clear to the American people the “criminal folly” of Bush and his camarilla of Straussian neocon sadists. Unfortunately, in the meantime, it appears thousands of Iraqis, mostly innocent civilians, will pay the ultimate price, the same way Jews, Poles, Russians, Germans with the wrong political ideas, and millions of others paid the ultimate price.

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