

## **“The Salvadoran Option”: More than half of the population of Iraq is dead, crippled or traumatized,**

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Although the “surge” has failed as policy, it appears to be succeeding as propaganda. It seems to be the only thing that supporters of the war have to point to, and so they point, and they point, and they point. Allow me to point out that while there has been a reduction in violence in Iraq — now down to a level that virtually any other society in the world would find horrible and intolerable, including Iraqi society before the US invasion and occupation — we must keep in mind that thanks to this lovely little war more than half the population of Iraq is either dead, crippled, traumatized, confined in overflowing American and Iraqi prisons, internally displaced, or in foreign exile.

Thus, the number of people available for being killers or victims is markedly reduced. Moreover, extensive ethnic cleansing has taken place in the country (another good indication of progress, n'est-ce pas? nicht wahr?) — Sunnis and Shiites are now living more in their own special enclaves than before, none of those stinking mixed communities with their unholy mixed marriages, so violence of the sectarian type has also gone down; and the powerful movement of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr has had a cease-fire in effect for many months, unconnected to the surge.

On top of all this, US soldiers, in the face of numerous “improvised explosive devices” on the roads, have been venturing out a lot less (for fear of things like ... well, dying), so the violence against our noble lads is also down. Remember that insurgent attacks on American forces is how the Iraqi violence all began in the first place.

Just imagine — If the entire Iraqi population over the age of 10 is killed, disabled, imprisoned or forced into exile there will probably be no violence at all. Now that would really be victory.

No American should be allowed to forget that Iraqi society has been destroyed. The people of that unhappy land have lost everything — their homes, their schools, their neighbourhoods, their mosques, their jobs, their careers, their professionals, their health care, their legal system, their women’s rights, their religious tolerance, their security, their past, their present, their future, their lives. But they do have their surge.

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