

Remembering Srebrenica, Thinking of Fallujah

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On July 11, 2005, American and European leaders gathered at a ceremony in Srebrenica marking the 10th anniversary of the death of “at least 8000 Bosnians men and boys” during the war in Bosnia, where many Bosnians died in fighting. As usual, the news of the anniversary was broadcast live throughout the Western world, and the alleged “massacre” was compared only to that of Fascism (“Europe’s worst massacre since World War II”). Will Western leaders who commemorated Srebrenica “massacre” and promised to bring the indicted leaders to justice apply the same standards of justice to those who committed the Fallujah massacre?

The small Bosnian town of Srebrenica was (supposedly) “protected” by the UN as a “safe area” at the time when the alleged 8,000 Muslims (loved to death by the US and its Western allies) were slaughtered by Serb forces in 1995 while the 370 Dutch military contingents stood by. The same was repeated few years later in Kosovo when NATO/UN forces stood by while Albanian terrorists (the KLA) kidnapped, tortured and murdered Serbs and Gypsies. The Srebrenica “massacre” was just a propaganda coup for the US-NATO war against the Republic of Yugoslavia.

Subsequently, the US-NATO used the “massacre” to intervene on behalf of the Bosnian Muslim leaders in the war against Serb forces and in pursuit of their own imperialist agenda. The aim was to break up the Republic of Yugoslavia and colonise Bosnia and Kosovo. Credible evidence provided by US and Western sources showed that the number of the so-called at least “8000 Muslims” killed by Serbian forces was inflated to provide the US-NATO with a “humanitarian” pretext to demonise the Serbs, and gain public relations support for military intervention in the region. Although many people (Bosnians and Serbs) have been executed or died in combat, there is no evidence to support the inflated number. There is also no evidence to support the alleged 200,000-250,000 Bosnians who died in the Bosnian war (1992-1995). European humanitarian organisations estimated that between 80,000 and 102,000 Bosnians died during the war. It should be borne in mind that Western media have played their usual role of imperialist propaganda in distorting the truth throughout the war in the Balkans.

It is also noteworthy several US reports (e.g. US Senate Staff Report and the Foreign Military Studies) have accused the Bosnian forces of deliberately attacking their own Bosnian civilians (e.g. the “Breadline Massacre” in 1992, and the “Market Massacre” in 1994 and 1995) in order to get US-NATO to come to their aid against Serb forces.

In addition, the Srebrenica “massacre” was also used by the Croatian regime (the darling of Western Fascism) as a smokescreen to conduct an overt criminal policy of ethnic cleansing Serbs and Bosnian Muslims in Western Bosnia and the Serbian inhabitants of the Krajina in Croatia. According to Edward Herman, America’s most astute critical reformist, massive

ethnic cleansing and atrocities against Serbs and Bosnian Muslims was “carried out with U.S. approval and logistical support within a month of the Srebrenica events, and it may well have involved the killing of more Serb civilians than Bosnian Muslim civilians killed in the Srebrenica area in July: most of the Bosnian Muslim victims were fighters, not civilians, as the Bosnian Serbs bussed the Srebrenica women and children to safety; the Croats made no such provision and many women, children and old people were slaughtered in Krajina”.

Like the war on Iraq, the US-NATO war on Yugoslavia was an act of aggression that destroyed the entire Republic and killed an unknown large number of Serbs, the war largest victim. Over a million people (now live in Serbia) are displaced refugees from Krajina, Bosnia and Kosovo as a result of a fascist policy of ‘ethnic cleansing’ and an illegal war against Yugoslavia.

The Srebrenica “massacre” was universally condemned in Europe and the US as “genocide” and crimes against humanity. The Serbs who have been accused of the killings were described by Western governments and Western media as “Serb evils”. They are indicted for war crimes and promises have been made to bring them to “justice”, that is, Western justice. However when something worse than the Srebrenica “massacre” happened in Fallujah, it was described by Western leaders and their media accomplices as a “necessary step to hold elections and bring freedom and democracy” to Iraq.

The Iraqi city was the subject of heavy US bombardments before and after the 2003 Occupation. In November 2004, US occupying forces embarked on “pacifying” the city of Fallujah in order to make an “example” of Western brutality. Water, food and electricity were cut off to the city of 300,000 citizens – in violation of the Geneva Conventions. The aim was to empty the city of its women, children, and the elderly while preventing the departure of able-bodied males from leaving, then US forces bombed the city with all the remaining civilians. Many people were able to leave, but others stayed in their homes and massacred by US forces.

For several weeks, US forces bombed the city continuously, with deliberate violence that has been described as “war crimes”. US helicopter gunships and F-16 fighter planes, using legally banned Napalm-type firebombs (MK77s type bombs used in Vietnam) and bombs as heavy as 500 lb (220 kg), are attacking population centres and shopping malls. From the air and from the grounds, US forces indiscriminately killed civilians holding white flags or white clothes over their heads, murdered the wounded fighters, killed unarmed Iraqis who had been taken prisoner, and destroyed mosques, hospitals, and health centres protected under international law.

All males between the ages of 16 and 60 years old were slaughtered. US forces attacked and occupied the Fallujah Hospitals to prevent the publication and counting of civilian casualties. Patients and doctors in the Hospital were taken hostages and abused by US forces and their Iraqi collaborators. “Staff have been attacked by US marines, doctors have been shot, emergency medicines blocked. Children have been murdered in front of their families. Now imagine the same state of affairs imposed on the London hospitals that received the victims of the bombing”, wrote John Pilger.

[Agence France-Presse \(AFP\)](#) reported on 18 December 2004, that US unit commanders revealed that their troops had orders to shoot all males of fighting age seen on the streets, armed or unarmed. According to the Red Cross spokesman and the Iraqi Red Crescent

Society, more than 6,000 people have been killed and many more have been injured in the first three weeks of the unprovoked US attacks. The entire city was destroyed and rendered uninhabitable by humans. Currently there are some 250,000 people reported as being internally displaced by the atrocity. Law experts have described the atrocity of Fallujah as war crimes and breach of the Geneva Convention and US Law. It is part of an illegal war of aggression that has needlessly caused the suffering and death of thousands of innocent people.

Two independent studies investigating the death toll of Iraqi civilians found that more than 100,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the US-led invasion and occupation of the country. In November 2004, the reputed and peer-reviewed British medical journal, *The Lancet*, estimated the death toll to be 100,000 Iraqis, mostly women and children. The estimate was conservative because it did not include the atrocity of Fallujah.

The second independent study was by the *Iraqiyyun Humanitarian Organization* in Baghdad which reported that at least 128,000 Iraqis have been killed since the US invasion began in March 2003. Dr. Hatim al-'Alwani, head of *Iraqiyyun*, said that 55 per cent of those killed have been women and children aged 12 and under. The *Iraqiyyun* compiled its data from relatives and families of the deceased, as well as from Iraqi hospitals throughout Iraq. However, the 128,000 figure includes only those whose relatives have been informed of their deaths and does not include those who were abducted, assassinated or simply disappeared by the US forces and their collaborators. The number also includes those killed by US forces during the attacks on Fallujah and the town of Qa'im in western Iraq. In addition, tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi men, women and children are imprisoned without charges. They are abused, tortured and denied their human rights. Many Iraqi prisoners and detainees have been murdered in cold-blooded and cowardice fashions by US-British killers.

As part of US-British war propaganda, Iraqi dead are not counted, because they are considered inhumane. And even when Iraqi dead are counted the number of dead is squeezed to serve a crafted purpose. The July 13, 2005 report by the England-based Iraqi Body Count (IBC) estimated that Iraqi civilian casualties to be between 22,838 and 25,869, an extremely deflated number, which contradicts previous credible counts.

When 55 people died in the 7/7 London attack, Westerners and their allies were in arms condemning the crimes and demanding that the "perpetrators" be brought to justice for their crimes. However, when 128,000 innocent Iraqi men, women and children are murdered by the policy and violent actions of their Western leaders, the silence is deafening. The perpetrators of these war crimes were rewarded and re-elected to high office, thanks to powerful media distortions and blindfolded "moral values". There is no two minutes of silence for the mass slaughter of Iraqi children.

More than two years of brutal Occupation, US plans for Iraq remains unchanged: the Iraqisation of the Occupation and the violence. This is done by franchising (contracting) the US violence to US-created local militia groups, and removing the occupying forces from Iraqi cities and towns to more protected areas. In other words, the Occupation will be localised by replacing foreign forces with the US-created Iraqi forces – the Kurdish *Peshmerga*, the Iranian-trained BADR Brigade, the Wolf Brigade, including the Chalabi's thugs, and Al-Hussein Brigade. The essential criteria to join the echelons of these forces are previous experience in corruption and pro-Occupation skills in torture and human rights abuse. They are rightly called the "dogs of the Occupation" by Iraqis for their brutality and subservient to US forces and CIA officials.

The militia groups work closely with the Occupation, carrying out US orders of random house raids, mass arrests of innocent people, and major violent operations against Iraqi civilians, and anti-Occupation Resistance. Together with the occupying forces these militia groups are embarking on violent crimes against Iraqi civilians in order to distort the image of the Iraqi Resistance and weaken its popular supports. The US aim in Iraq is to create an atmosphere of terror in order to terrorise the population and instil fear in Iraqis' daily life. At the same time, the US is encouraging sectarian strife and religious fundamentalism as a way of undermining secular and nationalist resistance movements.

The strategy is an old imperialist strategy designed to allow the imperialist forces to role by proxy behind an Iraqi façade. This will provide safe enclaves for the occupying forces and reduces their casualties. The occupying forces will be used only in an emergency situation to protect the puppets. In other words, foreign forces will be used only when the puppeteers are in danger of loosing control to suppress the Iraqi people. In addition, public opinion in the US and Europe will be manipulated through US-crafted rigged elections and fake sovereignty, depicted as "political process" towards "democracy".

It is this "political process" and the US-style "democracy" which have been promoted for Iraq by the US-Western governments, Western media and Western liberal elites (left and right). Iraqis, who reject this colonial dictatorship, are labelled "insurgents". It is an old agenda of Western imperialism and has nothing to do with the ordinary Iraqi people. Its aim is to colonise Iraq and siphoned off its wealth into the bellies of US-Western corporations. It has been admirably rejected by the Iraqi people. Iraqis are universally united against the Occupation, and blame the occupying forces for the continuing violence in their country.

Speaking at the ceremony to commemorate the Srebrenica "massacre", the British foreign secretary, Jack Straw said; it was "a shame on the international community that this evil took place under our noses. I particularly regret this, and I am deeply sorry". It was very misleading statement because Mr Straw is very aware that "this evil took place" again ten years later with his government full cooperation to massacre the people of Fallujah and obliterate their once vibrant city. Like the "massacre" of Srebrenica, the massacre Fallujah was premeditated war crimes in contravention of the Geneva Convention, the US War Crimes Act and the UN Charter.

It has been suggested by law experts that the Fallujah massacre was the perfect case to indict the president of the United States with war crime under US law. The Fallujah genocide is a clear breach of the Geneva Conventions, Geneva Conventions. "You couldn't have a more grave breach of the Geneva Conventions than that", said Naom Chomsky citing the US War Crimes Act which was passed by a Republican Congress in 1996.

It is worth remembering that at the Nuremberg Tribunal they did not try soldiers, and they didn't try unit commanders, they tried the people who sold the war. One of those on trial , the German foreign minister (1938-45), Joachim von Ribbentrop, was convicted as a war criminal and hanged because of participation in the supreme international crime which 'encompasses all the evil that follows'. Shouldn't the world community follow the same justice and try those who instigated the illegal war on Iraq? Or are the West's war crimes tribunals and international criminal courts part of the imperial strategy?

Unlike Srebrenica, we know that the ultimate responsibility for the massacres of Fallujah, Baghdad and other Iraqi cities rests with the US Secretary of Defence, Ronald Rumsfeld,

George W. Bush and Tony Blair. There is an overwhelming *prima facie* evidence to formally indict those who committed this international war crime against the Iraqi people.

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