

The Iraq Charade

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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In recent months, we have been inundated by media reports bringing good news from Iraq, with countless testimonials to the great improvement in security enjoyed by the country in general and the Baghdad area in particular.

This progress is attributed solely to the judicious 'surge' of US military presence, and the astute tactics enacted by occupation forces in a place that once personified despair and violence. Indeed, reports repeatedly point to the figure indicating that violence in Iraq has dwindled by 60 per cent in the past three months.

BBC reporter in Iraq, Jim Muir, is one of the leading enthusiasts of the apparent miracle. In his report, 'Is Iraq Getting Better?', he indulges in over-generalised estimations which just happen to be shared by the US military.

"Over the past three months, there has been a sharp and sustained drop in all forms of violence. The figures for dead and wounded, military and civilian, have also greatly improved...People walk in crowded streets in the evening, when just a few months ago they would have been huddled behind locked doors in their homes. Everybody agrees that things are much better."

Elsewhere, Muir goes further in discussing the role played by Sunni militias in bringing peace to Baghdad. He quotes a militiaman as saying, "At the beginning, people saw it as an occupation which had to be resisted. But then they saw that the Americans were working in the interests of the people."

The BBC represents only a mild example in this charade, which is instilled mostly by the Bush administration and its allies in the military and in the mainstream media. It is mind-boggling how the latter could accept the so-called transformation from chaos to semi-order without any real questioning.

Meanwhile, there are a few sources of information regarding the violence resulting from the US invasion of Iraq. One of these is the US military itself, which keeps track of and publishes information pertinent to the violence only when it's relevant to attacks on US installations and personnel.

Confirming or denying these reports in their entirety is unattainable by any independent source. Considering the politicised nature of the US military public relation strategies, such reports should hardly attest to what is indeed unfolding in Iraq.

Another source of information is the Iraq government and army. It's no secret that those at the helm of both of these institutions are working under the command of the US military.

Spokesmen for the Iraqi government coordinate their statements — with a few exceptions — to confirm those made by the latter.

It seems odd that the bulk – if not the entirety – of reports on the improvement in security are predicated principally on information released by the US military, Iraqi official sources or willing collaborators of both (conformist Shia sources, tribal Sunni leaders). The latter group reportedly receive a monthly-imbursement for helping guard their areas against Al Qaeda. Moreover, an estimated 80,000 Sunni fighters — many of whom were apparently insurgents fighting the US military — get paid US \$300 each to perform various guarding duties. What else do media ‘investigative’ reporters expect to hear from those who get paid to improve security in Iraq? Can they possibly discredit their own efforts, thus losing badly needed incomes? It’s interesting how the US military can now lend its trust to arming and funding the same people who were supposedly blowing up their vehicles a few months ago.

A third source of news is the implausibly huge number of statements made by various organisations in Iraq — some fighting the US and British forces, others fighting amongst themselves due to differences of ethnicity or agenda. Moreover, many of Iraq’s death squads were found to be no other than Al Badr Brigades, the militant arm of some leading members of the Iraqi government. Much of the killing was also attributed to Al Mahdi Army, based mostly in Baghdad’s Al Sadr City. Internal politics and secretive dealings have contributed to the cessation of violence attributed to Al Mahdi militias. The Iraqi army and police are said to be assembled from these two large Shia militants groupings, and much of the violence seems to be of their own making.

Isn’t possible that the US allies decided to cease their violence and ethnic cleansing in Baghdad to give the impression that President Bush’s genius ‘surge’ strategy has paid off, thus discrediting all of his detractors, both at home and abroad?

Is it not ingenious that the Iraq ‘success story’ is now, retrospectively, associating such upbeat and positive terminologies – security, peace, safety, hope – with a most sinister act, that of military invasion of a sovereign country and the subjugation of its people? Why isn’t the media asking these questions instead of indulging in ‘good news’ which is likely to propagate and justify the unwarranted and humiliating occupation?

There are more sources that are closer to credibility than any of the ones above. Independent reports such as the survey of Iraqi households in the Lancet, estimating that by July 2006, 655,000 Iraqis died as a consequence of the war. UK-based polling agency Opinion Research Business reached even a higher number, in September 2007, suggested that 1.2 million people might have died as a result of the war. But no number can do justice to the hurt felt by Iraqi people, so many of whom perished by the firepower of their ‘liberators’.

On December 28, 14 Iraqis were reportedly killed, and 64 others were wounded in a Baghdad square crowded with shoppers following the Friday prayer. I wonder if the many families that collectively share the latest tragedy in Baghdad will find some peace and comfort in the figures and statistics issued by the US military and disseminated cheerfully by the media. I wonder how the people of the bloody Tayaran Square would respond to the question: “Is Iraq getting better?” Would any reporter even bother to ask them their thoughts?

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