

George W. Bu-Shoes, The US President “Victim” of Iraq’s “Weapons of Mass Destruction”

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FIRST SHOE: “This is a gift from the Iraqis; this is the farewell kiss, you dog!”

SECOND SHOE: “This is from the widows, the orphans and those who were killed in Iraq!” (Muntadar al-Zaidi),



For the Western media, the Bush-Shoe incident is casually described as a failure of Green Zone security. The substance of the press conference is barely mentioned, namely that Bush had travelled to Baghdad to sign the Strategic Framework Agreement and Security Agreement. The latter allows US troops to remain in Iraq until 2011. The Press Conference was to announce the signing of these far-reaching agreements.

I’d like to welcome the President of the United States, President George W. Bush. I would like to welcome you here as a guest. You have stood by Iraq and the Iraqi people for a very long time, starting with the — getting rid of the dictatorship, helping the Iraqis to fight terrorism.

Your visit today to Iraq, Mr. President, comes after the signing of the agreement between the two countries, which represents — (audio drop) —

foundation and draws a road map that will govern and guide the relationship between the two states. (Prime Minister Maliki opening remarks)

The BBC described the incident as “violence” directed against the US president, Why did he not ask tough questions instead of throwing his shoes?

Most commentators see it as beyond doubt that the treatment meted out to Mr Bush by Iraqi journalist Muntadar al-Zaidi is a just response to the president’s policies in Iraq, although one chides the shoe-thrower **for expressing his protest through violence rather than “tough questions”**. (BBC, December 15, emphasis added)



The nature of the US military intervention and the crimes committed by allied forces are carefully avoided .

The Global and Mail, describes the incident as “a disgrace to journalism”:

“he [Zaidi] is a disgrace to his profession and should be fired by his employer. The fact that he has not been dismissed, and is instead being treated as a martyr by the television company he works for, says a great deal about its standards of journalism.

...

To its shame, Al Baghdadia has not only failed to apologize, or to discipline or fire Mr. Zaidi, who is being held in an Iraqi jail over the attempted assault, but instead posted his photo on its website and attacked the government for holding him. To their shame, organizations that work to protect journalists and free expression internationally, like Reporters Without Borders, failed to condemn the attempted assault, an act that could have ramifications for the ability of journalists in Iraq, and elsewhere, to do their job.

Shame on the Globe and Mail, which has failed to report on the atrocities and crimes committed by allied forces in the Iraq war theater, including the targeted assassinations of journalists.

Al Zaidi is facing seven years imprisonment. He is accused by the Iraqi government of a “barbaric and ignominious act,” (as if the US led humanitarian invasion was not ignominious). The Western media consensus is a “disgrace to journalism”:

Iraqi authorities have not charged Zaidi, but they have arrested him for “his aggressive actions against an official and a visitor of the Iraqi government,” Yaseen Majeed, a top media adviser to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, said in a

statement. Majeed called Zaidi “a disgrace to journalism” and said he would be handed over to the Iraqi justice system for punishment.

Munqeth al-Faroon, an Iraqi court official, said Zaidi could be sentenced to up to seven years in prison for insulting the nation’s leader. On Sunday, at a news conference held by Maliki and Bush, Zaidi threw his shoes, one after the other, at the U.S. president, shouting, “This is a farewell kiss!” As Iraqi security guards converged on Zaidi, he yelled: “Dog! Dog!” (Washington Post, Dec 15)

The BBC also dismisses the protest movement in Iraq, following the arrest of Zaidi, describing it as an initiative of Shiite factionalism:

Correspondents say the protesters are supporters of Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr – a leading critic of the US presence in Iraq. Smaller protests were reported in Basra and Najaf.

An Iraqi official was quoted by the Associated Press as saying that the journalist was being interrogated to determine whether anybody paid him to throw his shoes at President Bush.

He was also being tested for alcohol and drugs, and his shoes were being held as evidence, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

(BBC, December 15, 2008)

The New York Times in a convoluted report points to resentment by Iraqis opposed to Al Qaeda. The insinuation is that al Zaidi is somehow connected to the terrorists. And those who are opposed to Al Qaeda, quite rightfully believe that al Zaidi is a “bad journalist”:

A number of Iraqis said they were dismayed by what Mr. Zaidi had done. Ahmad Abu Risha, the head of the Awakening Council in Anbar Province, a group of tribal leaders that started a wave of popular opposition to fighters linked to Al Qaeda, condemned the move.

“The American president is the guest of all Iraqis,” he said. **“The Iraqi government has to choose good journalists to attend such conferences.”** (NYT, December 16, 2008)

Al-Zaidi has been beaten up, he has a broken hand, broken ribs as well as internal bleeding.

On December 16, according to US military sources, he was taken out of police custody and handed over to the Iraqi military command, which is tantamount to handing him over to US “interrogators”.

The Iraqi Ministry of Defense denies that he is in the hands of the Iraqi military.

US intelligence agents together with Iraqi security guards were directly involved in the arrest and beating of al Zaidi, which resulted in serious injuries :

The U.S. Secret Service yesterday defended its agents’ response to an Iraqi journalist who threw a pair of shoes at President Bush during a Baghdad news conference, **saying that they acted with the proper balance of aggressiveness and restraint.** (WP, December 16, 2008, emphasis added)

Bush made the following remarks following the incident:

"It didn't bother me, and if you want the facts it was a size 10 shoe he threw at me... **That's what happens in free societies when people try to draw attention to themselves.**" (emphasis added)

The BBC report says that Al Zaidi "appeared before an investigating judge and "admitted the action he carried out", a High Judicial Council spokesman said."

Other reports state that an Iraqi judge visited Muntadhar Al-Zeidi in jail. "His brother Durgham Zeidi alleged the reporter must have been too severely injured to appear in the courtroom." (Mirror, December 17, 2008)

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